

Learning to Love the Grey

By

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Draft 4.

Y Touring Theatre Company

Characters

Sarah Jones	Mid to late twenties.
Dr Edward Marsh	Late thirties, early forties.
Tom Goodchild	Early twenties.
Cally Okinawa	Mid to late twenties.

(The play is set in various locations in London during the first weeks and months of the new millennium.)

Scene One

(Edward and Tom's office in the Biochemistry Department of Thames University, in one of the renovated developments on the banks of the Thames. Late morning. An academic office; desks, books etc. One desk is tidy the other not at all so. Towards the side of the untidy desk is a book display stand of the sort you see in shops. It is for a book entitled 'Cloning; the issues'. It bears a picture of two identical men, one positive, one negative in colouring. Sarah stands in the window looking out at the view. She sighs and turns away, pulling some notes out of an over stuffed bag. She catches sight of the stand and jumps, startled. She inspects it closer.

Sarah: Mary mother of God. **(As she's looking Tom, slightly younger, immaculately dressed in rather good suit, enters. He comes towards her with a cup of coffee.)**

Tom: Good eh? **(Sarah jumps at the sound of his voice)** It's only me. **(Sarah relaxes. He hands her a coffee.)** Or is it? **(He gestures at the stand)** Is it my cloned twin? No milk, no sugar.

Sarah: This thing...

Tom: It's the stand for Ed's book- the one I sent you.

Sarah: It's Satan and Gabriel-

Tom: Cloning; a question of issues. Crap title, I know-

Sarah: Why?

Tom: Not enough razzmatazz- doesn't grab you by the balls- Anyway. Sorry about that- I had to take a call. **(Proudly)** 'Tomorrow's World' no less.

Sarah: Oh?

Tom: They might want us to do a slot. **(He's infectiously thrilled by this prospect. Sarah laughs.)**

Sarah: You're very into the old razzmatazz aren't you?

Tom: **(He'd intended her to be impressed.)** Sorry?

Sarah: **(Changing the subject abruptly- as she often does when she's made a point)** I was just admiring the view-

Tom: Pretty impressive view, eh?

Sarah: All the old city stretched out in the dusk-

- Tom:** (**Smoothly, moving behind her; this is something he's done before.**) There's the London eye- over there- and that's all the South bank-the Oxo tower of course- best view of any office in the whole of London it's reckoned. And it's all mine. Or it will be when Ed's has been decorated. Anyway- he shouldn't be long- (**Sarah sits and gets out a pad and pen.**)
- Sarah:** Where is he then?
- Tom:** (**grandly**) Westminster.
- Sarah:** Westminster, Westminster?
- Tom:** Talking to a minister about cloning. It's a hot topic.
- Sarah:** It was in the paper today.
- Tom:** It's in the paper everyday. Photocopied humans, Boys from Brazil, Brave New World. Scientific advance, or a step too far? Only you can decide.
- Sarah:** It sends me running for my Nan's old rosary.
- Tom:** (**Smiling, shaking his head.**) I love it. (**Sarah looks at her notes again.**) So- how **do** you go turning it all into a play?
- Sarah:** I haven't decided I will yet.
- Tom:** I hope you do.
- Sarah:** Why?
- Tom:** Well, you're a good writer.
- Sarah:** How d'you know that then?
- Tom:** All that community theatre you're done.
- Sarah:** Have you seen any of it?
- Tom:** No, but I read your CV. Some of the issues you tackled, homelessness, that drug abuse play.
- Sarah:** 'Shooting Dreams'.
- Tom:** I mean really worthy stuff.
- Sarah:** (**abruptly, like many writer's she's not keen talking about her work**) Worthy!
- Tom:** I really admire people who can write. I always thought I should try writing.

Sarah: Are you good at angst then?

Tom: It's time. As in never having enough. I don't even read these days. At least things that aren't scientific reports. That's why I admire people like you. **(His meaning is fairly overt but she doesn't respond, by now she's back reading her notes. He casually extracts a book from where it's sticking out of the top of Sarah's bag, not seeing her head shoot up.)** 'The Lord of the Rings'. All fairies and pixies isn't it?

Sarah: **(taking the book back)** So what is it you do?

Tom: **(grandly)** Science Outreach Officer.

Sarah: And what are you outreaching with?

Tom: Well- science- It's a Government funded thing... it's all about educating the public about science... listen if you wanted, when you've seen Ed, we could maybe talk some more. Do lunch. We could go to The Pharmacy if you wanted.

Sarah: Why, are you ill?

Tom: It's a restaurant called 'The Pharmacy'. In Kensington. All done out like a chemists.

Sarah: Jesus.

Tom: The place to eat, London's newest, Mecca of all the great and good in the science world. They say it's where anything worth talking about gets talked about.

Sarah: Have you ever been?

Tom: You can never get in. Not on a Wednesday. But we could go today. Suss it out.

Sarah: More razzmatazz.

Tom: What's wrong with a bit of razzmatazz?

Sarah: Nothing- as long as you don't forget that's what it is.

Tom: So how about it? Shall I call? **(There's a pause and Sarah looks at him, and then as she so often does when faced with a direct question changes the subject.)**

Sarah: These buildings; they used to be warehouses didn't they?

Tom: **(thrown)** I don't know probably, Sarah. It's nothing heavy. Just lunch.

Sarah: Lunch can be pretty heavy.

Tom: Help you decide if you do want to write the play. Bounce around ideas.

- Sarah:** Aren't I meant to be doing with Dr Marsh?
- Tom:** There may be things Ed doesn't have time to explain.
- Sarah:** Tom.
- Tom:** Yes?
- Sarah:** I just need to...
- Tom:** Again?
- Sarah:** It's the cold. And the coffee. **(She retreats but pauses at the door.)** Tom. **(Expectantly, he looks at her)** It's a wonderful office. **(He smiles at her and she exits. He looks after her, and then moves swiftly to his phone.)**
- Voicemail:** You have one message, left today at ten forty two pm.
- Girls' voice:** Tom, it's me. I'm so sorry, please, pick up if you're there. Please, or at least ring me. I'll be in after six. **(He presses a button, his face expressionless)**
- Voicemail:** Message deleted. There are no more saved messages. **(He crosses to the window and stands looking out, his expression unreadable. After a beat the door opens and Edward enters. Tom however doesn't look round.)**
- Tom:** D'you know what would've been brilliant? To be, here with you as all the Millennium fireworks were going off.
- Edward:** **(Going straight to his desk and rooting around looking for papers.)** I'm very flattered to hear it Mr Goodchild, but I'm afraid I'm unable to repay the compliment.
- Tom:** **(Flustered)** God, not you.
- Edward:** I don't know whether to be relieved or disappointed.
- Tom:** Egg on face time right? I wasn't expecting you back yet.
- Edward:** Apparently. Any messages for me?
- Tom:** Just the one. Do you want to speak at LOFPUS?
- Edward:** At where?
- Tom:** The London Forum for Public Understanding of Science.
- Edward:** **(Irritably)** No I bloody don't. **(He slams his folder down.)**

- Tom:** (**Tentatively, sensing his mood.**) How was the meeting?
- Edward:** It depends which meeting you're referring to. The meeting between myself and the Advisory Board or the subsequent unfortunate encounter between the minister and a fourteen stone anti- cloning demonstrator.
- Tom:** Wow!
- Edward:** Though perhaps 'demonstrator' is too restrained a word to be used in this context. (**Sarah enters unnoticed.**) His screams of 'This flies in the face of God' perhaps erred more on the side of melodrama.
- Tom:** Bad news.
- Edward:** As you say, bad news. The attendance of the popular press certainly adding to that statement.
- Tom:** Shit.
- Edward:** It was absolutely what we didn't want to happen. The Government's running scared as it is. The last thing we want is a GM style trial by media.
- Sarah:** Presumably he felt he had a point to make. (**Edward notices her for the first time.**)
- Tom:** Edward. This is....
- Edward:** (**above this**) Presumably he did. What I'm taking issue with is the way he and his brown rice, woolly sock cronies chose to make that point.
- Sarah:** I read there's all sorts of people concerned about cloning. Religious groups, pro-life groups- even Greenpeace -
- Edward:** The point is.
- Sarah:** Surely it's rather simplistic to dismiss them as sock wearing vegetarians.
- Tom:** Edward this is Sarah.
- Edward:** Presumably the real candidate for firework night.
- Sarah:** Sorry?
- Tom:** (**curtly**) As a matter of fact Sarah's...
- Edward:** (**breaking on**) I don't mean to be rude. Normally I'm more than happy for you to use this office as part of your extended foreplay Mr Goodchild but the upshot of this afternoon's fiasco is that the minister has urgently requested a further report, which I must get on with forthwith/

Tom:Ed...

Edward: /added to which I've a 'Miss Jones' from some arts foundation due to descend upon me, always supposing her tie-dye draperies don't become entangled in the revolving doors, so I need to make at least some headway before that happens.

Sarah: It's too cold for tie-dye actually. **(There is a ghastly pause)**

Edward: Sorry?

Tom: **(smoothly)** Ed. Dr Marsh, Sarah Jones from Camden and Islington Arts Trust.

Edward: Ah!

Tom: She's on the science festival committee with me.

Sarah: Descending on you, as opposed to going down on Mr Goodchild.

Edward: Ah. I can see some sort of apology's in order.

Sarah: It's all right. **(But it isn't of course.)**

Edward: All the same I hope you'll forgive my crassness, Miss Jones.

Tom: Sarah's one of the writer's involved with the 'Culture Shock Culture' science festival-

Edward: The what?

Tom: **(Nervously trying to relieve the tension)** Culture Shock Culture. Science meets art. Kaboom!

Edward: Kaboom?

Tom: The arts stroke science festival? The one with the Department on board as a consultative voice? Bringing together science and art.

Edward: Why?

Tom: Why what?

Edward: Why bring science and art together? It strikes me that they seem more than capable of surviving independently.

Sarah: You don't think one adds to the other?

Edward: Not particularly.

- Sarah:** Or there's whole areas of science that can be explored through art?
- Edward:** **(Putting totally the wrong emphasis on the words, it's obvious he's never seen it before.)** Star Trek?
- Tom:** Surely Ed there's some really exciting scientific concepts.
- Edward:** Which are better off being explored by scientists.
- Sarah:** Look, why don't I just ask what I need to and then I can leave you with your report.
- Tom:** You see Sarah's writing a play about cloning.
- Sarah:** Considering writing a play about cloning.
- Edward:** I see.
- Tom:** And with you being our resident bigwig on the subject, she wanted to run her facts by you.
- Edward:** Why cloning in particular?
- Tom:** Why not? I mean you have to agree it's an exciting subject.
- Edward:** But then I would- being a resident Big Wig
- Tom:** I think it goes beyond the purely scientific- I mean the creation of a new life genetically identical to the parent, I mean it's such a sexy concept.
- Edward:** Sexy? **(There's an awkward pause which neither Sarah or Edward seem disposed to break. Tom decides to retreat.)** Anyway I'll leave you two to it. If you need me I'll be in the resource room. **(To Sarah)** See you afterwards? **(He smiles encouragingly and exits. Sarah gets her notes ready. Ed moves around gathering various papers and computer discs in preparation for writing his report.)**
- Sarah:** **(Formally)** It's very good of you to spare the time Dr Marsh.
- Edward:** It isn't actually-
- Sarah:** Sorry?
- Edward:** It's very good of Mr Goodchild to say I'd see you. Not that I've anything against you, you understand, but as I said I do happen to be extremely busy.
- Sarah:** If I can quickly just go through my notes I can leave you to get on with it.

- Edward:** I do actually recall sending you a very comprehensive book on the subject-
- Sarah:** You did.
- Edward:** Which should more than have answered any questions you had.
- Sarah:** I need to make sure I've got my facts straight.
- Edward:** Very commendable. Go ahead.
- Sarah:** This is how I understand the basic process to work. (**Consults notes**) You get an egg, empty out all the doubris.
- Edward:** I take it you mean the DNA.
- Sarah:** You get an egg, empty out the DNA. (**As she talks she consults her notes and waves graphically with her hands.**) You get cells from whatever it is you want to clone. Sheep or person or mammoth or whatever and you put these cells to sleep chemically and then whilst they're asleep put them in the cell you've already emptied. Then, instead of getting a sperm to jolt it into life and provide more genetic material, you use a teeny tiny little electric shock. That starts the cell off dividing and there you have it an embryo! Yes?
- Edward:** More or less.
- Sarah:** Have I got it right?
- Edward:** (**Long sufferingly, as he pauses in his moving around.**) What happens Miss Jones is that an egg is manually evacuated of the existing genetic material so that laboratory insertion of donor material, containing a processed nucleus can take place. As you so succinctly state the egg is **then** stimulated into growth by a moderate electric charge ensuring cell division occurs and yes, the resultant genetic offspring will possess the exact genetic make up of the donor.
- Sarah:** Isn't that what I said?
- Edward:** I was using the correct technical terminology.
- Sarah:** Like you did in your book-
- Edward:** Sorry?
- Sarah:** (**Changing the subject. She consults her notes**) But you **can** create identical copies of whatever, that's the important bit-
- Edward:** Theoretically- you must remember it hasn't been attempted with humans-
- Sarah:** Yet!

- Edward:** Nor is it likely to be, at least not in this country.
- Sarah:** But you could, in theory, if you had the right donor material create clones of people who'd died.
- Edward:** No not at all!
- Sarah:** Oh?
- Edward:** Dead material isn't suitable, it has to be from a live donor.
- Sarah:** So no Adolf Hitlers.
- Edward:** Anyway it's not enough to be genetically identical. To grow into a similar sort of person they would need similar life experiences. It's debatable whether Hitler would have been the same if he hadn't lost his father at the age of 12.
- Sarah:** **(scribbling furiously)** Or if Myra Hindley hadn't met Ian Brady.
- Edward:** **But** that's hardly the most important, or even relevant application of the concept- look- Miss Jones
- Sarah:** **(stopping him with a gesture)** Hang on. **(To herself as she writes.** We are who we become, early experiences/ influences.
- Edward:** **(patience wearing even thinner)** I do hope you're going to take all this... **(Sarah looks up at his tone and he pauses tries to find the right word.seriously.**
- Sarah:** I'm sorry?
- Edward:** It is a particularly sensitive issue. At the moment there is a government ban on any research or experimentation using human embryonic material- for purposes of cloning. Research can only inch ahead until such time as this freeze is unfrozen- **(Sarah makes to speak but Edward drives on.)** The Government is seeking advice from its chief medical officers on the Donaldson committee who are currently preparing a report which will hopefully recommend that this ban will be lifted- **(Sarah just looks at him.)** To my mind research needs to proceed and proceed now- it's vital that the restrictions are lifted- but as I said there's a lot of high feeling in certain quarters- and as I said the popular press seem poised to make their own inimitable contribution to the debate- so you'll understand the very last thing we need is a lot of nonsense about buildings and Myra Hindley-
- Sarah:** I can assure you **(but Edward holds up a hand forestalling the argument he has just created)**
- Edward:** If you've no more questions?

Sarah: (Realising she's been dismissed) Sorry?

Edward: As I said I am rather busy.

Sarah: No, right. (She rises)

Edward: You can see yourself out?

Sarah: Yes. (Rises to go as Tom comes in.) Oh Tom there you are.

Tom: (tentatively) All done?

Sarah: All done. Thank you very much for your time Dr Marsh. (To Tom) It's all very interesting. I just want to let you know I am keen to write the play, I'll send an outline in, in the next couple of weeks. (a pause as both look at her) Well?

Tom: What?

Sarah: You said something about lunch.

Blackout

Scene Two

(The interior of a womb. Or rather a large fabric mock up of one made for a science Fayre- billowing red cloth with a large red throne in the middle of it. A sign proclaims it as 'womb' Offstage we hear Tom speaking into a mike. As he speaks Sarah wanders into the wearing a rather glamorous dress and carrying a glass of wine, her shoes and her overstuffed bag. . She looks around, taking stock of her surroundings and shaking her head. She ignores the speech and sits on the throne. She puts on some rather battered specs and fishes out some notes which she frowns at in dissatisfaction)

Tom: (clearly in his element) Ladies and Gentlemen if I could have your attention. I'm Tom Goodchild, Science Outreach Officer for the Department of Biotechnology, I'd like to take the opportunity of welcoming you this evening to Thames University's first annual science fair. It's been doing good business today with local school children so I'm told, I hope you've been able to take advantage of the many and varied displays and exhibitions. I'd especially like to thank the Open Fist Theatre Company for that extract from Sarah Jones's work in progress 'Hard Cell' (Sarah looks up and frowns at this) This piece of dramatic expression which is funded by both by the University and the Millennium Arts should hopefully receive it's full premier later in the year as part of our 'Culture Shock Culture' festival. (Cally enters in costume- a rather slinky dress with male and female symbols all over it. A sash proclaims her as 'Miss Gene Genie')

Cally: Hey there honey chile, what y'all doin' in mah uterus?

Sarah: This place. Jaysus!

Cally: You haven't seen my Cosmo anywhere? I was reading it in here earlier.

Sarah: I thought you were doing your old demo bit.

Cally: I would've been if I'd had anyone to demo to. (She retrieves a magazine from behind the throne.) Ten people I had in. Ten!

Sarah: I thought it was busy.

Cally: It might have been, I wasn't. (She sits and lights up.) Miss Gene Genie and her 'Reproduction Roadshow' were just that bit too sensitive for the little darlings apparently.

Sarah: I thought you glossed over most things.

Cally: I did, reproduction without bonking, IVF, cloning just the bare facts.

Sarah: Sex without the sex.

Cally: Darlin', I was positively frigid. But people don't see it like that.

- Sarah:** The old womb's a sensitive area. Just the word would've been enough to scare most of them off.
- Cally:** Anyway, what' you doing out here? Bit of modesty? I can relate to that. I thought you'd be back in there collecting all your bouquets-
- Sarah:** It's all a bit intimidating actually.
- Cally:** How come?
- Sarah:** Apparently there's a load of top scientists here.
- Cally:** It didn't stop one of them pinching my bum just now.
- Sarah:** The great and the good from the science world- I don't know what they all think.
- Cally:** About the script?
- Sarah:** You see I think it has to be about ideas, you know, concepts sparked off by the science. But the one I spoke to seemed to be rather stuck on the bare facts, you know, the old science lesson we have this technology and this is how it works.
- Cally:** I guess that's scientists for you.
- Sarah:** What did you think of it then Cally?
- Cally:** They play? I know one thing, it'd have been a damn sight better if I'd been in it.
- Sarah:** You were off doing your auditions.
- Cally:** I mean, did you see that Laura? Moves like a bloody policeman directing traffic.
- Sarah:** But what about the play itself?
- Cally:** Very good.
- Sarah:** You don't think it was a bit, well... You see I just can't help feeling with this whole cloning thing, it doesn't add up somehow.
- Cally:** How so?
- Sarah:** I mean I checked the facts, but it's like I missed something. I mean why would anyone want clone themselves? I mean apart from Saddam Hussein there's no **need** to do it, like there is to find a cure for cancer or something.
- Cally:** There's always some weirdo around wanting to do this or that. What does your man think?

- Sarah:** He's not exactly my man.
- Cally:** Isabel said you'd been on a load of dates.
- Sarah:** Meals.
- Cally:** I'd snap him up if I were you babes. Good speaker, good looks, good wage. Arse a definite nine out of ten. **(Sarah doesn't look convinced.)** Listen babes, there's no such man as Mr Right, just Mr Right Now and right now he looks all right to me and hey, if you're not interested send him my way.
- Sarah:** Apparently he's had loads of girlfriends.
- Cally:** So? He'll know what to do with you, pardon my French.
- Sarah:** Cally!
- Cally:** Listen did he nick your credit card? Trash your house? Shit in your handbag?
- Sarah:** Of course not.
- Cally:** Then give the guy a chance. **(Stubs out her fag and gets up to go.)** Come on girl, go back and enjoy your triumph Miss Gene Genie is gagging for a drink and maybe a bit of quality time with a lonely scientist in an Armani suit.
- Tom:** I thought I heard voices. I've been looking everywhere for you. That was terrific.
- Sarah:** What did the scientists think?
- Tom:** They loved it.
- Sarah:** Did they actually say that?
- Tom:** Well I haven't had chance to speak to them as such, but Carmen from 'Tomorrow's World' thought it was fabbo.
- Cally:** You see.
- Sarah:** Tom this is...
- Cally:** Ah's Miss Gene Genie and welcome to mah all singing all dancing reproduction road show. **(Tom claps. Cally produces a large red ball)** Here, catch honey chile. Careful, youse a-holding mah egg. It's precious, I've only a finite number of those babies to last me a lifetime...
- Tom:** Well if you can drag yourself away Miss Genie there's food & wine being served.
- Cally:** Great, I'm starving.

Tom: And the fireworks are about to start.

Cally: **(Delightedly)** Fireworks?

Tom: Over the river some left over from Millennium night.

Cally: Gangway. **(She exits.)**

Tom: Well done you.

Sarah: It wasn't too... razzle-dazzle?

Tom: Relax. **(Smiling)** Come on- I'm going to get you a drink.

Sarah: Look you go. I'll catch you up in a sec there's just something I need to look up.

Tom: But the fireworks'll start any moment.

Sarah: Honestly, I won't be a sec.

Tom: Sarah?

Sarah: Yes?

Tom: Will I see you later?

Sarah: Do you want to?

Tom: Yes. Look what I want to say, what I've been wanting to say for the last three weeks and obviously making a right balls of it, well I'm interested. Go on!

Sarah: What?

Tom: Isn't this where you normally start talking about your Nan's chilblains or something.

Sarah: **(Laughing)** I've told you that before.

Tom: So? **(But at this moment Edward enters)**

Edward: Miss Jones a word.

Sarah: Oh were you looking for me?

Tom: **(Deciding to beat a retreat)** I'll leave you to it. See you later. **(Exits)**

Edward: Perhaps you'd be so kind as to explain this. **(He brandishes some papers at Sarah.)**

Sarah: It's the script.

Edward: A script which carries my name.

Sarah: As scientific consultant.

Edward: You may be interested to know that I've just spent an extremely unpleasant ten minutes with my Head of Department asking me just why I let my name and the name of Department be associated with this fifth rate piece of science fiction.

Sarah: You didn't like it.

Edward: I'm not here to play games Miss Jones.

Sarah: I'm not trying to play games.

Edward: Do you realise the department has been held up to ridicule in front of some of the major scientific figures in this country all because of your so called piece of drama.

Sarah: I don't understand.

Edward: Don't you.

Sarah: I checked the facts with you.

Edward: Certain facts.

Sarah: I mean I was saying to Cally it did feel.

Edward: **(Breaking in)** Facts which you subsequently added to.

Sarah: I had to.

Edward: Telepathic twins, people cloning their pets, though quite where the brain fitted in I don't know.

Sarah: Well- the whole thing took place in someone's dreams- following the idea that a cloned person wouldn't have a soul.

Edward: I certainly don't recall telling you that...

Sarah: I did consult other sources.

Edward: 'The X Files'?

Sarah: I looked on the Internet.

- Edward:** The Internet.
- Sarah:** Yes. I typed in 'cloning'.
- Edward:** I should've guessed.
- Sarah:** Seven thousand three hundred and sixty two entries. Of course most of them were a load of old hooley.
- Edward:** You don't happen to have a list of the pages you did consult anywhere?
- Sarah:** Yes. **(Trying to explain.)** You see what I...
- Edward:** May I see it? **(She looks at him a moment then rummages in her bag.)** It'd be too much to hope you have an efficient filing system.
- Sarah:** **(She hands a piece of paper to Edward.)** You see you told me the facts, but what I.
- Edward:** **(Scanning the page)** Oh my God!
- Sarah:** Like I say I know some were a bit weird but they all took the same premise, you can clone people and animals.
- Edward:** Miss Jones, let me congratulate you. Somehow you've managed to ignore all the sites of any worth and select almost every dubious fringe, cloning organisation in existence plus a few that are new even to me. 'Send in the Clones'?
- Sarah:** That's a group wanting to clone famous musicians.
- Edward:** You seem only to have omitted the 'Elvis Lives' lot.
- Sarah:** I know these groups are a bit off the wall.
- Edward:** If by 'off the wall' you mean about as scientifically accurate as 'Lost in Space' then yes. These sources, which you have woven into your play and credited with my name, are indeed 'off the wall'. This is just the sort of claptrap the media latch onto.
- Sarah:** I'm not contradicting what you basically said- humans can theoretically be cloned.
- Edward:** Human cloning is a red herring.
- Sarah:** But it can be done.

- Edward:** But it won't. It's not going to happen, at least certainly not in this country, not in the foreseeable future.
- Sarah:** But it's a fact and what I did was use that fact as a starting point.
- Edward:** What you didn't do was mention the fact of stem cell therapy.
- Sarah:** Stem cell therapy?
- Edward:** Did Mr Goodchild not tell you about it?
- Sarah:** He might have said something.
- Edward:** It happens to be a vitally important application of the science of cloning much more current than reproduction.
- Sarah:** I see.
- Edward:** It was outlined in some detail in my book, there were several chapters dealing specifically with the subject.
- Sarah:** I'm sure there were.
- Edward:** **(Exasperated)** So why on earth didn't you read it?
- Sarah:** **(Angry)** The book of Kells.
- Edward:** **(Totally thrown)** What?
- Sarah:** It's a book of Celtic law in Ireland, no one can understand it.
- Edward:** I know perfectly well what the book of Kells is Miss Jones. If by that you mean my book is incomprehensible may I tell you it was aimed specifically at the High Street?
- Sarah:** Not my High Street.
- Edward:** If you don't understand you shouldn't be doing this.
- Sarah:** That's why I came to you for help.
- Edward:** Help which I gave.
- Sarah:** No.
- Edward:** I did.

- Sarah:** What you gave me was ten minutes of 'run away and play and don't meddle in things you don't understand'.
- Edward:** I did explain I was very busy that day. I had a very important report to write.
- Sarah:** Who for?
- Edward:** A government committee.
- Sarah:** So what about people like me who couldn't afford seventeen pounds for your book of Kells even supposing they could understand it? **(She turns, by now genuinely embarrassed at what has occurred. We suspect tears aren't too far away which throws Edward more than her temper.)**
- Edward:** **(Trying to calm things down.)** This isn't getting us anywhere.
- Sarah:** So what you're saying is it's a load of old hooey.
- Edward:** Scientifically inaccurate
- Sarah:** And all the great and the good will have seen it was scientifically inaccurate.
- Edward:** Well, hopefully Mr Goodchild is currently embarking on a damage limitation exercise.
- Sarah:** How?
- Edward:** By saying the work is in its earliest stage something like that. He's very good at that sort of thing I imagine. **(Tom enters, highly amused, blithely unaware of any problem.)**
- Tom:** Dr Cooper from Biophysics has just spilt red wine over that woman from 'Tomorrow's World'
- Edward:** Oh my God.
- Tom:** Sorry?
- Sarah:** Look, tell your Head of Department I'll take your name off it right away. I'll read your book, redo the outline and e-mail it through.
- Edward:** I'm afraid it's not quite as simple as that.
- Sarah:** Oh?
- Edward:** I'm afraid I got more than a rollicking. Thanks to tonight's little Masterpiece I got very specific instructions to continue advising you in the closest manner possible to

ensure that there's at least some semblance of scientific accuracy in your piece of 'dramatic expression'.

Sarah: **(Weakly)** I see.

Edward: I'll be round in a couple of days.

Tom: Problems? **(Sarah doesn't reply)** Hey, come here.

Sarah: I didn't deliver a science lesson.

Tom: So what? People liked it.

Sarah: People liked 'Lost in Space'.

Tom: Scientists can't present ideas to save their lives. You can.

Sarah: Just the wrong ideas.

Tom: Hey. **(He puts his arms round her and maybe revving up for a kiss.)**

Sarah: What is stem cell therapy?

Tom: Not now... come on the fireworks are starting.

Sarah: Yes. Fireworks. **(A pause, she looks to where the lights are starting to explode.)**

Tom: And afterwards, can I take you home? **(She looks at him a long moment and nods.)**

Blackout

Scene Three

(The Headquarters of The Arts Co-operative where Sarah and sometimes Cally work. Mismatched chairs and a totally inadequate electric fire. There is a sound of heavy hopeless rain. Cally enters with a bowl, followed by Edward who looks in horrified dismay at the room.)

Cally: Here we go Doctor Marsh. She **is** expecting you, she had a hospital appointment

Edward: Thank you.

Cally: Not as plush as your place I'm afraid. She shouldn't be long, she should be back any minute. Oh! **(She thrusts the bowl into his hands.)** 'Scuse me, bit of maintenance, nothing heavy. **(She puts the bowl under a leak.)**

Edward: This is the Arts Place?

- Cally:** **(Grandly)** The Camden and Islington Centre for the Arts. I know, terrible isn't it?
- Edward:** And you work here.
- Cally:** Only when I'm resting darling. Which is most of the time. When ah's not dressing up at science fairs that is honeychile.
- Edward:** **(Moving to the window.)** Will my car be all right outside?
- Cally:** You out the front? **(Goes to the window.)** The Mercedes?
- Edward:** Yes.
- Cally:** You'll be fine, at least while it's light. It **is** alarmed?
- Edward:** Yes.
- Cally:** As I said she shouldn't be long- you don't mind looking after yourself? I've a bit of photocopying to do. **(Moves to the door but pauses.)** Would you say I was statuesque Doctor Marsh?
- Edward:** I'm sorry?
- Cally:** **(Drawing herself.)** Statuesque. Cool, but with a hint of warmth. Especially with the right fella. Essentially logical, but it's still there, the old spark under that crisp white coat. Brainy but essentially a woman. The archetypal fantasy Doctor. Add black and we're talking cover of Radio Times here-
- Edward:** I'm afraid I have no idea what you're talking about.
- Cally:** Doctor Hannah Joy. This TV thing I'm reading for. If I could only land this one- no more schools and science fairs I tell you. **(Sarah enters, cold and wet.)**
- Sarah:** Jaysus I'm cold.
- Cally:** And wet. God, look at you girl.
- Sarah:** All humanity's soaked today. Hello Dr Marsh. **(Catching sight of the bowls.)** Not more leaks?
- Cally:** 'Fraid so Babes. I think you need to call Alf and His Ladders.
- Sarah:** Did Tom ring?
- Cally:** Should he?

Sarah: If he does tell him I'll be a few minutes late.

Cally: Oke-doke. I'll be fighting with the photocopier if you want me. (Exits. Edward shudders.)

Sarah: Can I get you anything?

Edward: No thank you.

Sarah: Mind the drips.

Edward: I am. **(He looks around expressively as Sarah gets out notes.)**

Sarah: When this was used as a church George Bernard Shaw used to come here.

Edward: Really.

Sarah: This was a while ago of course. When everyone did go to church.

Edward: The Good old Bad Old days. Anyway, without wishing to be rude.

Sarah: You're due at a meeting.

Edward: As it happens. And I'm due to go away shortly so I thought we could outline ideas for you to think about while I'm gone.

Sarah: Before we start, there is something I wanted to say.

Edward: Do go ahead.

Sarah: About the script the other night.

Edward: Yes.

Sarah: Well it's just this. I do appreciate I need to rewrite. I realise my ideas might have been a little, well, 'Lucy in the sky with Diamonds'.

Edward: Yes.

Sarah: But what I was trying to do was take the facts, as I understood them and apply them, that's what a story has to do.

Edward: If that story is grounded in reality, to my mind fanciful flights of imagination do not further our understanding of those facts.

Sarah: Do you not think? What about the Bible? That's fanciful in places, the burning bush, Jonah and the Whale, yet what's that but a book of instructions.

- Edward:** In my opinion science is already fairly, 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds'. As it is without further elaboration, any explanation has to be grounded firmly in reality, how it affects the individual, to ensure a better public understanding.
- Sarah:** But surely my ideas were real. I mean it is possible to clone pets and people.
- Edward:** Barely. Reproductive cloning is notoriously unreliable at this time. It can be done but not with any degree of certainty and as far as humans go it's illegal in this country and likely to remain so.
- Sarah:** But it can be done.
- Edward:** As I said. Barely!
- Sarah:** But what about Dolly the sheep and those pigs in America?
- Edward:** Dolly the sheep was the only one of 277 embryos to come anywhere near full development. The same has been true with most cloned animal embryos. They simply failed to grow or grew misshapen and over large to the extent that a moratorium has been called on the cloning of animals for anything but research purposes. And, as I said the other night, this focusing on cloning for reproductive purposes to my mind entirely misses the most important aspect of the issue.
- Sarah:** Which is?
- Edward:** What your ideas totally fail to address is any mention of cloning for therapeutic purpose.
- Sarah:** That stem cell thing you mentioned.
- Edward:** (Breaking in.) Stem cell technology. Stem cells: the cells from which all other cells develop. Muscle, tissue, nerve.
- Sarah:** 'Building block' cells
- Edward:** To use the vernacular. The ability to create stem cells represents the most important bio- technological breakthrough since- the discovery of penicillin.
- Sarah:** What's this to do with cloning?
- Edward:** It is possible to use a cloned embryo as a source of these stem cells. Stem cells which can in turn be used to develop different sorts of tissue, such as skin, nerves, muscle.
- Sarah:** A sort of source of spare parts? Like you could grow new kidneys, hearts?
- Edward:** No. Before we journey to the Island of Dr Moreau, at least not yet. One day possibly, but using stem cells it is theoretically possible to grow new cells to repair

the damage done through degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinsons.

Sarah: **(Sharply)** MS?

Edward: And because the cells are grown from the person in question there's no danger of tissue rejection.

Sarah: You can treat MS?

Edward: Potentially. There are several chapters in the book dealing with the subject.

Sarah: **(Angry)** 'It is possible to renegotiate our beliefs to re-engineer a revised version of a sub classical data handling system'.

Edward: Pardon?

Sarah: From your book. I tried reading it at the hospital this morning. I even tried looking up all the words in a dictionary. I still couldn't follow it.

Edward: Without meaning to be rude I can only re-iterate what I said before. Are you the best person to be writing this play Miss Jones?

Sarah: You always say 'I don't mean to be rude', and then you are. If you don't mean to be rude then surely you shouldn't be. I mean what's the point of art and science staying separate if all the scientists at the party are like you?

Edward: **(Backing off from the conflict)** Miss Jones.

Sarah: **(Driving on regardless.)** Not meaning to be rude. Writing books ordinary people can't understand. It's as bad as not telling us things, important things we need to know in language we can understand. Maybe I'm not the person to be writing the play, but are you the best person to be writing the book? **(There is a pause during which Edward turns away from her. Sarah, near to tears and wanting to hide it puts her notes away.)**

Edward: Should the fire be smoking like that?

Sarah: Shit! **(She bends to switch it off- there's a flash, she shrieks.)**

Edward: Careful! **(He falls to the floor, pushing her aside. For a moment they sit sprawled on the floor regarding each other, startled at the contact.)**

Sarah: I need to...

Edward: Have you hurt yourself?

Sarah: No.

- Edward:** You seem a little stiff.
- Sarah:** It's fine. Just the damp. Look.... I need to... look.... I'll look again at the script. I just have to... **(She exits. Bemused Edward gathers himself up. As he's doing so Cally enters with some photocopying.)**
- Cally:** Was that Sarah?
- Edward:** Yes. She just had to go out.
- Cally:** Did she say where?
- Edward:** No she didn't. **(He exits. Cally shrugs and picks up the papers on Sarah's desk. She moves Sarah's notes and starts reading them. Tom enters.)**
- Tom:** Hay there Miss Gene Genie.
- Cally:** Hey there Honeychile. If you're looking for Sarah, she's just nipped out. Didn't you see her on the stairs?
- Tom:** I'm parked round the back. I am a bit early. We're doing lunch.
- Cally:** **(Eagerly)** That chemist-y place?
- Tom:** The Pharmacy? No, it's Wednesday, we couldn't get in there. We'll have to make do with the Organic. D'you know how long she's going to be?
- Cally:** Not a clue. **(A beat.)** So are you and her an item then?
- Tom:** I think so.
- Cally:** Think?
- Tom:** **(Changing subject.)** D'you know how it went at the hospital?
- Cally:** She didn't say. It'll be fine. It always is. Except when it isn't. **(Moving bowl.)** "Scuse me.
- Tom:** I don't know how you can stand working here.
- Cally:** Thankfully I don't, not all the time. Mouldering old ruin. The sooner they pull it down the better.
- Tom:** Don't let Sarah catch you talking like that. **(Cally smiles, empties a bowl. He shakes his head looking round.)** My school was a bit like this.
- Cally:** The old roots, eh?

Tom: Very old thank God. **(Changing the subject.)** So. What are you up to these days?

Cally: Would you say I was statuesque?

Tom: Sorry?

Cally: Cool with a hint of warmth, especially with the right fella. Essentially logical, but it's still there, the old spark under that crisp white coat.

Tom: Is this that Doctor thing Sarah was saying about?

Cally: 'Island Hearts' Jack Dee, Pauline Quirke, GP's on the Isle of Wight.

Tom: Why the Isle of Wight?

Cally: Not been done by a big series yet.

Tom: And who would you would be in all this?

Cally: Doctor Hannah Joy. Tres PC. Single parent, female, black Doctor.

Tom: And you've got it?

Cally: God, it's not like that. I've not even been to audition yet. Then there's recalls and recalled recalls and pencils and heavy pencils then lunches with the producers plus all sorts of crap in the BBC wine bar.

Tom: That'd really get to me.

Cally: What?

Tom: The uncertainty.

Cally: You get used to it.

Tom: I mean I can be roughly sure where I'm going, where I should be in ten years time. Next month I'm off on my first conference for the University.

Cally: Very nice, wouldn't suit me though.

Tom: No?

Cally: Me, I like things to hit me. Out of the blue.

Tom: Do you.

- Cally:** The bluer the better. No plans. Just doing something because it comes up. It becomes a way of life.
- Tom:** **(Nervous.)** What about others?
- Cally:** **(Shrugs.)** Every man for himself. **(A pause. Tom backs away.)** So how's it going with the play?
- Tom:** Doesn't Sarah say?
- Cally:** We don't tell each other everything.
- Tom:** It's more Ed's field than mine. I just launch the books.
- Cally:** Anyone able to run me off a Ralph Fiennes yet?
- Tom:** You'd have to wait twenty odd years for it to grow up.
- Cally:** I think I need someone a bit sooner than that.
- Tom:** It's forbidden in this country.
- Cally:** I'll just have to take myself off to the land of the free.
- Tom:** Sorry? **(She reaches across Tom to get the notes she was looking at before.)**
- Cally:** **(Reading.)** In America one could wake up tomorrow to find a person had been successfully cloned.
- Tom:** Yeah, there's no restriction on private companies.
- Cally:** **(Looking down at notes seemingly unaware of her proximity.)** In the US the Popular notion of technological advance, indicates the strong cultural context there that technology is the means to perfection. **(She looks at him.)**
- Tom:** **(Nervously.)** Cally.
- Cally:** In the absence of any government regulation regarding the issue, ethical questions are ones entirely for the individual scientist and his conscience. **(She kisses him and after a beat he responds)**

Blackout

Scene Four

(A week later. The restaurant 'The Pharmacy' in Kensington. Cold and clinical and done out to look like a chemist's shop. It says money very loudly. Tom is waiting in the bar area for a table when Edward enters.)

Tom: Hi.

Edward: Hello.

Tom: They're all through there. I'm just waiting for a table.

Edward: Thank you. **(He's obviously keen to pass by.)**

Tom: A message for you. **(Edward pauses.)** Do you want to go to Bedford and address a public forum on science?

Edward: No I would not. **(He starts to move.)**

Tom: Sarah not with you? I'm meant to be meeting her.

Edward: She's just behind me, dispensing charity to the poor.

Tom: Talking about the script... **(But he's gone. Sarah enters, looking around her.)**
Over here!

Sarah: Hi.

Tom: What charity have you been dispensing? That's what Ed said.

Sarah: Mr One Step Back, anything remotely disturbing or distasteful let's keep well back.

Tom: What?

Sarah: Never mind. Hello. **(She sits down, obviously ill at ease about something.)**

Tom: Hello. **(A pause.)** It is just Edward, there's nothing else? **(Sarah looks at him.)** It's just I've hardly seen you over the past week.

Sarah: Look Tom, I'm sorry I've retreated into my old Ivory Tower. I'm like that when I'm writing.

Tom: Not a problem.

Sarah: And it is nice to see you. **(She impulsively kisses him on the cheek.)**

Tom: Hello **(He smiles at her and they kiss again.)**

Sarah: This place.

Tom: Good, eh?

- Sarah:** It's like eating your dinner in Boots the Chemist.
- Tom:** **(Brushing this possibility aside.)** Talking of which let's order here's the menu. I hear the artichoke pate's a bit yummo.
- Sarah:** Actually there was something.
- Tom:** **(Nervous)** Oh?
- Sarah:** I'm a bit short of money. **(In a rush.)** You see it was just there was this woman sat in the tube station, a beggar and she had this child with her, all bundled up, just sat there.
- Tom:** Have you never seen her before?
- Sarah:** There was something about them. I mean they were shivering, really shivering both of them. I mean I know it's sunny but it's still really cold.
- Tom:** These people are professionals Sarah.
- Sarah:** So Dr Coldheart said. I mean one minute he's talking about the benefits of this stem cell therapy for all mankind, the next he's got this glassy look on his face and nearly stepping on them...
- Tom:** Sarah....
- Sarah:** ...the kid, I mean it surely wasn't his choice to be sat there he can have been no more than 2 or 3.
- Tom:** How much did you give them?
- Sarah:** They had nothing Tom.
- Tom:** Neither have you, how much?
- Sarah:** Just a tenner.
- Tom:** A tenner? Sarah!
- Sarah:** It seemed the right thing to do. **(A pause)** But you see it means I've nothing for lunch. I mean maybe we could go get a sandwich.
- Tom:** Or you could ask her to treat you.
- Sarah:** I'm sorry, I know you've had this booked for days. **(He kisses her.)** What was that for?
- Tom:** Because I'm going to buy you lunch. And because I love you.

Sarah: Do you?

Tom: Yes.

Sarah: Because I give my money to beggars.

Tom: Because you don't step back like Ed. How was your meeting?

Sarah: Well I didn't run out on him this time. (They both laugh.) It's hard though, getting the ideas. **(Cally enters and approaches their table.)**

Cally: Hi! Not too late am I?

Sarah: **(A bit surprised.)** Oh, hi Cally.

Cally: You did say it'd be okay if I joined you if I was passing. **(Tom is looking askance.)**

Sarah: Of course. How was the audition?

Cally: Crap, terrible. I mean I don't know. I don't want to talk about it. I was shite.

Sarah: I'm sure you weren't.

Cally: No? I had to read this jargon, all this Doctor speak. I just don't think it's me.

Sarah: Jargon?

Cally: Medical crap. What was it again? 'Sorry Morag but there appears to be a compound ibia of the tibia- which does have implications for the such and such'. I was terrible, I hadn't a clue really. I mean I just kept my head at a low angle, like this and tried to sound sincere as poss, you know the old 'the cheque's in the post' jobbie.

Sarah: So when do you hear?

Cally: Soon. Which in Beeb speak means 'when we bloody well like'. But don't worry, I haven't got it, written off. Gone!

Sarah: Listen. I just need to.

Tom: It's over there, by the medicine cabinet.

Sarah: I won't be a sec. **(Exits)**

Cally: **(Looking at the menu.)** You okay Babes?

Tom: Yeah, fine.

- Cally:** Then for God's sake stop looking like that.
- Tom:** What d'you expect? What are you doing here?
- Cally:** Relax, I'm not doing a 'Fatal Attraction'. Sarah asked me along.
- Tom:** How come?
- Cally:** I said I was auditioning near here, she asked me.
- Tom:** You could've refused.
- Cally:** And missed the Pharmacy? Come on. Rumour has it Posh and Becks come here... Hey, but isn't it fab?
- Tom:** Yes.
- Cally:** All these bottles, ugh, is that real medicine d'you think?
- Tom:** Coloured water.
- Cally:** **(Looking round, clearly bowled over by the place.)** You know I used to pass places like this when I was a kid, like you automatically think, 'not there, never ever'...
- Tom:** You're here now.
- Cally:** I am indeed. 'The Pharmacy' just fancy that with the old spicy organic goat curd sarnies. Hey, I bet I'm the only person from Mile End ever to come in here.
- Tom:** That's where you grew up.
- Cally:** Flaming dump.
- Tom:** **(Her enthusiasm and lack of guile is infectious, he has relaxed somewhat.)** Look Cally. I was going to ring you.
- Cally:** Why?
- Tom:** I mean about what happened. I mean you're a very special.
- Cally:** **(Breaking in.)** Aggh! No, stop. Desist!
- Tom:** What?
- Cally:** Look Tom, don't take this the wrong way, but don't for God's sake make it anything it wasn't.

- Tom:** What d'you mean?
- Cally:** That, 'I meant to ring', 'you're very special'... yack.
- Tom:** So what was it then?
- Cally:** Gor, d'you want me to spell it out? Sex. A fuck if you want to be all Channel 4 about it. No more, no less, bloody good but for God's sake let's not complicate things any more than they already are.
- Tom:** Isn't that a bit. **(He's sort of relieved but like most men, a bit miffed to find out it didn't mean anything at all.)**
- Cally:** Callous? God, I don't know, you men are all the same. I mean come on isn't this wish come true time? What the hell would you do if I walked in here declaring my undying love? Look, Tom, it's no strings sex, it's the bag of chips, the glass of wine in the bath, the last chocolate biscuit.
- Tom:** But?
- Cally:** My "motivation"? Because I can. Because I want to. I mean, I don't know about you but when I'm wrinkled up in the twilight home, God, I want me memories. **(She smiles.)** Some memories.
- Tom:** And Sarah?
- Cally:** Ah. Well my love, that's your problem, if a problem it is.
- Tom:** Isn't it? She's your friend.
- Cally:** That's putting it a bit strongly. Anyway, I'm not going to tell her.
- Tom:** You see, this last week I've been thinking, I really want to give this thing with Sarah and me a go.
- Cally:** Fair enough.
- Tom:** It's not you.
- Cally:** Don't worry. It's not a problem.
- Tom:** You sure you're okay?
- Cally:** Rejoice, you've just met a modern woman. Me, I should be writing for FHM. **(Sarah returns.)**
- Sarah:** There's hi- jinks at the old scientists table.

Tom: Oh?

Sarah: All laughing their heads off about something.

Cally: What, even old Dr Coldheart?

Tom: Don't get her started on him.

Cally: How's it all going, you've been tapping away like mad so I hear?

Sarah: I don't know if I can do it.

Cally: **(To Tom)** Relax, she always says that.

Sarah: No. I mean the more I find out the more complicated it is, this stem cell therapy. At first. Next to the old photocopied people it seemed a bit dull, then when I found out more, I mean it's fantastic. They can cure all sorts of things, potentially, but we were talking about it today.

Cally: And? Where's the snag?

Sarah: Well when you look at it there's all sorts of worrying things. To start with in the first place you need eggs to turn into embryos, to turn into stem cells.

Cally: Okay.

Sarah: Anyway I asked if cloning does go ahead for this, where do these eggs come from in the first place?

Tom: They'd be donated wouldn't they?

Sarah: Yes, but how?

Tom: I'm not totally sure, it's not strictly speaking my field.

Sarah: A needle would be inserted into the ovary of the donor.

Cally: Ye-uch!

Sarah: A bloody big hollow needle.

Tom: Surely it's quite painless?

Sarah: Then any number of eggs can be drawn off.

Tom: It's not the only way. They use spare eggs from IVF treatment.

- Sarah:** Eggs from women desperate to have children.
- Tom:** They don't need them.
- Sarah:** And there's a third option.
- Cally:** What's that then? Child sacrifice?
- Sarah:** Very nearly, you know women are actually born with their entire lifetimes supply of eggs?
- Cally:** Yes-
- Sarah:** But did you know aborted female embryos also have those eggs. So they use those eggs.
- Tom:** Remember it's not allowed with humans.
- Sarah:** Yet it will be if the government get the go ahead. **(There's a pause, the other two don't seem that bothered)** We're talking about human eggs here.
- Cally:** Right, I mean Sarah these aren't dead babies here, just bits of goo.
- Sarah:** Bits of goo that could become babies.
- Tom:** They're not recognised as such by law up until 14 days.
- Sarah:** I know, up until 14 days it's not legally speaking an embryo and then suddenly, day 14, ping, it is...**(The others obviously don't share her passion, she suddenly feels the need to justify herself)** It just seems to be.... tampering with things.
- Tom:** What things?
- Sarah:** Things we shouldn't be tampering with. I mean it makes me feel cold.
- Tom:** Oh come on Sarah. There's all sorts of things been happening for years. IVF, organ transplants, things that at first made people feel cold.
- Sarah:** My Nan used to say if you feel cold it's usually because there's a window open.
- Cally:** Your Nan grew up when they'd only just let off bleeding people.
- Tom:** Anyway they've been using embryos for research for years.
- Sarah:** Only for research into infertility.
- Tom:** So? They're still used.

- Sarah:** But as embryos... now they're being used for something else, turned into something else.
- Cally:** They're still the same bits of goo.
- Sarah:** It doesn't make you feel odd.
- Tom:** To be honest I don't think about it.
- Cally:** Most people don't babes.
- Sarah:** I just don't know how I feel about it and until I do I can't write a play about it.
- Tom:** I don't know why you're concentrating so much on the stem cells side of things anyway, like you said, photocopied humans makes for much more exciting drama.
- Cally:** Look, I don't mean to be boring but can we order? I'm bloody starving here.
- Sarah:** Sorry I'm being a bit of an old Banshee, wailing on.
- Tom:** No it's good you're going through this process. Just don't get too hung up on it all. **(Sarah looks at him.)** Look there's loads of things genetic selection, Xenotransplantation if you stopped to think about them you'd run a mile. (He puts his hand on hers) Just write the play and don't get too involved. Rise above it.
- Cally:** Take the money and run.
- Tom:** Think about the premier.
- Cally:** Sarah Jones, the thoughtful voice of the new millennium. **(Sarah looks at them and smiles.)**
- Tom:** Now let's enjoy this place a bit.
- Cally:** Hey, is that Anna Ford just come in? **(At this moment Cally's mobile rings)** Sorry. **(Answers it.)** Hi oh, hi Polly. **(Hand over mouth.)** The Beeb. Yes? Yes? Brilliant! Yes, that's no trouble, when? Yes, that's fine, same place? Great I'll see you then. **(Rings off.)** Yes!
- Sarah:** You've got the part?
- Cally:** God, no. But they want me back... I mean it's between me and this other girl, but I'm black!
- Sarah:** Well done! This calls for something more than Perrier. **(Gets up.)** Oh!
- Tom:** Go on.

Sarah: I'll pay you back.

Tom: My treat.

Sarah: No, I'll pay you back. I'll find the waiter. **(She hurries off. A pause. Tom and Cally look at each other.)**

Tom: Well done.

Cally: Thanks.

Tom: So. Celebration time.

Cally: Hardly. But we could maybe celebrate a bit tonight.

Tom: Sarah's got a workshop tonight.

Cally: It wasn't Sarah I was thinking of. But it's up to you. **(A pause. They smile at each other. Cally touches Tom's face. Sarah comes back and watches as Tom puts his hand on Cally's.)**

Blackout

Scene Five

(Three weeks later. Tom and Edward's office. Tom comes in and accesses his voice mail)

Voice: You have no new voice mail messages.

Tom: Shit. **(He claps his hands on his pockets, his face screws up)** Shit! **(He taps in a number, looking at the door. As he does so Sarah enters. He quickly replaces the phone.)** Hi. **(He crosses to her.)** You're soaking.

Sarah: It's sleeting. I'm like the snow demon.

Tom: A very lovely snow demon. **(He kisses her.)** You've not forgotten the theatre tonight?

Sarah: No.

Tom: How's the script coming on? **(For an answer she hands him a package.)** You've finished.

Sarah: **(Briskly with no sense of pride or achievement.)** This morning.

Tom: Well done.

- Sarah:** I just sat me down and wrote it and had done with it.
- Tom:** **(Touching her hands.)** God, you're freezing.
- Sarah:** Even the bricks are soggy today.
- Tom:** I hate this country. I mean from November to March you can virtually write off completely weather wise. **(She doesn't reply but goes to the window Tom comes behind her and holds her.)**
- Tom:** I tell you my dream. Get a post somewhere like Florida where the weather never gets like this. Everyday blue skies.
- Sarah:** No grey days?
- Tom:** Absolutely. Everyday in the pool, on the beach. **(He looks at her, suddenly tender.)** We ought to get away somewhere, you and me. Take off. Somewhere hot. Warm your hands Sarah Jones **(She doesn't look round.)** I got you something.
- Sarah:** Oh? **(He produces a large cellophane wrapped bundle of flowers.)**
- Tom:** So a bit of your office can have something growing other than mould. **(She looks at them.)** Are they okay? Oh God, you're not allergic to them or anything?
- Sarah:** No, no of course not.
- Tom:** I thought with your, well, you know.
- Sarah:** It's fine. They're beautiful. You've never given me flowers before, thank you. **(She smells them, frowns. Edward enters.)**
- Tom:** First time for everything.
- Edward:** Bloody traffic! Hello Mr Goodchild, Miss Jones.
- Tom:** Bad?
- Edward:** Over an hour to get from Millbank to here. I could have walked it twice in less time.
- Tom:** It's the weather.
- Edward:** It's London and its ridiculous streets system.
- Sarah:** **(Abstracted.)** They were all village streets once. Lanes. Cart tracks. No one ever intended it to be a city.

- Edward:** Then they should do the sensible thing. Tear the whole lot down and start again.
- Sarah:** Like Florida.
- Edward:** I beg your pardon?
- Sarah:** That's built like that. Straight lines.
- Tom:** We were just planning an escape to the sun. Talking of which, how was Madrid?
- Edward:** Like anywhere.
- Tom:** Oh come on- Madrid-
- Edward:** **(Holds out a biro.)** The Renaissance Hotel, Madrid. To go with the Renaissance hotel Amsterdam, the Renaissance hotel New York.
- Tom:** **(To Edward)** Listen, I've left my mobile at home, any calls for me could you divert them through to the resource room. **(To Sarah)** I'll see you later.
- Sarah:** Yes. **(He exits.)** Hadn't you spoken about Madrid?
- Edward:** I've only just got back.
- Sarah:** Tom said he was at a debriefing yesterday afternoon? I can't see you because I'm at the Madrid debriefing.
- Edward:** **(Busy with his papers.)** Not my debriefing. **(Sarah sits down, thoughtful, sorting papers.)** That's a very impressive bunch of flowers. **(Meaning 'I hope you're not going to leave them on my desk')**
- Sarah:** **(Moving them)** Hothouse.
- Edward:** I'm sorry?
- Sarah:** Hothouse flowers. Grown in a hothouse.
- Edward:** Not so unlikely in February. They still look lovely.
- Sarah:** No scent.
- Edward:** Oh.
- Sarah:** I mean you sniff them but nothing. They may as well be plastic. **(Edward has finally realised there's something distracted about her manner. She's looking away from him seemingly lost in thought.)**
- Edward:** Forgive me, are you?

- Sarah:** **(Abruptly)** So: the script.
- Edward:** **(Relieved at the change of tack.)** Yes good, you've obviously done a lot of hard work. I liked it.
- Sarah:** Did you.
- Edward:** Yes. Why d'you say it like that?
- Sarah:** Like what?
- Edward:** Like I shouldn't for some reason.
- Sarah:** Did you ever read 'Shooting Dreams'?
- Edward:** I don't believe I did.
- Sarah:** My drugs play. Three teenagers, a dilemma. Drugs are wonderful, but where's the catch. This was a straight rewrite.
- Edward:** It worked very well I thought, there were a number of points that need correcting.
- Sarah:** You don't think I skated over the murk?
- Edward:** I'm sorry? **(At this moment the phone rings.)** Excuse me that's Goodchild's, he asked me to divert it through....
- Sarah:** **(Suddenly, strongly.)** No!
- Edward:** He said.
- Sarah:** No. **(Despite himself Edward stops.)**
- Voicemail:** This is Tom Goodchild, I can't get to the phone right now, please leave a message and the time of day at which you called and I'll get back to you.
- Cally:** **(Voice)** It's me surprise, surprise your mobile's switched off. Listen, it was loads easier than I thought, there's two I've found the Mayberry and the Preston. Both in our price range so get back to me, I'm in all afternoon if I don't hear I'll just go ahead and book. **(Sarah sits her face totally impassive and unreadable.)**
- Edward:** **(At a loss.)** I'd better. **(She doesn't respond.)** All right, anyway.
- Sarah:** **(Abruptly, strongly.)** So my script!
- Edward:** Yes.

- Sarah:** Cloning for therapeutic purposes is wonderful, the only way we'll ever get the numbers of stem cells needed for stem cell therapy.
- Edward:** Well, yes.
- Sarah:** But as I said there's this bit I skated over, this dirty big bit of murk that's been worrying me ever since.
- Edward:** And what's that?
- Sarah:** Is it right to turn a human embryo into a load of stem cells.
- Edward:** Well it's not as black and white as that.
- Sarah:** Why isn't it?
- Edward:** For a start it's misleading to call them embryos.
- Sarah:** Are they not embryos then?
- Edward:** **(Thrown by the way things are going.)** Well, hardly.
- Sarah:** What are they then?
- Edward:** Well, technically embryos, but embryos still at a very early stage. They're only a few cells big when disaggregation takes place.
- Sarah:** That's when it's smeared all over the petri dish so it can grow into stem cells.
- Edward:** It hasn't even developed a primitive streak at that stage.
- Sarah:** The what?
- Edward:** The part of the embryo that gives you an inside as well as an outside. The first traces of a nervous system.
- Sarah:** But it will do.
- Edward:** Well, yes.
- Sarah:** So it's still an embryo. I know legally it's not classed as such until it's fourteen days old.
- Edward:** That's very true.
- Sarah:** So what? After fourteen days, ping, it's a embryo?
- Edward:** Sarah, I just think it may be wiser to do what you did.

- Sarah:** What?
- Edward:** Well, play down that side of things. **(She looks at him.)** It's a very sensitive issue to some.
- Sarah:** So because it's sensitive I should just skate over it.
- Edward:** Look I know what you're saying and in an ideal world, fine.
- Sarah:** But you don't want the media to get hold of it.
- Edward:** I just think the less ammunition we can give them, the better.
- Sarah:** But it's true, an embryo is dispersed.
- Edward:** Look embryos have been routinely used for research for over ten years now.
- Sarah:** No, using embryos as embryos for research has been going on, now it's different. Now they want to use embryos as a source of something else.
- Edward:** It's still not a baby.
- Sarah:** It would be to certain people.
- Edward:** A few people.
- Sarah:** Childless couples, someone having an abortion. **(Something about the way she says this stops Edward dead in his tracks.)**
- Edward:** It's true... some people have a notion.
- Sarah:** That creating life only to destroy it again is wrong.
- Edward:** It's not like that.
- Sarah:** **(Intense)** So why is it not like that? Make me understand.
- Edward:** For a start, as I said the embryo, for want of a better word is at an incredibly undeveloped stage when disaggregation takes place. Only a few cells big, the size of a pinhead.
- Sarah:** But it has that potential. I mean surely it's like destroying an acorn and saying 'just because it's not yet a tree it doesn't matter'.
- Edward:** But there are thousands of acorns, only a fraction become trees.
- Sarah:** Some do.

- Edward:** Many, many embryos are aborted in the natural course of things.
- Sarah:** This isn't the natural course of things we're talking about.
- Edward:** I told you how unreliable cloning for reproductive purposes is. Bearing that in mind it's highly unlikely that the embryo will go full term and become, well?
- Sarah:** **(Bleakly)** A child.
- Edward:** Yes.
- Sarah:** But not impossible.
- Edward:** No. **(Suddenly weary Sarah sits down.)** Are you all right?
- Sarah:** It's funny when people say that, have you noticed? What they're really saying is, 'I know you're not all right but please could you try and be all right?' Okay, I'm sorry Dr Marsh, I shall do my very best to try and be all right.
- Edward:** What you've got to remember are the enormous benefits of stem cell technology. Diseases like Parkinsons, Alzheimer's, they could become treatable.
- Sarah:** Multiple Sclerosis.
- Edward:** Yes, MS too, potentially.
- Sarah:** But only potentially?
- Edward:** But think if they were.
- Sarah:** Take all the pain away, no grey days.
- Edward:** Well, yes.
- Sarah:** Only blue skies and hothouse flowers. My Nan once said to me.... being ill made you special, made you see things other people didn't... when I was little I used to pretend I was a Princess with a curse put on me...
- Edward:** Sarah.
- Sarah:** But I was still a Princess. **(She takes the script and then tears it up.)** I'm sorry I can't let you have this. I'm sorry, I'll refund my fee to the department, but I just... **(She starts gathering her things up.)**
- Edward:** Sarah. **(She hands him a book.)**
- Sarah:** **(In a hurry.)** I thought you might want to read it.

- Edward:** **(Reading the title, at a total loss.)** The Hobbit, J.R.R Tolkien.
- Sarah:** **(As she stuffs the torn script into her bag.)** Someone finds something which seems wonderful. A ring, which can get him out of all sorts of trouble.
- Edward:** Sarah.
- Sarah:** But in the long run it saps his soul.
- Edward:** **(Very embarrassed.)** Look, Sarah. **(She stops.)** Is there something... the matter? I mean is something wrong? **(She nods, mute.)** I know it's none of my business, but is it to do with that call. **(She nods again.)** I mean surely it could have meant anything.
- Sarah:** They're having an affair.
- Edward:** You don't know that.
- Sarah:** I do. At least I wasn't sure, you're not, you think you can't be right- but...
- Edward:** Those places.
- Sarah:** The Mayberry and the Preston.
- Edward:** They may not be hotels.
- Sarah:** They're not. They're private abortion clinics.

Blackout

Scene Six

(A day later. The Pharmacy. Cally and Tom sit with large glasses of wine.)

- Tom:** D'you want to eat?
- Cally:** No thanks. I think I'd honk if I touched anything. God- that place.
- Tom:** It looked okay.
- Cally:** Bloody did. Okay nice chintz-o curtains, flowery prints, welcome to the bloody doll's house. It's what went on there that did my head in.
- Tom:** Second thoughts?

- Cally:** Uh uh. I mean absolutely not. **(She attempts to shrug off her doubts and be practical.)** Now what I was thinking, if you paid up front I'd give you my share of the dosh, well, when I get some dosh.
- Tom:** Whatever. (A pause. Neither seem disposed to talk any more about the arrangements.)
- Cally:** Have you heard from Sarah lately?
- Tom:** No I've not seen her since last week. Have you? **(Cally shakes her head.)**
- Tom:** There's no way she can know, absolutely no way.
- Cally:** No flies on our Sarah.
- Tom:** She's just done one of her going to ground numbers. You heard she tore up the script? The department's going mad. **(Cally isn't reacting)** Are you all right?
- Cally:** That's a bloody stupid question if ever I heard one.
- Tom:** Look you don't... **(He pauses. She looks at him)**
- Cally:** What?
- Tom:** I was going to say, you don't have to go through with this you know.
- Cally:** God, don't give me that.
- Tom:** What?
- Cally:** Bloody 'Holby City' hushed voices. **(Hushed serious voice)** 'Are you sure this is the right thing?' 'Oh yes it's what I need to do for me' ...ugh.
- Tom:** I was trying to be civilised.
- Cally:** I know, I know, God, maybe what we need's a good old fashioned scream and shout.
- Tom:** What I wanted to say was. If you did want to.
- Cally:** What?
- Tom:** Well keep it.
- Cally:** You'd what? Come riding along on a white charger, whisk me off to Mothercare?
- Tom:** I'd stand by you, help you.

- Cally:** Oh yeah? Call you at three in the morning can I, when it needs feeding? I don't think so. Anyway. I don't. Want to keep it that is. Look this show's the biggest break I'm likely to have. I am down to the last two. The only one who can halfways act, the only black one. D'you know what sort of an edge that gives me? Doctor Hannah Joy. I mean we are talking mega bucks here, filming starts in three months. I tell them I'm pregnant! **(She shakes her head.)** I'd be out before you could say 'Hello Dolly'. **(Looking at Tom)** What?
- Tom:** Nothing.
- Cally:** Seems hard hearted?
- Tom:** I didn't say that.
- Cally:** Selfish? A trivial reason to abort my child? My love it's the most practical set of reasons in the world. Can I afford to have this child? No. Do I have the time to care for it? No. Do I want to have a child? Absolutely not, not now. Come on, we're talking cold but sensible here. I can play Joan Collins and you'd better be bloody glad of it because now you can jet of to the Renaissance Hotel Amsterdam or Madrid or wherever with a free and happy heart. **(She lights up.)**
- Tom:** I'd've helped.
- Cally:** Do you want it?
- Tom:** It's not a question of wanting it.
- Cally:** It's exactly a question of wanting it.
- Tom:** I mean of course I want kids at some point. With... **(He stops himself.)**
- Cally:** Don't we all, just without the hassle. **(She stands up, looks out across the restaurant.)** I tell you when I have a kid I'll just have one cloned from me, that way I can make absolutely damn sure it avoids all the mistakes I made. **(Sarah enters.)**
- Tom:** Shit. **(Sarah looks around, seems them and heads for them.)**
- Sarah:** **(Out of breath, urgent.)** Cally! **(She seems almost feverish.)**
- Tom:** Look, Sarah.
- Sarah:** **(Ignoring him.)** Cally! need to talk to you.
- Tom:** Look. Sarah.
- Sarah:** Cally listen. I know this is going to sound like I'm the crazy woman. I know there's all sorts we should be saying, but there isn't time.

- Tom:** Listen, Sarah
- Sarah:** Please, Tom, just shut up.
- Cally:** Tom, make mute. What?
- Sarah:** Cally, keep the baby.
- Cally:** What?
- Sarah:** Keep the baby and then I'll have it. I'd take it off you and you can go on as if it never happened.
- Cally:** Sarah!
- Sarah:** I mean you can see him or her if you want, but if not it'll just be like a friend's baby. I know it seems crazy but I've thought and thought, I really have gone into it. I can make it work.
- Tom:** Look Sarah I was saying. It's a brilliant idea, but I don't know if I'm ready for a child at this point in my career. **(Both look at him.)**
- Cally:** I don't think she means you.
- Sarah:** **(Ignoring him.)** I have gone into this very thoroughly, seen the bank, found out about child care, even gone to nurseries. I'd get child benefit and Polly knows this really good child minder, but I could do loads of work from home.
- Cally:** I don't want it.
- Sarah:** No, but I do.
- Cally:** I don't want to have it.
- Sarah:** No, what you don't want is the boredom and the worry and the hard work, but I can take that all away from you.
- Cally:** It's not as simple as that.
- Sarah:** It is. It can be. It's a new life what could be simpler than that?
- Cally:** It's not a new life, it's a bundle of cells no bigger than my little finger nail.
- Sarah:** Cally.
- Cally:** Sarah, stop it! Come on, we don't need this, just stop and think.
- Sarah:** I have thought.

- Cally:** I mean really thought, really, really thought.
- Sarah:** I have.
- Cally:** **(Gently.)** And what about when you get ill?
- Sarah:** I'll be all right.
- Cally:** What if you get ill and you're on your own with the baby?
- Sarah:** I've got friends. But it might not, it might not happen. I might be all right.
- Cally:** **(Firmly)** No! **(More gently.)** It's not feasible. We both know it wouldn't be all right. If it was, even then, but it's not. It's not. **(They look at each other.)** I'm sorry Sarah. I mean, big deal, fuck all help, but I am, right now if I could undo it all... **(She exits. Defeated Sarah slumps down.)**
- Tom:** How did you know we were here? Scrub that, it doesn't matter. Look, I should have said. I wanted to say, loads of times. Look Sarah I know I'm crap and shit and anything else you want to call me. I know it sounds clichéd but it meant nothing... look I know I don't deserve, but we were good together. We could talk to Cally if you wanted, make her change her mind. **(She stands.)** Sarah? **(She pauses. He grabs her hand. At a loss she sits again.)**
- Sarah:** **(Looking round.)** I used to think this place was so exciting... all those bottles of medicine and those books... but they're all just the same book. Some remaindered book. Glossy smart books that no one wants to read.
- Tom:** **(Intensely, clutching her hand.)** All my life I had to make do with second best... hand me down clothes... my brother's bath water. Living somewhere that was... nowhere and everything that happened, that was second best. C's in exams, 2-2 at college and then one day... I had it... job, office, this place and I thought it was what I wanted... but it's not.
- Sarah:** They used to burn scientists as heretics once. Even witches were meant to be better than them.

Blackout

Scene Seven

(Two weeks later. The arts centre. Edward enters, unsure, looking round him. Cally enters.)

Cally: Hi Doctor Marsh thanks for coming.

Edward: **(Surprised)** Miss Okinawa!

- Cally:** It's really good of you.
- Edward:** I thought Miss Jones wanted to see me.
- Cally:** She does, only she doesn't know she does, if you get my meaning.
- Edward:** I'm afraid I don't.
- Cally:** It was me who left the message for you to come here. Tom told you what happened. **(He nods)** Well, I wanted you to do something for me.
- Edward:** And what might that be?
- Cally:** Well you're doing it a bit by not calling me all the names going round your head.
- Edward:** Miss Okinawa.
- Cally:** **(Holding a hand up.)** Can't call me any I haven't called myself. Strumpet. That's the latest. Strumpet. It's got a good Jacobean ring, don't you think... but it's kind of nice though- lacks the bite of 'cold hearted bitch'. Which is what I am. **(She sinks down.)**
- Edward:** Are you all right?
- Cally:** Fine. Physically. Well, intact. I mean I should be fine, after all it was just a bundle of cells at the end of the day, that's what my head says ... and if I think of it as a baby in a yellow romper suit, well that's my problem. Sorry, I think I might pace a bit if it's all the same to you. **(She jumps up, starts moving restlessly.)** Now, I'm going away. The sunny south, for good, or as good as, If old Dr Joy wins through.
- Edward:** This is your television series.
- Cally:** Filming starts next month. Special studio in Southampton, option on a second series looks good. We got it all see, scenery, dilemmas, black single Doctor. Mal Young's very excited.
- Edward:** Congratulations.
- Cally:** A life of being someone wholesome. **(Doctor voice)** Now then, what seems to be the problem? **(Normal voice.)** I've seen the scripts, the worst I get to be's having a bit of PMT. **So,** I'm getting a bit of practice as it were. Being wholesome.
- Edward:** In what way?
- Cally:** Well, I want you see Sarah.
- Edward:** I see. **(A pause.)** And say just what exactly?

- Cally:** God, you scientists. I don't know, 'hello', 'here's some flowers', 'I'm sorry your lover and your mate dumped on you big time'. Whatever you think.
- Edward:** And what makes you think she'd want to see me?
- Cally:** Because she likes you. **(Edward's eyebrows go up.)** Respects you then. Well I do anyway. Maybe a bit of a git but I can see you're a sound person to have around.
- Edward:** Should I be flattered?
- Cally:** If it makes you see her.
- Edward:** I've not actually seen her in quite a while.
- Cally:** Since this blew up, I know, none of us has. She's been to her sisters, but she'll be back soon.
- Edward:** I ask again, why me?
- Cally:** Well, it's like with all this cloning. It's one thing to understand the science, but how that science is used, now that does need, morals for want of a better word. A sense of decency. And I think you've got that.
- Edward:** Morals?
- Cally:** Remember that day at the Pharmacy? When Sair gave the last of her money to that beggar? Well I saw you later on, sneaking outside, giving her a load more.
- Edward:** And that makes me 'decent'.
- Cally:** It makes you someone sound. Someone who'll take care of Sarah.
- Edward:** From what I gather Mr Goodchild's desperate to do that for himself.
- Cally:** Tom's too like me. Runs from the shit. Probably already onto the next girl.
- Edward:** I think you'll find he genuinely cares for Miss Jones.
- Cally:** So he cries on her shoulder, whoever she is.
- Edward:** And really, well this is none of my business.
- Cally:** Can I level with you?
- Edward:** I thought you were doing.

Cally: Dr Marsh. Edward. Stop taking one step back.

Edward: From what exactly?

Cally: The shit, pain, mess, **(American)** commitment.

Edward: And you think I do that?

Cally: I don't just think it you're doing it now. I mean listen to yourself no, 'how's Sarah'- it's all 'do you think it'll serve any purpose'? Stepping back words Dr Marsh. I mean maybe it's to do with you being a scientist. All that thought and energy that goes into getting rid of pain, can't deal with it when it happens. I mean that suits someone like me fine, bit of pain, bung down some pills. Total coward. I mean I couldn't do Emily Bronte, not my scene. That's why I like your stem cell whatsit. Grow new bits, repair the damage. Fine, no probs lovely idea. But then we do end up with a load of people who don't have what it takes to, well, rub their faces in the crap.

Edward: Has it ever occurred to you some of us have had no choice but to 'rub our faces in the crap' as you put it. **(He stands abruptly.)**

Cally: Ah, I see who was it? Wife? Messy divorce?

Edward: Nothing like that. But I have found a certain amount of caution can make life..

Cally: What? Sunny? Bright? Happy?

Edward: **(Softly)** Bearable.

Cally: Sarah needs you.

Edward: Does she.

Cally: Yes she does.

Edward: I'm sure she has friends.

Cally: What she has is MS. Multiple Sclerosis.

Edward: I did wonder.

Cally: It's no secret.

Edward: And is she able to have children?

Cally: Not recommended apparently. Hence her Mother Courage bit last week.

Edward: What's her current state of health?

- Cally:** She's okay now. She's okay a lot of the time, but there's times when it, well, kicks in. And after each do she's a bit worse than before. There you have it. And you know Sarah, fine when it comes to Feng Shui, bit crap at making sure she has the right medication organised. And yes, she has friends, most of them as do-lally as she is. What she needs someone with a bit of nouse looking out for her.
- Edward:** And you want me to act as the Good Samaritan to salve your conscience?
- Cally:** Got it in one. You see in spite of everything you said - I know you can rub your face in the shit again. **(American)** Only you can save her Doctor Marsh.
- Edward:** And if I say 'no'.
- Cally:** Nothing I can do. But you won't. Girl on her own, rock bottom, few friends. You maybe cold but you're not that cold. **(She looks at him. He looks away.)** Anyway, it's your decision. **(She sees something out of the window.)** Right, done, good deed for the day? Not quite but exit stage left anyway. **(Makes to leave.)** Thanks for coming over here.
- Edward:** Miss Okinawa. **(She turns)** Good luck.
- Cally:** No, please, I don't deserve that, anyway, you know me. I don't need luck, just enough painkillers.
- Edward:** I'll perhaps give Miss Jones a ring.
- Cally:** No need
- Edward:** Sorry?
- Cally:** She's just come in. She'll be here in a sec. **(Exits. Flustered Edward looks after her. After a beat Sarah comes in.)**
- Sarah:** Oh hello. **(She sounds flat and exhausted.)**
- Edward:** I'm not disturbing you I hope.
- Sarah:** Isn't this your day for the Pharmacy?
- Edward:** Yes, but I'm not going though I can't stop long.
- Sarah:** You're due at a meeting.
- Edward:** Yes as a matter of fact. How are you?
- Sarah:** All right.

Edward: I brought this back. **(Hands her 'The Hobbit')** Thank you.

Sarah: You read it?

Edward: I can see why you like it.

Sarah: A fanciful flight of imagination.

Edward: Well, yes.

Sarah: Not many facts I'm afraid.

Edward: But some truths. **(A pause.)**

Sarah: I've arranged with my agent to pay your money back.

Edward: Look.

Sarah: I'm sorry to have wasted everyone's time.

Edward: Actually I think you should write the play.

Sarah: Do you?

Edward: Yes I do.

Sarah: Because you feel sorry for me?

Edward: Because you understand both the facts and the issues.

Sarah: I can't.

Edward: I wish you'd try.

Sarah: I can't. To write I need to make a stance.

Edward: And you can't do that?

Sarah: I don't want to. Not any more. I don't want to think about it. Besides I've other work.

Edward: Oh?

Sarah: I'm up to write Eastenders. Anyway don't let me keep you, you'll be late for your meeting.

Edward: Yes. **(He collects his bag.)**

Sarah: Westminster?

Edward: No, as a matter of fact it's at the... **(Reads bit of paper)**..Plaistow community centre.

Sarah: Where?

Edward: The London Forum for the Public Understanding of Science.

Sarah: I see.

Edward: **(In a rush)** I know it's none of my business, I do happen to know Tom is very sorry. I know he's behaved like a shit, but I'm sure if you wanted he'd appreciate seeing you again.

Sarah: I know.

Edward: He does care for you.

Sarah: There'd be no point.

Edward: Are you sure?

Sarah: Yes. **(She sits.)** What we had, how he felt, it wasn't what I thought it was. It's like this whole thing about cloning. I thought it was one thing, exciting, a bit scary, but then the reality turned out to be a lot more mundane. And yet complicated. Very, very complicated.

Edward: I'm sure you could work it out between you.

Sarah: It's not a deliberate choice, it's just how I happen to feel. I'm not flouncing off like the old fishwife and teaching him a lesson, it's not like that. It's like feeling odd about using embryos for stem cells or wanting someone's unborn baby... it's just a feeling here. A simple very unscientific feeling.

Edward: I've some news that may be of interest to you.

Sarah: Oh?

Edward: I don't know how closely you've been following the scientific press recently.

Sarah: I haven't.

Edward: There maybe an alternative to the use of cloned embryos in stem cell technology. Latest research shows that it's possible to reprogram ordinary cells without making them into stem cells at all.

Sarah: I see.

Edward: No embryos. No eggs. Perhaps a more tortuous process, but a lot less controversial. The prevailing view being that such action, that is use of cloned embryos, would never be properly countenanced by society.

Sarah: I don't see why. After all isn't it's only a bundle of cells when all's said and done.

Edward: Perhaps. **(He turns to go, takes a step away, but turns back, speaking awkwardly, almost desperately, not looking at Sarah.)** I don't believe I told you, my Father died of Parkinsons disease. I'm not saying that to make you sorry, I'm trying to say I used to, as someone told me, step away from pain. Having seen Dad, what happened to him... I used to think I'd rather he were dead in a car crash than go through another single second of this. So of course stem cell technology, wherever the cells came from would be marvellous. Something like that can make one a bit blinkered. So when you say to me we should consider the cost of treatments like stem cell therapy, I say yes. I mean I think... I think I would still go with it, but it's important to consider that cost, mourn it if necessary and certainly acknowledge that though disease can be terrible, there can be... benefit through pain.

Sarah: Love the grey days.

Edward: **(Tentatively, awkwardly, hardly daring to look at her.)** Grey can be a remarkably lovely colour. **(She looks at him, surprised, perhaps a bit startled as she realises what he is trying to say to her. Hurriedly he exits.)**

Blackout

Scene Nine.

(Some months later. Sarah stretched out on a sofa. She has an open pad and pen. She wears no make up and is dressed in loose, comfortable clothes, jogging pants, tee shirt. She is deathly pale. She tries to write but it's just too laborious holding the pen and after a while she gives up, lies back and closes her eyes. Edward comes in. He is obviously in a mood about something.)

Edward: Lunch in about ten minutes. **(Sees her stirring. Exasperated.)** You've not been asleep?

Sarah: **(Immediately apparent is the slurring of her voice.)** No.

Edward: Sarah.

Sarah: Point to God.

Edward: You won't sleep tonight. **(He goes to her and starts to arrange her more comfortably.)** Come on.

Sarah: Sack of potatoes. **(He doesn't respond to her joke.)** The news.

Edward: **(Not wanting to talk about it.)** I saw it in the kitchen.

Sarah: You looked clever.

Edward: **(Irritable)** Not that clever the ban's still in place. Over bloody whelming public opinion. "This branch of science is ethically unsound". I mean all opinion in the scientific community, Nuffield, Roslin, HFEA, they were all in support...

Sarah: The Yuk Factor.

Edward: The Government is just running scared. It's GM all over again. I mean the work at Roslin, in the States, it shows it's a valid line of research.

Sarah: Still embryos.

Edward: I know, loads of potential babies in little yellow romper suits.

Sarah: **(Feebly waving her pad.)** This flies in the face of God.

Edward: Thank God there's still America with some sense of scientific reality.

Sarah: Too blue.

Edward: The colour of the sky has absolutely nothing to do with it, we've set back stem cell research years.

Sarah: Grouch

Edward: **(Almost shouting by now.)** It could help you. **(A pause. Sarah smiles.)**

Sarah: Never mind. **(She touches his hand.)**

Edward: **(A pause. Calmer, to himself.)** I was sure it'd be allowed. All the signs were there, everyone seemed to be thinking the same way. I thought perhaps, just perhaps, we were starting to grow up a bit.

Sarah: Too big a step.

Edward: I know. **(He retrieves the pad from where it's fallen.)** How's it coming along?

Sarah: Art meets science. Ka-boom. **(She smiles at him and finally he smiles back. They clasp hands.)**

(Split scene. Cut to Tom standing addressing an audience)

Tom: Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for inviting me here to America particularly at this time when cloning and stem cell technology are dirty words in England.

(Cally stands before a camera.)

Cally: A take? Okay, I can go for that... hang on.

Tom: No one can, to my mind, doubt the legitimacy of using cloned foetal material in a limited capacity as a source of stem cells, but many can and many do. And in England, along with other EU countries that has caused a ban which sets stem cell research back months, if not years.

Cally: Okay. **(Takes a breath.)** Hi Cathy, take a seat. I know you're busy with the Marina- but I do need to explain this to you face to face. You see I'm sorry to have to say this, but the latest test results were conclusive. It's highly unlikely your baby will go full term. I know this must be hard for you. *(Her voice breaks)* I'm sorry, can we go again?

Tom: Such a ban is to my mind arbitrary and immensely disappointing, if not just to me but to the tens of thousands of people who would ultimately benefit from stem cell therapy.

Cally: Sorry. God, I'm sorry, don't know what's got into me, give me a sec.

Tom: Should we rail against such legislation or celebrate it? That is the dilemma of organisations like my own. Human life is such a sensitive area, previously the province of fate. Now cloning puts that power firmly in our hands. Should we be pleased our hands are tied, or regret the freedom that you have here in your land of blue skies where anything goes and morality is strictly a case for the individual.

Cally: **(Recovering.)** I'm ready to go now. **(But her composure is shaken.)**

(Cut back to the living room. Edward has just finished feeding Sarah and is wiping her mouth.)

Edward: There we are.

Sarah: Yum.

Edward: Not very nice I'm afraid.

Sarah: My cup runneth over.

Edward: More? There's a yoghurt in the fridge.

Sarah: No.

Edward: Here. **(He removes the tray.)** Now, are you going to do some more work?

Sarah: My brain's weary.

Edward: You're not going to sleep.

Sarah: No.

Edward: Television? Or I could put some music on?

Sarah: Read to me.

Edward: **(Obviously not keen on this idea.)** The papers?

Sarah: No more reality for now.

Edward: **(Realising)** Oh, Sarah.

Sarah: Please. A bit.

Edward: Very well. Under protest. If I can find the thing.

Sarah: Chair. **(Edward goes and picks up 'The Hobbit'.)**

Edward: If I can find the place.

Sarah: Page 206.

Edward: Ah.

Sarah: Doorstep.

Edward: They'd found the door but couldn't get in.

Sarah: The runes too hard.

Edward: Page 206. **(He clears his throat.)** The talk among the dwarves was wild and exciting. Dragons yes, but the treasure too and what treasure it would be! Gold harps, elven mail, dwarfish shields. But the Hobbit did not join in, nor did he speculate on the riches within. He would do nothing but sit with his back to the rockface and stare away west, over the wild lands to the distances beyond in which he... **(He looks down and sees Sarah has drowsed off again.)** He sometimes thought he could catch glimpses of the Misty Mountains small and far- **(His voice breaks as he gazes down at her. She opens her eyes and smiles drowsily up at him. Recovering.)** The Misty Mountains small and far. But I am afraid he was not thinking of the dragon or the treasure, but of what lay beyond the blue distance, the quiet Western land and the hill and his Hobbit hole under it.

Blackout

The Curtain falls