

SCENE FOUR

DINING ROOM OF THE MINERS' LODGING HOUSE. *Evening. The following week. The Bachelor's Club is about to start. SUNNY is at the fire practicing singing a song – trying to remember the words. CHARLIE is listening intently and has the words written down – checking SUNNY is singing them correctly.*

SUNNY. All day we crouch as for a prey
The mine to cut and drive
We sack and tear old mother earth –
Her bowels forth we rive.
Upon our sides, upon our backs
With pick in hand, we toil
Till we secure, each man of us,
The day's allotted spoil –
Clothes weighted with water,
That the groaning fissures weep,
A thousand fathoms deep, my boys,
A thousand fathoms deep.

Outside of the dining room SINCLAIR is being pestered by LAUGHLIN.

LAUGHLIN. Ye said yersel. Hit's a skoosh. Thay'll no miss twa-three sticks ae dynamite. Jesus Christ man – the place is a cowp. They wadna miss a hale barrae ae bangers.

SINCLAIR (*Whispering loudly*) Haud yer vyce doun son! Leuk Lacky – A wis bitch-fou an bletherin whan we spak about thon.

LAUGHLIN Hits easy siller Sinclair.

SINCLAIR Thare's nae sic hing's easy siller. Gif thare wis – we wad aw be buckin weel-aff. An dinna forgit – ye blaw a wages sauf – an ye herry the pootches ae the wirkers.

LAUGHLIN We wad blaw a sauf somewhaur faur awa frae here! England e'en.

SINCLAIR (*Getting angry*) We're aw brither miners Lacky – aw strugglin. Aw ower. The mine awners'll uise the thift's a excuse tae pit the wages doun. The twistit bastarts'd mak a profit oot it. Clear the attersome gair oot yer heid or hit'll fester! Noo – in!

SINCLAIR *and* LAUGHLIN *enter the dining room.*

CHARLIE (*To LAUGHLIN*) Whit wis aw thon whimperin about? Mair politics an gowst frae yer bowsie brither. Miners unitit'll niver bi dividit – yak, yak, yak.

SINCLAIR (*A warning*) An ye better hae teuk hit in. (*To SUNNY*) You git it leart yit?

SUNNY A hink sae. A'll cant ye the feenish.

LAUGHLIN *pours everyone a dram of whisky into teacups*

SUNNY *exaggeratedly prepares himself before he begins to sing very formally.*

SUNNY. Danger is ever near us,
Death ever prowls about,
As day by day, and up and down,
We weave the bobbin out
Until it happens on a day
There comes a sudden crash,
And pale death springs upon us
To kill, and bruise, and dash;
Or with the dark mists of the mine
He makes our winding sheet,
He pulls them softly o'er us
And covers up our feet;
And gently life ebbs from us,
As the senses do in sleep,
And our wives are left to weep, my boys,
Our wives are left to weep.

SUNNY *takes a bow and the three men clap in appreciation.*

SINCLAIR A'm fairly tean bi hit Sunny. Ye makkit up yersel an aw?

SUNNY Ivery wurd.

SINCLAIR Thare yar. Eh? *Of!* Bes haurd tae tap 'at the nicht.

LAUGHLIN Fesh a tear tae a caipitalist's ee richt eneuch. You neist Cherlie?

CHARLIE *finishes his whisky.*

CHARLIE. Aye. 'is yin's no feenisht. Hits cawed Tae a Spriglet.
As CHARLIE takes the poem from his pocket ROSE ELLEN enters purposefully.

SUNNY. Hen – can ye no see we’re yet thrang?

ROSE ELLEN. Busy ye say?

ROSE ELLEN *picks up a tea cup and sniffs it.*

ROSE ELLEN Busy breken the hoose rules bi the leuks ae hit! Gif A telt Mrs Hoolihan whit youse’re gittin up tae A’m/

CHARLIE Rose Ellen wants tae jyne. ‘at’s richt int hit Rose?

ROSE ELLEN A’m cawed Rose Ellen. No Rose.

LAUGHLIN ‘at’s you telt Chic.

ROSE ELLEN An aye –A’m breem tae jyne. A hae poems ae ma ain.

SUNNY An A hae a yeukie erse bit ‘at disna mean A shoud scart hit in public.

SINCLAIR A see nae hairm in lattin the wee lassie

SUNNY Noo haud yer pownies Sinclair. A’ve nae kinch wi lassies gaun tae school an aw thon modern weys. Bit ‘is is a Bacheleer’s gaitherin.

SINCLAIR An A’m mairit wi a paircel ae seiven weans an you’re a widea-man. Sae gif the lassie’s oot – oor jaikets’re oan the sel an same shoogly heuk!

SUNNY Aye bit...

SINCLAIR Aye bit whit?

LAUGHLIN Lat her dae yin.

CHARLIE Aye; A deek nae raison hou no.

SUNNY Gat hit ower wi.

ROSE ELLEN *takes a poem out of her front pocket and shakily begins to read.*

As she reads her confidence builds.

ROSE ELLEN. The dogs of war.

ROSE ELLEN *takes a breath to steady herself.*

ROSE ELLEN. The dogs of war are hungry still,
Though from their reeking jaws
The heart’s blood of a nation drops
Upon their restless paws.

Their hot eyes glare from out of the gloom
Of widowhood and woe,
And through the awful stillness comes
A mutt'ring deep and low,

Which stronger grows, till rock and sea
And every traversed shore
Shall hear, and dread the meaning of
That fierce, menacing roar.

Oh! That some brave and daring hand
Would chain them down for aye,
And from a night of horrors lead
Our land to peaceful day.

They are stunned – silent. ROSE ELLEN beams. CHARLIE claps loudly in genuine admiration.

CHARLIE Who-we! A wisna expectin sic a pouerfu tummle ae wirds.

ROSE ELLEN Whit war ye expectin? Kittlins an knittin?! (*Acting heart-broken*) “Come back tae mae ma bonnie luvie – ma hert is smasht an awa wi it wi’oot ye”?

SINCLAIR (*Laughing*) Pit thon dugs ae war intae yer cutty-cley an smeuk hit Sunny. She’s a rare an fiery ingine!

SUNNY Awa. A unbraw case ae (*Pause as he guesses the word*) *plagiarisational...ism* gif A iver saw yin.

ROSE ELLEN Dae ye mean plagiarism Mister Smith? As faur as A’m awaur ye canna plagerise yersel.

SUNNY Richt! A’m no haein a braisant an pauchtie lassie reeve the peeins oot ae us the nicht! Chase yersel! We’ll hae nae sprig gash hereabouts!

ROSE ELLEN Sprig gash?! A’m no takken ‘at frae nae man. Juist acause ye gat aw reidneckit acause ye gat a wird wrang?! A wis unner the impression ‘at this gaitherin wis aw aboot wirds – an hou tae uise thaim fairlins. No aboot/

SUNNY Git her oot! Oot – afore A loss ma temper.

SINCLAIR Weet yer aizle – thon twa-three gills ae baurley-bree hae ye owerfest tae bruind.

ROSE ELLEN (*Raging*) You threitenin mae? Breinge awa! A've owercome waur 'an you hae tae flisk it mae! Faur waur auld yin!

CHARLIE *takes ROSE ELLEN by the arm and tries to get her to leave.*

CHARLIE. Easy noo queanie. Tak nae hairm whaur thare's nae hairm intendit.

ROSE ELLEN. Minnie wis richt. 'is bes a baiblers' gilravage – no a poesy gaitherin!

She kicks CHARLIE in the shin and storms out. CHARLIE hobbles out after her and catches her by the arm again.

ROSE ELLEN Yin sair shank no eneuch fir ye?! Ye wantin us tae lick yer ither shank?! Lat us gang – an lea' us alane frae noo oan!

CHARLIE Nae needin tae snitter an huff. A'll lat ye gang gif ye come wi us tae Dalsarf kirk this Saubath.

ROSE ELLEN An ye caw yersel a poet?! Kirk?! Howe-backit sheep the lot ae thaim. Sins be whit sins be – daurk maiters. Aye biddin daurknesses. An thay're no fir some story nailt tae a cross tae dicht awa like a mither dichts aff snochters an gour frae a wean's chowks. A'll kirk ye. Chase yersel! The anely hing wirth believin in's wirds. An e'en thay'll mak a bauchle ae ye an twistle yer dreams till thay bleed bluidy nichtmares.

CHARLIE Daed A moot onythin aboot gaun *intae* the kirk?! A'm no a stickit meenister ettlin tae suaf yer saul Rose Ellen. Yer ower faur gaun fir 'at helleri bi the leuks ae't! Naw naw – A'm anely askin gif ye'll gae wi us tae the maiste lillie bit hereaboos. Hits as bonnie's yersel. A neuk sae bonnie 'at poesy sheens oot ae ivery blad ae gress – e'en whan the wintry rain is stoatin doun an drounin ye.

ROSE ELLEN (*Thawing*) An A daursay ye're howpin we'll be suppin the kail afore the grace afore the rain gaes aff?!

CHARLIE Awa. Ye hae the wrang end ae the pincil aw thegither. Gae wi us. As a fallae poet. Tae read alood the lair-stane names ae the lang forgat deid – an mairvel at the grandur ae oor lifes aheid ae us. A spend ma life in the daurk. In the daurk wi the likes ae thay toerags in thare. Wad ye grudge us a skelf ae licht?

She inspects him with her eyes – looking for a reason to say no.

ROSE ELLEN. Mebbe.

She turns away before he can say anything else and runs off with a light in her heart she hasn't felt before.