



Comes A Cropper

by Robyn Archer

This file contains a scanned copy of the script for *Comes A Cropper*, which formed Act Two of **Monstrous Regiment Theatre Company's** 1990 production of *The Colony Comes A Cropper*. It was written for the company by Robyn Archer, providing a contemporary counterpart to Act One, Marivaux's *The Colony* (1750) translated by Gillian Hanna.

The scripts for both Acts are held in the company's archive at the V&A's Theatre and Performance Archives.

Full information about the show, including access to some of the music composed for it by Lindsay Cooper, is provided in its **Productions** page on the company's website: www.monstrousregiment.co.uk

The file contains a scanned copy of the final draft of the script, as provided by the author, to which is appended a copy of the script 'as performed', with minor handwritten (non-authorial) changes made during the rehearsal period.

Requests for permission to perform or translate *Comes A Cropper* should be addressed to: MJ Creative Projects, 231 Chapel Street, Prahran, VIC 3181 (<https://mjcreativeprojects.com.au>)

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2nd DRAFT.
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COMES A CROPPER

© R Archer , Sydney , August 1990

MONSTROUS REGIMENT
190 UPPER STREET
LONDON N1 1RQ
TEL. 359-9842

1.

In the women's camp, Monica Arty-Nicey, and Jenny Swingbin are sitting around looking bored. Lina Swingbin seems to be fossicking amongst the onshore detritus, and building something.

There are signs of creeping agitation. Only Lina seems interested in what she's doing - a careful piecing together. The others look like they've been hanging around for years

MRS S:

But what is it, love ?

LINA:

Like I said, Mum, all in good time. I'm just trying to put it all together - all the bits and pieces ; what I pick up myself, what's left from before. It'll make sense, eventually, all in good time.

She continues the piecing together

I wish Pearce'd hurry up

MRS S:

Where is she ? I don't remember her going .

LADY A-N:

What do you mean going ?
She must be here somewhere.
Where else could she be but here ?

LINA:

Could be anywhere. I suppose it's only an island but, all that water, all those ferns and fronds. She's got ever such strong legs has Pearce.

LADY A-N:

But what about the enemy ?

MRS S:

What bleedin' enemy ?

LADY A-N:

What on earth do you mean ?

MRS S:

Have you seen or heard or smelt one whiff of an enemy since we've been squatting around here ?

LADY A-N:

Can't say that I have

MRS S:

And how long have we been waiting ?

LINA:

Feels like centuries

Silence

MRS S:

We've been had

LADY A-N:

Pardon ?

MRS S:

Oh for godsake, clear your coiff from your
lugholes and listen ! Don't you lot hear
anything the first time ?

LADY A-N:

Look here ...

MRS S:

No you look, your Moneybags.
They tricked us, plain and simple.
And it's all your fault

LADY A-N:

My fault ?

MRS S:

Who else ? Right in the thick of it you were.
One minute you're all pally and treating us
with a bit of respect, the next you're
believing everything they tell you.

LADY A-N:

If my memory serves me, Mrs Swingbin..

MRS S:

There's a thing you wouldn't put the holiday
savings on...

LADY A-N:

I do wish you could refrain from these petty
cracks

MRS S:

I'll give you cracks. It's about time that
Hunt-club head of yours saw a bit of action

LADY A-N:

Common violence. Typical solution !
I can't imagine how we thought any of this
would work in the first place...

LINA

Can't you ?

Lady Arty and Mrs S cease hostilities for a second to observe
the interruption

It's not that hard. Like this - it'll work.
It's just a question of everyone seeing it the
same way. Back there you blinked for a second,
and saw what was needed, exactly what was
needed - the common good.

MRS S:

Common good ! What are you on about ? You were
there, you heard - I haven't got so much as a
beetle's bum in common with that woman.

LINA:

Wake up ,mum. Of all the things you can
see before you right now, which two are the
most alike ?

MRS S:

Her face and my...

LINA:

Mum, it doesn't help...
Look at it like this : which enemy can
you afford to lose sight of longest ?

MRS S:

You and your theories- can't you listen either
for a change ?
I just told you ; there is no bleedin' enemy.
I had plenty of time to think, and I started to
listen for rustling in the night...

LINA:

Oh god, were we making a lot of noise ? I tried
to push her face into the banana leaves, but
she said it's the quality of the air - swells
her lungs and she simply has to let it all out

MRS S:

That'll be enough of that, my girl.
I'm not talking about here anyway.
Out there ... signs of the enemy...
But all I could hear was the distant voice of
a bingo-caller. Didn't sound like men in battle
at all

LINA:

It's the birds, they're everywhere. Beautiful.

MRS S:

It wasn't any birds. It was something else,
nasty... Anyway, the only bird I'm interested
in is the old goose over here who got herself
cooked, and all of us into the bargain.
We had it right at our fingertips : the perfect
moment to do it our way at last. Now look at
us. It could be twenty years , or two hundred.
They're running the show again. And how, I ask
you, did it bleedin' well happen ? We were
doing so well. Not that it matters - they
always find a way.
Divide and conquer, that's how they do it -
her too. Couple of choice lies. Victory.
When's it ever been any diferent ?

LINA:

It could be

LADY A-N:

Not in my lifetime. Irreconcilable differences.
You can make all the plans you like, talk
yourself blue in the face...

MRS S:

Not too hard for you...

LADY A-N:

... when it comes down to it, we're a race
apart...

LINA:

That depends a bit on how you look at the
race. Wotcha Lady A !

2.

Pearce enters. She's dressed as a Diana of the Tropics. Power pads for the pioneers.

LINA:

Hi ! How is it out there ?

PEARCE:

Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant.
 Couldn't have done a better job myself.
 It's so spare.
 Apart from this little oasis here, it's sort of
 barren - tones of terra cotta, with a dash of
 umber to underscore it - roads, tracks, tree-
 trunks , that sort of thing. And the sea a
 bright, clear blue - matches the sky,
 sparkling...
 I'd like my office done exactly like it.
 And you know those cupboards you put in the
 kitchen?

(to the others)

Brilliant job, you know, all my friends think
 she's...

MRS S (to LADY A-N):

Did a course, you know...
 Hang on, you've been out there ?

PEARCE:

Yes ,naturally, if I wasn't in here, it goes
 without saying, Mrs Swingbin, that I was 'out
 'there'.

She plants a kiss on Lina and dumps some designer beachcomber findings

LADY A-N:

The enemy ?
 The hordes of savages ?

PEARCE:

Not a sign

In the background we hear an unidentifiable but slightly threatening sound which they all ignore

MRS S:

What did I say ?

LADY A-N :

Well what is out there ?

PEARCE:

Practically nothing, as I far as I can see

LINA:

How far could you see ?

PEARCE:

Well my guess is that it is an island, but I couldn't get all round. It's big all right. Perfect resort stuff ,with the right kind of management, that is...

LADY A-N:

Do you mean we're all alone ?

LINA:

Could you hear anything ?

MRS S :

Any sign of the men ?

PEARCE:

Nothing - but I expect they're around. I did hear something - but it wasn't them. It was bigger, distant, pounding - I expect there's a surf beach round the other side - the bit I couldn't get to.

MRS S:

Why ?

LINA:

Couldn't go all the way, could you ?

PEARCE :

No, something stopped me

LADY A-N:

See, there is an enemy

PEARCE:

No, something inside, something hidden. Something like that... You always know, don't you ? I don't understand - you're not old enough, but you do know...

Pearce and Lina kiss passionately. Lady Arty and Mrs Swingbin avert their eyes

LADY A-N (to MRS S):

Do you think it's possible we could exchange a civil word?

MRS S:

You be very careful if it's about my Lina. She has her quirks, she's headstrong I know. But she's young, and she's me only.

LADY A-N:

The sanctity of the family is something I respect, Mrs Swingbin, and under other circumstances I wouldn't comment on what others do in private - or others' daughters do in private...

MRS S:

I'd hardly call that private, would you?

LADY A-N:

Mrs Swingbin, have you considered the implications? Seriously, now. We could be on very delicate ground here... What if this is an island?

MRS S:

Well, we have been stuck here for longer than I like to think about...

LADY A-N:

Precisely, and apart from a few undecipherable rumbles, nobody has seen sight nor sign of anyone but us...

MRS S:

...and the men...

LADY A-N:

Yes, that's what I mean, 'us'

Lina and Pearce have broken their clinch

LINA:

Funny thing 'us and them'. Watch it, Mum.

MRS S:

Come up for air have we?

LADY A-N:

My point is, what if we're the only ones?

PEARCE:

Brilliant !
No one to mess it up.
We really can call the shots

LADY A-N:

What if we are on an island, and it is just us,
and no-one else comes for a very long time ?

MRS S:

What are you getting at ?

LADY A-N:

It's all very well for you. You have your
husband, but what about the rest of us ?

LINA:

No problem here

She touches Pearce

LADY A-N:

I do think this typically short-sighted of you
all.
If you're all spoken for, do you realise what it
might mean for me - when the other two strong
able-bodied men on this island realise that we
may be the only women they will encounter for
the rest of their lives ?

MRS S:

I'd say you better hope that what she's
building is a shelter with a big lock on it !

Lina and Pearce have a suitably dirty, somewhat unkind giggle

PEARCE:

Or start using that tree there to mark up your
evening engagements...

LINA:

No hang on, there's more to this .
I sniff a lizard in the logpile.

LADY A-N:

Thank goodness someone has a nose for the
noble. Don't you see ?
This could be a matter of destiny ...

LADY A-N (cont):

If there's no-one else here, and no-one else comes, we have a major issue of survival on our hands.

Who's to say we're not the last on earth ?
And even if we're not, we won't know - so we shall have to start behaving as if we are anyway...

LINA:

Rubbish. You can't ever tell what's on the other side. There's probably a Club Med across the bay - then we'd look bloody silly.

PEARCE:

But what if she were right ?

LINA:

What does it matter ?
Get on with it; do what you do.

LADY A-N :

If I were right, and we were the only ones, then the survival of the race would depend on...

They all look at each other, a moment's consideration

PEARCE:

Oh my god.

MRS S:

It's true.
She's past it

LADY A-N:

Now just a minute

MRS S:

All right, all right, off the horse.
Childbearing, I mean. So am I.
That leaves...

PEARCE:

The two of us

LINA:

Not on your nellie. No. Absolutely not.
Never. Not for an instant.

PEARCE:

Me. The hope of the race.

Pearce is visibly swelling with a sense of her new importance

LINA:

Come off it.
What about us ?

PEARCE:

It doesn't interfere with that.
Lina ?
Where's your sense of history ?
Destiny - that's what Lady Arty-Nicey called
it. That's what it is.

LADY A-N:

At last, a sense of responsibility is in
evidence. Don't you see, in the face of a
situation like this, the smaller details are
irrelevant - there's no room for personal
predilection . Queen and country . That's the
noble call.
My dear, this is Eden, and you are our Eve.

MRS S:

Lina, if you let them get away with this, I'll
never forgive you. Get in there girl, I'm not
going to stand by and see any child of mine
give up on the race .

LINA:

Forget it. I don't believe we're the only ones.
Even if I did, I wouldn't do it.

MRS S:

But we're going to have to make some decisions
about this before we see the men.

LADY A-N:

Quite correct. We must have our position clear.
Otherwise they'll just use brute force. They
have to be appraised of the situation - the
possibilities are drastically limited.

MRS S:

There's always that in vitro stuff, love.

LADY A-N:

Exactly. On that score, Miss Swingbin we do have an understanding. I myself have known perfectly reasonable women who have sincerely felt that there's never such an untidy sight as a naked man coming towards you.

But these new methods - wait for the right moment, constellations in the right place, everything at the right temperature, all the bits in the right place - presto !

You never have to catch sight of it at all.

LINA:

Knock it off. You too Pearce. You're just getting carried away.

Who cares about the race ? Look where it's got us - we don't know where we are , or when. I care about me, now ! What makes the race so worthy of being saved ? I just can't see the point of the sacrifice. I want what's still in my grasp - better than ever...

Just feel the air in this place, that sky.

I've got to get this worked out

She continues to build

MRS S:

Lina ! Child ! I'm almost ashamed.

Look at us. I'm a woman of little education, but even I can see how far we've come. If there was a monkey in that tree I'd point at it right this minute.

Think of the great cities, the advances in medicine, supermarkets, satellites...

LINA:

All I can see in front is horizon, and behind me - a few bits and pieces I find useful.

If you think I'm going to sweat over what might happen , you don't know your girl at all - any of you. The way I see it, what happens around me will be because me...

She's building and spots a connection

... oh Christ, why couldn't I see that before... ?

and fits in a tricky bit

LADY A-N:

I'm sure I don't see anything at all in it..

LINA:

Oh you will ,Missus, you will

LADY A-N:

Will is will, young woman, and now is now.
What we urgently need just now is a spot of
reconnaissance.
Before we encounter any delegation from the
men, I think we'd better double check . If
there's no evidence to the contrary, then we
must assume the worst and make plans, draw
up a roster

LINA:

Leave me off. I've got enough to do here

MRS S:

We'll see about that

PEARCE:

Come on, we'll go in the other direction -
the one I didn't take. Shouldn't take long.

LADY A-N:

You're sure there's no enemy

LINA:

Can't be sure of anything...

PEARCE:

I didn't see anything, anyone

MRS S:

Oh, she's got her head on straight -
worth a look anyway. Come on.

Pearce goes to give Lina a peck on the cheek

LINA:

Whose side are you on anyway ?

PEARCE:

Same as always, Chippie -the winner's.

LADY A-N:

Right you are. This way, now.

The three women leave

3.

Precisely as the last bit of female body leaves the stage, save Lina who quietly searches and builds, a bit of fern starts shaking, not unlike the mating dance of the lyrebird, it quivers violently. In creeping succession the three men appear out of earshot of the industrious Lina who may even leave the stage for a moment in her hunt for materials.

SWINGBIN:

How long do we have to keep up this creeping around ? I could have had a bit by now.

STOCKMANN:

You have to treat women like any other commodity. Get in, lots of bold activity, then pull out suddenly - ignore it while it tries to gain ground. Affect indifference. Then they're begging for you to get back in there. Risky business, but it's worth it, there's not a feeling in the world to beat it. You see how they come round. I told you you could trust me

SWINGBIN:

Well, I must admit, I didn't at first - not my type at all. But I have to hand it to you, you certainly pulled it off.

TIM:

Look here, I have to say - and I've been quiet up until now - but I am going to say it, because I think it needs to be said...

SWINGBIN:

Get on with it

TIM:

... I wasn't at all happy about the way you handled that situation back ther. We all have to learn and change together ...
I meant it when I said they should be the generals. And I was being perfectly sincere when I said their rights must be considered when we draw up the laws. I actually believe in the equality of the sexes. I don't believe the planet has any future unless we take that one on

SWINGBIN:

He's got something there, hasn't he ?

STOCKMANN:

It's rubbish. The minute the boys in advertising were able to proceed with confidence, the world changed. Sex came back to car sales ; men could wear stubble again. In the movies those stubbly-faced heroes were slapping their women around again. And the women loved it ! Secretly they do love it !

SWINGBIN:

I don't know about that. I slapped her at home once. That's how I got my jaw bust

STOCKMANN:

You can't go too far, just a sting you know, a touch. The mating game , all part of it. Bit of claw and bite : have you seen lions at it ?
Rooaawh !

TIM:

You make me sick

The lion call has alerted Lina

LINA:

Hi guys !

They creep awkwardly out of hiding

STOCKMANN:

Where are the others ?

LINA:

Out on a reccy

SWINGBIN:

Your mum too ? Weren't they afraid ?

LINA:

What of ?

STOCKMANN:

The enemy ,of course, thundering down from those hills.

LINA:

Grow up, moneyfucker. They worked it out ages ago. Enemy !

She laughs , shakes her head

SWINGBIN:

Smart kid, that
Here, give your old dad a hug

LINA:

Get off, I got work to do

TIM:

What is it ?

LINA:

What does it look like ?

Tim and Stockmann look at each other

SWINGBIN:

She's a hell of a carpenter
She can tell at a glance what's useful -
I've seen her knock up some real things of
value - out of old stuff you wouldn't
have given twenty p for

STOCKMANN:

No time for that.
Let her do what she wants. It doesn't matter
anyway. We need a game plan, quick.

TIM:

I agree

SWINGBIN:

Why ? I just want me old lady.
I miss her. Nights like this. I've never been
abroad. It's not like Brighton. Sort of soft
and warm of an evening. It's enough to get a
man going. For all the plotting and planning,
I have to say, making that one there was fun.
And even though we've moved on a bit, I'll
say this for Mrs Swingbin - she's still a bit
of all right in the sack.

STOCKMANN:

All in good time, my friend, all in good time.
First things first. Before we see them again
we have to have a plan - not a step out of
place. What we need's another enemy - more
convincing this time.

TIM:

Look I'm...

Tim's protest is interrupted by the sounds of the women
returning to camp

STOCKMANN:

Quick, here they come. Let's go.

SWINGBIN:

What for ? I want to see Jenny.

STOCKMANN:

You fool. If you go off too soon you'll get no
satisfaction at all - it'll be hell here.
Use your brains man. They're cunning as a
chancellor on exchange rates. They'll have you,
mate, soon as you can say Harold Wilson - come
on.

SWINGBIN:

What about him ?

STOCKMANN:

He squawks a lot, Bernard, but he's not ready
to perch in the hen-house just yet. He'll
follow. Won't you, pet ?

TIM (aside):

Bastard.
We'll see who gets first into amongst the
fowl..

Stockmann dashes off, followed by Swingbin trying to catch a
glimpse of his wife. Tim does catch sight of the women and
ducks away from the other two men, while avoiding being seen
by the women .
There's another hair's breadth crossover, as the women enter
hot on the exit of the men

4.

LADY A-N:

That's decided then

MRS S:

Bit premature if you ask me

PEARCE:

But we didn't see anyone

LADY A-N:

And it's been a long time.
I say play it safe, one jump ahead of the mob
- what harm can it do ?

MRS S:

Well if you weren't so fired up about keeping
the place populated, we might be able to put
our minds to less high-faluting things

LINA:

Such as ?

MRS S:

You know, rights, duties, whatever it was we
were all so excited about before

PEARCE:

Times change, Mrs Swingbin, priorities have to
change with them

MRS S:

Yes, dear, I can see you have the main chance
on your 'agenda' as you call it.
Not that I ever really approved, but you
certainly changed fast enough

LINA:

Give it a rest, Mum, I think Pearce knows what
she's doing - she usually does

PEARCE:

Perhaps I do - is that such a bad thing ?

LINA:

Dunno. Which bible do you keep by the bed these
days ?

PEARCE:

No bibles I'm afraid... but I picked these up
on the way back - might be useful

She tosses her some more collected junk she's brought back from the reccy

No hard feelings ?

LINA:

I'll tell you when the moon rises.
Thanks for these - something's bound to come in handy, though I can't quite see it just yet

MRS S:

I don't understand.
Thank god I'm not in all this.

LADY A-N :

We're all in it.
So let's sort it out
You and I are out of the running.
That leaves Miss Pearce and young Lina
And for the men, Mr Stockmann, Mr Tim and Mr Swingbin are all eligible

MRS S:

Not my Bernie, not him, mind you

LADY A-N :

If we're to avoid a very nasty strain of in-breeding, he'll have to be, I'm afraid.

PEARCE:

But I'd be the only one he could...
I couldn't. Not Lina's father.

MRS S:

You got something against my husband ?

PEARCE:

No, it's not that, he's perfectly...

LINA:

In it right up to your neck, darlin'
Don't like saying 'should' or 'ought',
but you're playing with fire, Pearce

PEARCE:

You know me, Chippie, nothing's too hot to handle if it gets you into the frontline

Lady Arty is intent on her schedule

LADY A-N:

Miss Swingbin, you have to go with Mr Stockmann and Mr Tim

LINA (shouting) :

Just cut it out !
I'm not playing

MRS S:

I don't think it's a game, love.
This is serious business.
Life and death

LINA:

It'll be death if any of 'em try it on me.

LADY A-N :

Come, now, I'm sure it doesn't have to ...

They are interrupted by the entrance of a strange woman. It is Tim in drag - a terrible dress he has sewn himself.

What's this ?

LINA:

Looks like you might need a recount, Lady A.

MRS S:

Where did you come from, love ?

TIM (in drag):

Washed up, terrible it was, the waves,
couldn't see back from front, night from
day - the confusion of it all.
Drenched and dazed I dragged myself ashore.
If I'd had a mirror I'm sure I would never
have recognised myself.
I had nothing.
Took me ages to sew this together

LADY A-N:

You did well, dear.
Now, tell me, how old are you ?

TIM:

Not much of a welcome.
I sort of thought you'd be less direct

PEARCE:

You've arrived at the height of negotiations
Don't take it personally. How old ?

TIM:

Just the wrong side of forty

LADY A-N:

That'll do in a pinch.

MRS S:

Takes a bit of the heat off you, my girl

LINA:

Couldn't be cooler, Mum.
There's nothing you can do anyway

She continues to build the structure which is getting quite high by now

This thing's going to work if it kills me. I know I'm young, I know you all think I don't know my own mind, but you're wrong. Others have done it before, and I have a choice. It's not saved by the neck by some woman we've never seen before - it's what I choose to ...

5.

There is a ferocious sound from quite close by. All the women jump, including Lina. They stand there quivering. There is another quiet sound, they jump again. This time it's Stockmann and Swingbin, who seem to be just as alarmed as the women. They have with them a few possessions. Swingbin is brandishing a big stick which Lina eventually uses for the structure. Stockmann is carrying a portable laptop computer

STOCKMANN:

Did you hear that ?

MRS S:

Bernie, baby

She rushes to her husband's arms
Swingbin winks at Stockmann

LADY A-N:

Thank god you're here

LINA:

What is it with you lot ?

TIM(in drag):

I agree with her, how do you know it's not a trick ? Types like these can't be trusted

Stockmann and Swingbin look curiously at the new arrival
Pearce starts assessing Stockmann

STOCKMANN:

You don't think that sound came from anything human do you ? Scared me shitless.

LINA:

Maybe it is, maybe it isn't.
Beside the point.
In two cracks of the cocoanut, you can bet the mob in here'll be worse than whatever that is out there.

(specifically to the women)

I don't see why you're so amazed when they bully you and take over, attack and grab control.
When it comes to the crunch, you want them to protect you - get them to kill at all costs. Don't you think that sort of thing takes its toll. Don't you see they're always at the ready? Why should you be surprised when they turn round and rape you . War or peace, if that's their brief, they'll keep on thrusting.

TIM(in drag):

Absolutely. I agree. Let men off the hook. Let them quiver, let them hide. We should take over - protect them for a change

SWINGBIN:

Who is she ?
The voice is familiar, but...

LINA:

She can put her toolkit under my bench any day.
Good on you.

She shakes hands with Tim(disguised), feels the firmness of the handshake and enjoys it

STOCKMANN:

Look, we just want to hang in here for a while. Strength in numbers. It's not how she says at all. It is us who want a bit of security.

LADY A-N:

It's just that we were at a very delicate stage of our...

Mrs Swingbin gently pushes Swingbin away, then notices that Pearce has started to look him up and down. Mrs S moves subtly nearer her husband but refrains from touching.

MRS S :

I'm not so sure it's such a good idea. We were hoping to have things a bit better organised before...

SWINGBIN:

Have a heart, Jenny.
That thing sounded really dangerous

He gives Stockmann a wink and nudge

LINA:

Where was your heart when you cheated us last time? Those things were important too. Now look at us all - back to basic grovelling. Well, not me - I don't give a damn if they stay or go.

She goes back to her building

STOCKMANN:

Look at at this way - if we shelve the rule-making for an agreed time, then it won't hurt to have us around for a bit. We can fix things up, make life a bit more bearable, one way or another...

He gives Swingbin a wink and nudge

... and then we can work it out later, once we find out what the hell made that noise. Now, Bernie here, and myself will...

LADY A-N :

I've got it.
You can stay as long as you keep quiet.

PEARCE:

What ?

TIM(in drag):

First class. I agree one hundred percent.

MRS S:

I don't get it

SWINGBIN:

I don't either - but if we're allowed to stick around that might change

Now he winks at his wife

LADY A- N:

Shutup
(to Mrs S)
Sorry

TIM(in drag):

It's perfect. You're a genius Lady A.

LADY A-N:

I believe the problems stem from the fact that they seem to have louder voices, and they never listen.

TIM (in drag):

It's because they go through life with everyone expecting them to have all the answers , never showing the cracks...

LINA:

I like this woman more and more.
Very sussed stuff, this...

LADY A-N:

I think if you are forced to stay and listen to the way we go about things, you'll have to admit that we are in fact equal to any task, and can cope with any crisis.

TIM(in drag):

Here ,here. That'll show 'em a thing or two.
Connniving ,double-dealing, mealy-mouthed...

SWINGBIN:

She's got a bit of a chip on her shoulder, this one.

MRS S:

SShh

PEARCE:

What do you say ?

Swingbin looks to Stockmann. Stockmann deliberately shuts his mouth tight, and nods.

LADY A-N:

Bravo ! Small victories.
The way forward presents itself
Ladies, we have work to do.

Lady A sets about her scheduling

LINA:

Listen I could use a hand over here - can you spare me...

MRS S:

I don't see why we should...

PEARCE:

It might turn out to be something we could all make use of

TIM (in drag):

I'd like to help. Not much good at it, the heavy stuff. But I can cut and paste, that sort of thing, might come in...

LADY A-N:

Very well, I'm sure we can draw up the first roster , then we shall consult everyone

She makes a point of ensuring that the men have noted her sound procedures of consultation and accord. Lady A is now into full-blown demo.

Stockmann sets up his laptop and brings something up on the screen

Swingbin gets into some old-fashioned calisthenics

Lady A and Mrs S are right into the drafting of the roster. Pearce is finding it hard to concentrate.

LINA:

Here. If you just keep at this bit, I can go on to something else

TIM(in drag):

Thanks so much. I'd much rather be with you, doing something really useful. I mean all that talk is necessary I suppose, but I don't know, somehow, this sort of thing seems much more basic, gives a girl a chance to meditate while she works, exchange a few views, get to the bottom of things. You see, when I was little, my Dad always used to say...

LINA:

Excuse me just a minute. Yes, just like that

Lina notes Pearce's distraction and pulls her away from the
pow wow

You're not seriously going along with all this crap are you ?

PEARCE:

I don't think it is crap, Lina

LINA:

But after everything we've been to each other You're just going to go off and do it with them

PEARCE:

We can still mean a lot to each other, darling. It was wonderful with you - you are wonderful. But I've been bumbling my way around for years. Now I've been shown a higher purpose - I have to follow through. What we were to each other was perfect for the time, but the ground's shifted, Lina, the stakes are higher. I want to be on top, Lina, whatever it takes -and whatever it takes I'm going to be completely committed to.

Lina goes to walk away

And, incidentally, I think you'd better start some serious consideration yourself ...

LINA:

Just checking
That's all I needed to know

Lina goes back to the structure and moves intimately closer to Tim(in drag)

LINA:

No, not like that love, here let me show you

TIM (in drag):

You're so good at it. And I'm so useless.
You'd think that someone like me could have
learned a few useful skills along the way,
but I was never given the chance.
You see, when I was eleven, my mother...

LINA:

You just have to decide, that's all.
You can do anything you want

TIM (in drag):

That's what mother said. I hated it.
I wanted someone to be forceful, to
guide me...

This is clearly turning Lina on and she starts to interpret what he's saying sexually.

... sometimes even the strongest want to be
led, need to be taught. Meeting someone like
that can change a woman's life. I'm all for
independence - you for instance, you really
seem to be in control of your life, you call
the shots;but we're not all like that,
sometimes we have to be encouraged a bit, to
do something we hadn't considered before....

Lina starts a bit of a grope. It should start somewhere innocuous on the body, with Tim only gradually realising what's going on. Lina's assault shuts up his rambling, but produces a few grunts and squeaks as he tries to avoid being found out

The others are preoccupied with their tasks and remain oblivious to the mounting confusion as Lina manoeuvres Tim around the structure in an attempt at slap and tickle.

At last she gets him in a clinch, a kiss on the lips should be followed in quick succession, by a grimace and a touch of her cheek where his beard has scratched her, a hand to the tit, and feeling around to find any bosom at all, and ultimately a grab between the legs which evokes a hideous squawk
Everyone jumps in the same way as they did when they heard the 'terrible sound'.

LINA:

Bloody hell
 You conniving little shit
 You wimp
 You , you, traitor

By this time she has the attention of everyone in the camp
She rips off his disguise

LADY A-N:

I say

PEARCE:

You little cheat

MRS S (to Lina) :

How was it ?

LINA:

Not a hope in hell

Swingbin is about to open his mouth, and Stockmann shuts it.
They fold their arms in silence, shaking their heads at Tim

TIM:

You pack of hypocrites.
 What's a man meant to do ?
 You try and try and what do you get ?
 She's [Pearce] making googly eyes at that,
 that power pack in pants [Stockmann]
 The rest of you can't get your brains out
 of the bedroom, and when I do strike up a
 decent relationship with her, she caterwauls
 like the hound from hell.

LADY A-N:

He's been talking his head off

PEARCE:

Bloody cheek

MRS S:

Gag him !

Tim starts to run

TIM:

Me ?

She's the one that needs jumping !

He points at Lina

She's the thorn in the side.

How can you put up with selfishness like that ?

If we're going to green the planet, then
there's no room for her kind.

I'm all for equality - but everyone has to
pull their weight.

LADY A-N :

I agree !

Tim grins at the momentary thought of reprieve

Now gag him !

The men look on

PEARCE:

Now's your chance boys

LINA:

Unbelievable - there's more deals here than a
Sunday roast at Chequers !

LADY A-N:

Too right.

If you want us on side, gentlemen, do your
duty.

Stockmann and Swingbin nod to each other and rush Tim
Mrs S applies the gag

LINA:

Happy now ?

Tim is unceremoniously tied up and secured

MRS S (to Lina):

You're coming with me my girl

She grabs Lina roughly and hauls her off

Tim is struggling and grunting in a most undignified manner

Stockmann and Swingbin have a good giggle, and mime Tim in his dress and his wimpy manners. They do a pantomime of Tim's betrayal, and end up pissing themselves laughing soundlessly.

Swingbin drifts over towards Lina's structure and starts examining it in detail. He admires the joins, checks lots of the material, enjoys the texture. Though it's a ramshackle affair, shapeless and meaningless until now, it has a certain rough-hewn charm. It obviously begins to give Swingbin considerable pleasure.

Stockmann returns to his computer and instantly finds himself with an audience of Lady Arty and Pearce

They watch him at work for a bit

Pearce seems more focused on his body, while Lady Arty is intent on the screen

6.

Mrs Swingbin and Lina off the main stage

MRS S:

Lina, I love you as I should, and as I want to. You're my daughter, and that's that. It means I care about you. So I tell you this for your own good... when things get tight, people turn nasty. I don't like the way it's looking back there...

I wish you'd put on a dress...

LINA:

Christ, Mum ! Haven't you picked up anything ? I can put on a dress with the best of them - it doesn't change anything . I'll still look like what I am , what I want to be - the wrapping just don't matter...

MRS S:

Well if it doesn't matter, do it for me, love. I been through wars, I know what the length of a skirt means.

A considered silence, looking, between them

LINA:

OK, OK, but nothing more, right ?
I know my mind, mum.

Lina gets into a dress that Mrs Swingbin has brought for the purpose

7.

Back at the camp

LADY A-N:

My lord, this takes me back - gold, oil, .
property development, water futures...
Where did you get these figures ?

Stockmann tries to indicate 'the past';and his astonishment that she should know anything about the financial world

LADY A-N(cont):

You're surprised .
Don't worry,it's a common fallacy.
How do you think 'old money' keeps its youth ?
Doesn't get bigger under the four poster,
you know.

PEARCE:

Well,I'll be.
I had no idea you were so progressive
I do believe we're in for a few surprises with
you, Lady Arty...

Stockmann indicates to Lady Arty another spread of figures. But Lady Arty's attention starts to drift to the sight of Bernard Swingbin who is now using his considerable strength to straighten out something bent on Lina's building

LADY A-N:

Hmm. Very interesting.

Lady Arty is clearly beginning to flex a bit of sexual muscle in the wake of her new power base amongst the 'youngsters'. She makes her way idly towards Swingbin This leaves Pearce free to flirt with Stockmann

PEARCE:

How the hell did you get batteries to last that long ?

Stockmann makes an elaborate mime to indicate that it's solar powered.

Solar ?

That's foresight.

But you couldn't have known we'd get ourselves into this sort of pickle

Stockmann makes the Boy Scouts' 'Be Prepared' sign Pearce laughs

Don't know what I've been missing, do I ?

You know, I actually think we could make a bit of a team, you and me - when things get sorted out, that is

Stockmann flashes her his most fetching smile, then gets on with his game. Meanwhile back at the building

LADY A-N:

Like daughter, like father eh Mr Swingbin ?

Swingbin observes his work with pride, smiles and nods

I like to see a man take pride in his work

Swingbin heaves or twists something with great force, and hurts his hand. He mimes soundless scream of pain.

Oh dear dear dear.

Dear Mr Swingbin. Let me look at that

Lady Arty takes his hand

In all this Tim watches and fumes, still struggling

9.

Enter Lina, fuming, storming, with Mrs S in hot pursuit

LINA:

I told you ! A dress is a dress, but my head is something else !
How many times do I have to say it ?
No ! No ! No !
Even if I thought they were on the level, which I know they're not, I just don't see it the same way.
And I do think it's shitty of you even to bring it up when I agreed to the dress

MRS S:

I don't want to see you come to harm, Lina. It wouldn't take much of an effort, you'd keep the peace here, and keep yourself out of trouble

LINA:

But mum, it's my life.
It's the way I see the world.
Even if I only had half an hour left, it wouldn't be worth my thinking that this is it.
For me, that out there, is it..

She indicates the broad horizon

For all we know, there're things out there we've never even begun to imagine.
I don't care if I go down in the attempt.
What is it you think you're all so desperate to preserve here ?
Get real, you lot. Look at it. It's barren, worn out, dry.
I prefer dad's version in some ways - at least he's tuned into the soft nights, the quiet breezes, the moist air. Make love, but don't talk to me about saving the bloody race - look at us !

MRS S :

Where is your father ?

She goes on a brief hunt to find Swingbin

PEARCE:

You're such a plodder, aren't you ?
Beautiful in an inchoate sort of way, but
you just don't capitalise on the opportunities
Herman's just thrown up some...

LINA :

Herman is it ?
Writing's on the screen eh ?

PEARCE:

Perhaps it is .
If this place really is some uncharted
territory, then we'll be made - think of
it - mineral wealth, leisure industry, I
bet the seas are teeming...

LINA:

But I thought this whole push was about there
being no-one else ?
Who are you marketing to ?

Pearce and Stockmann turn to her together and wickedly grin
while making the 'Be Prepared' sign

You're all raving mad.
I've got to get this finished

She continues her search for building materials - a little
more frenetic now, and one of her forays takes her offstage,
perhaps, or at least to an unexplored corner of the stage.
Just at that moment, Mrs Swingbin finds her husband in too
close proximity to Lady Arty

MRS S:

What the hell's going on here ?

LADY A-N:

Your husband had a bit of an accident

MRS S:

He'll have more than that if this is what it
looks like.
What do you think you're doing with my Bernie

LADY A-N:

I was just trying to...

MRS S:

Don't give me any of your speeches .
Woman to woman, Lady A, this is my man
we're talking about

Swingbin starts to feel a bit flattered by this contest

LADY A-N:

All right, if that's how you want it - it's
true.
It's all very well for us to draw up these
cursed productivity spreadsheets...
But what about sex ?

Pearce and Stockmann and Tim prick up their ears

It's all very well for all of you, either
baby machines, or married , but what are my
options ? I'm not entirely devoid of feeling
you know - and these nights are getting warmer
and moister with every phase of the moon.
You have to be prepared to share, Mrs Swingbin,
it's the only decent thing to do .

Swingbin is clearly quite pleased about this

MRS S :

Share ? Over my dead body !

LADY A-N :

You're always on about sharing. You wanted me
to do away with privilege, with the advantages
of my birth. All right. You too.
Share the wealth. One for all and all for one.

PEARCE:

Top hole, Lady A !

MRS S:

You silly bloody women !
You think I'm going to fall for that ?
You think a woman like me sweats and toils
to keep a marriage like ours together, and then
just throws it in like that -just because some
snooty old broad's starting to get the hots in
the tropics. This isn't your bloody QEII, lady.
You and your facelifts, and your perfume,
your skin e-bloody-mollients.

MRS S(cont):

You can dabble around as much as you like
because you can always run in for a grease and
oil change, and come out with a brand spanking
new MOT.
Well, not this one, lady, this one's...

They are cut off in their dispute by the unmistakeable sound
loud, screeching, distorted, which had frightened them all before

STOCKMANN:

Jesus Christ !

LADY A-N:

Gag him !

Pearce throws her hand over his mouth
Tim scrambles towards the others
Swingbin rushes in front of Mrs S and Lady Arty
They hold their breath as the noise gets louder

Lina enters slowly, holding a battered cassette recorder of
some description.
She walks deliberately towards Stockmann

LINA:

I suppose you wouldn't know anything about
this, would you ?

(to Pearce)

Solar powered. Cute eh ?
Even at dusk it's still strong enough to
put you off the scent.
Super-techno.
How could you lose your senses so easily ?

(to Mrs S)

You too.
Well, this is what I think of your stupid
little games.

She tries to stop the tape recorder, but it keeps delivering
its scary sound message. The more she rips it, pounds it,
tears at it, throws it about, the more insistent and louder
the variations on the scare message become.

LINA (starting to weep in the distress of frustration):

What do you have to do ????

She sits down and starts to cry

The tape recorder stops. Everyone looks. Suddenly it explodes into pieces

I don't believe it ...

Lina has clearly found some vital piece towards her structure. She grabs the piece and rushes towards the thing she's building.

Everyone watches her try to fit the piece in. In the distance we hear something we've heard before, the pounding threatening sound which has periodically surfaced without being focused before. For a moment everyone stops in their tracks as if they've really heard something for the first time. They look at the broken tape recorder, then at each other. The strange sound threatens again in the distance.

From now on it will keep returning more frequently, and louder, finally more distinctly.

LINA:

Any piece could be the last ... how do you tell ?

They just think it's how old I am - but it's not. Pearce had hope, for two seconds, and Mum.

Everything they ever thought could work .

Dreams - ideals. It isn't just me.

All of them, if they could just breathe once and remember...

MRS S (to Swingbin) :

You silly old bugger, you silly old bugger

Mrs Swingbin starts angrily, but at his smile she starts to grin, then he laughs more, and by the time she starts to chase him we wonder whether this is in anger or in playful regained lust

She sets off after him. He takes off, Mrs S in hot pursuit

LADY A-N:

What does she mean the last piece ?

PEARCE:

I've no idea .
Lina ?

Lina looks down at the dress she has put on. The eyes of the rest of them turn to her in her self-consciousness. Herman looks at Pearce, Pearce looks at Tim, who in turn struggles even harder at the ties that bind him, then stares at Lina. Lina looks scared and takes off in the opposite direction from her parents.

PEARCE:

Lina !

Pearce takes off after Lina

Stockmann looks at Lady Arty. Lady Arty looks confused. He makes an appeal to her to let him speak

LADY A-N:

Oh I don't know.

Sound of the distant pounding, sounds like chanting

I'm all confused. It's this weather. The night coming on. There's a moon. I'm not used to it at all.
Yes, go on

STOCKMANN:

He's right [Tim]. She [Lina] is the one.
She knows something, and that thing there's the clue. Come on ! I've got to warn Pearce.

He takes off, after Lina, looking back at Lady Arty. Lady Arty looks around, sees herself all alone, screams and goes to follow them. Tim makes an enormous grunt and stops Lady A in mid-tracks. She stops, goes back, unties him but leaves his gag on. He defiantly removes as much of his drag as he can, and grabs up any semblance of male attire. The effect is that he's dressed half and half - in some light he looks like a woman, in others a man. They race after Stockmann and Pearce. The light is fading, casting strange shadows in the moonlight.

10.

THE CHASE IS ON

(i)

Swingbin is running hard
Mrs S comes after him

(ii)

Lina enters, searches, picks up, throws away
She hears tramping getting closer
Runs and exit

(iii)

Pearce follows soon after, Stockmann, Tim and Lady A bringing up
the rear follow and exeunt

(iv)

Swingbin enters, hears tramping, ducks behind tree

(v)

Mrs S enters, runs across stage, misses him and exit

(vi)

Lina enters on hands and knees, from the other direction,
frantically grabbing at stuff and throwing it away again.
Exit.

(vii)

Pearce enters in the lead, Stockmann (who's losing bits of
clothing) and Tim follow

STOCKMANN:

Pearce ?

PEARCE:

What ?

She's shocked to hear him speak

STOCKMANN:

It's OK. We got the nod from Lady Arty

PEARCE:

What are you after ?

STOCKMANN:

I have to warn you . This is serious.
It's the Swingbin kid, she knows something.

PEARCE:

You're telling me ?

She notices Tim. He seems totally confused. At first he tries to be very manly, having regained his appropriate status- he does some very strange macho posturing with the male side of his garb. Then he thinks it might be the wrong tack, and softens to the female side.

Haven't you made your mind up yet ?

Stockmann slaps him. Tim is utterly shocked

STOCKMANN:

Come on, we can't stop

They race out

(viii)

Lady A runs in panting. She leans against the tree to catch her breath
Swingbin can't see it's not his wife

SWINGBIN:

Now we're alone, no-one'll know what we're up to. You're not going to tell on me are you ?
You want it as much as I do, don't you ,love ?

He puts his hands round the trunk and gently strokes her breasts. Lady Arty laps it up and starts moaning, then she makes the mistake of verbalising....

LADY A-N:

Oh yes,

SWINGBIN:

Jenny

LADY A-N:

Oh no (with unbearable pleasure)

SWINGBIN:

Jenny ?

LADY A-N:

Oh, I say, jolly good !

Swingbin leaps out from behind the tree, sees who it is,
screams, and runs .
Lady A in hot pursuit

(ix)

Mrs S enters

MRS S :

Bernaataaard !

She catches the tail end of Lady A disappearing

MRS S:

You, you, Hunt-club whore !

She gives chase and exit

(x)

Tim comes in alone,whirling,twirling,somersaulting,bumbling
trying to get rid of his gag. He trips

(x1)

Stockmann follows,treads all over Tim. He roars

STOCKMANN:

Pearce ! Come on !

Stockmann exit. Tim gets to his hands and knees

(xii)

Pearce comes at a run and treads Tim down again and exit.
Tim tries to get up again and peers into the direction they
took. He seems dazed, confused

(xiii)

Swingbin backs in from the other direction.
They back into each other.
Swingbin roars, swivels round and knocks Tim to the ground
again.

(xiv)

Enter Mrs Swingbin riding on Lady Arty's back

MRS S:

I'll give you horseplay

Swingbin runs off. Tim lays down on the ground before the
horse and rider get to him. They jump him elegantly and
exeunt. Tim stands up, calmly rips off the gag and walks away.

(xv)

Lina enters backwards, dragging a huge mouldy canvas with her

(xvi)

Pearce enters forwards from the other direction at a rush and
bangs into Lina. She grabs her from behind.
Lina freezes, shivers, clings to her canvas.
The sound of the tramping increases, sound like voices too now
Pearce tightens her grip, both arms around Lina. there's a
moment's stillness, and then she impulsively kisses
passionately into her neck. Lina grabs her hand for a moment.

They do not look at each other.

Pearce exit the way she came.

Lina catches her breath, flings the canvas up onto the
structure and hares off after Pearce

(xvii)

Lady Arty comes in reeling - her wig awry, her pearls bust,
her twinset in disarray.
Stockmann follows her, tearing at his clothing like Dr Jekyll
about to transmute

STOCKMANN:

Where is she ?

LADY A- N:

They're all animals

STOCKMANN (shaking the distressed Lady A):

The kid ! Where is she ?

If she gets the last piece there'll be no
stopping her

The sounds of the tramping hordes are becoming ever more
distinct

Lady A screams and runs.

Stockmann hears Lina's voice yelling 'Pearce ! Pearce ?'

He backs himself up against the structure

(xviii)

Lina rushes in. Sees Stockmann just in time, and brakes.

They are face to face - a showdown

STOCKMANN:

You've got no idea, have you ?

But it's about time you found out.

Stockmann unbuckles his belt. Lina screams and runs

Stockmann is wrenching at his clothing as he gives chase

(xix)

Enter Swingbin carrying his wife in his arms

MRS S:

This'll do. Put me down.

You just take three deep breaths while I grab
a bit of greenery - the old back's not quite
what it used to be...

Mrs S exit. and crosses with Lina whom she doesn't see.

Lina stops dead in her tracks, facing her Dad. She stares at him

LINA:

Dad ?

You've got to help me.

Please ?

He puts his arms out to take her in

SWINGBIN:

Come on cherub...

LINA:

No, stop there, not that.
That's not what I want, Dad.

SWINGBIN:

But if you're in trouble, love...

LINA:

You don't know how much. It's life or death,
Da, god's truth. But I don't want that

She stares at him hard and points at his braces

I want those

SWINGBIN:

What ?

LINA:

Those

SWINGBIN:

These ?

LINA:

Yes, those.
I can't believe it - the last piece.
I don't need anything else .

SWINGBIN :

But...

He indicates that he'll lose his pants

LINA:

I really need them,Dad, you can't imagine how
rough your mates are playing out there.

SWINGBIN:

But I don't see..

LINA:

No, you won't for a minute.
 You'll have to trust me
 It just has to be an act of faith.
 It's my salvation, dad, yours too, if you only
 knew
 Do you think I'll love you any the less ?

The noise of the tramping, and shrieks from the beach is really starting to impose. Swingbin thinks for a moment, then removes his braces and holds them out to Lina. His pants slowly and ceremoniously fall to the ground. He steps out of his pants and starts to remove his other clothing as well.

SWINGBIN:

Quickly, give us yours.
 It'll give you more time to do what you need
 to . Come on.

They quickly exchange clothing

LINA:

Dad, I...

SWINGBIN:

Go on, hurry now

She goes and Swingbin goes in the opposite direction.

11.

Lina in her father's clothing is hell bent towards the structure. Suddenly she trips and falls. She has fallen on a glass bottle. She desperately wants to read the message inside, but keeps looking over her shoulder for the mob after her. Suddenly she fishes the note out and reads quietly

LINA(reading):

'seen by all of Europe and the more humane areas of Britain, as an already insular and self-interested entity, destined to sink beneath the weight of Tory arrogance...'

She turns the paper over to see what it is

LINA(cont) :

It's an old copy of The Newslime...
'...steps have already been taken to cut the
offending area off from the main body of Europe
and set it adrift. Already referred to as the
Untied Kingdom, recent climatic changes
have...'
Oh my god..

The distant voices have now become articulate

MOBVOICE:

Here we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go

Lina races off

12.

Pearce, Stockmann, Lady A, and Mrs S all appear at a rush.
They stop pant, bend.
Enter Swingbin in Lina's clothing. He waits, crouches, then
puts his fingers in his mouth, pulls a face and yells

SWINGBIN:

Nya nya nya nya nya nya !

STOCKMANN:

Grab her ! quick !

He tries to get away, but they throw a coat over his head and
bundle him off.

STOCKMANN:

Now we'll see what's what

Pearce and Mrs Swingbin look at each other a bit warily.
Lady Arty tries to pull herself together

13.

Back at the camp, Lina hauls herself up into the structure. She is pushing and pulling it into shape, and fixing her father's braces to the big canvas

Suddenly the others rush in with the bundle. They stop dead in their tracks just as Lina hoists the mouldy old sail on her Dad's braces. The structure is clearly a barque, shuddery, pieced together, but beautiful, romantic, and ready to sail

They look at it, at her -see that it's Lina - and look to the bundle which they dump.

PEARCE:

But if you're there, who's this ?

STOCKMANN:

If that lame excuse for a male has fouled us up again...

They unravel the bundle and Swingbin in his daughter's dress tips out.

MRS S:

Bernard Swingbin ! What the hell are you up to ?

SWINGBIN:

Search me.
Ask her

MOBVOICE:

Ere we go, ere we go, ere we...

LINA:

It's England

LADY A-N:

Pardon ?

LINA:

That's where we are ..
The south east. They cut us adrift.

MRS S:

The suns' got you, luv, I knew it'd happen

LINA:

I don't know how long we've been drifting

SWINGBIN:

It had already started to change...

PEARCE:

The bloody Chunnel - I knew it all along. They got wind of this didn't they - it didn't have anything to do with transport at all - solid concrete mooring, to try to stop us from drifting

Lina's nodding

The noise is getting quite violent

STOCKMANN (who by now bears an uncanny resemblance to a skinhead):

What about them ?

LINA:

God knows how long they've been roaming around out there

MRS S:

But who are they ?

LINA:

Who else ?
Poor boys, coloured boys, boys without hope .
When's it ever been different ?
What else did you expect ?

LADY ARTY:

Then we must remain, and defend the realm !

LINA:

Not me. I'm off. I'm not swearing allegiance to the Flag . I don't care how tiny the island is - if it's still punch-drunk from the days of glory then I'm not interested . I'd rather perish in the attempt to uncover some place that never had glory, never had power, never had slavery...

LADY ARTY:

Oh it's all in ruins.

LINA:

Maybe not, Lady Arty.
 Let me tell you something, all of you.
 From up here it looks beautiful.
 The moon's picking up the wet pebbles on the
 beach. And I know that out on the high seas,
 there's the most unimaginably tender breeze.
 A perfect moonlit night , a moist warmth to
 caress your limbs on deck. The perfumes on
 the night air might have wafted in from spice
 boat four hundred years ago - from the exotic
 east.
 It's the kind of night when people fall in love
 That is also the undeniable truth

SWINGBIN:

Is it safe ?

LINA:

Nothing's safe.
 But I've built it as best I could.
 And it's still afloat.

Mrs S looks about, and climbs aboard. Swingbin offers Pearce a
 hand. Lina looks at her.

PEARCE:

Like I said, Chippie, the winner's..

Pearce starts to climb aboard

LADY ARTY:

Where's Mr Tim ?

PEARCE:

I saw him wandering around up in those sand
 dunes

LINA:

I think he's lost...
 Lady Arty ?

LADY ARTY:

Sorry my dear.
 I simply can't do it.

PEARCE:

But ...

They all turn to look at Stockmann. He is unrecognisable from what we assume to constitute the mob. He walks away, and calls back amid the chanting

STOCKMANN:

Why not ?
They need leaders too

He growls ferociously at Lady Arty who is spurred into jumping ship. She bursts into tears. Pearce goes to comfort her. Pearce has also undergone a clothing transformation. She is stripped of most of her smartness, but the powerpads remain fixed firmly to her shoulders

LINA:

Get rid of those.

PEARCE:

Why ?
I'm practically naked as it is

LINA:

They'll sink us.
Get rid of them.

Pearce rips away the power pads and heaves them off. The effect is of weighing anchor. The boat creaks forward.

LINA:

Dad, can you handle the rudder ?

SWINGBIN:

Right

LINA:

Pearce, you get up front, and watch out for snags.

We hear again the noise of the roaming hordes, now intermingling with some sound of the hopeful sea

Mum, Lady Arty, get on those oars, this old crate's going to need all the help she can get.

Oh my eyes, will you look at that moon ?

END

BC. 2nd DRAFT
21/8/90

COMES A CROPPER

RUNNING TIMES

A Weds man
Approx 55
Weds aft 59

© R Archer , Sydney , August 1990

MONSTROUS REGIMENT
190 UPPER STREET
LONDON N1 1RQ
TEL. 359-9842

1.

In the women's camp, Monica Arty-Nicey, and Jenny Swingbin are sitting around looking bored. Lina Swingbin seems to be fossicking amongst the onshore detritus, and building something.

There are signs of creeping agitation. Only Lina seems interested in what she's doing - a careful piecing together. The others look like they've been hanging around for years

MRS S:

+ But what is it, love ?

LINA:

Like I said, Mum, all in good time. I'm just trying to put it all together - all the bits and pieces ; what I pick up myself, what's left from before. It'll make sense, eventually, all in good time.

She continues the piecing together



I wish Pearce'd hurry up

MRS S:

Where is she ? I don't remember her going .

LADY A-N:

What do you mean going ?
She must be here somewhere.
Where else could she be but here ?



LINA:

Could be anywhere. I know it's only an island but, all that water, all those ferns and fronds. And the hot sun beating down on her back, and her without her ant-perspirant.

LADY A-N:

But what about the enemy ?

MRS S:

What bleedin' enemy ?

LADY A-N:

What on earth do you mean ?

MRS S:

Have you seen or heard or smelt one whiff of an enemy since we've been squatting around here ?

LADY A-N: Can't say that I have

MRS S: And how long have we been waiting?

LINA: Feels like centuries

Silence

MRS S: ^{have}
We ~~we~~ been had

LADY A-N: Pardon ?

MRS S: Oh for godsake, clear your coiff from your
lugholes and listen ! Don't you lot hear
anything the first time ?

LADY A-N: X
Now Look here ...

MRS S: No you look, - your Moneybags.
They tricked us, plain and simple.
And it's all your fault

LADY A-N: My fault ?

MRS S: Who else ? Right in the thick of it you were.
One minute you're all pally and treating us
with a bit of respect, the next you're
believing everything they tell you.

LADY A-N: If my memory serves me, Mrs Swingbin...

MRS S: There's a thing you wouldn't put the holiday
savings on...

+ LADY A-N: I do wish you could refrain from these petty
cracks

MRS S: I'll give you cracks. It's about time that
Hunt-club head of yours saw a bit of action

LADY A-N:

Common violence. Typical solution !
I can't imagine how we thought any of this
would work in the first place...

LINA

Can't you ?

Lady Arty and Mrs S cease hostilities for a second to observe
the interruption

It's not that hard. —
It's just a question of everyone seeing it the
same way. Back there you blinked for a second,
and saw what was needed, exactly what was
needed - the common good.

MRS S:

* Common good ! What are you on about ? You were
there, you heard - I haven't got so much as a
beetle's bum in common with that woman.

LINA:

Wake up ,mum. Of all the things you can
see before you right now, which two are the
most alike ?

MRS S:

Her face and my...

LINA:

Mum, it doesn't help...
Look at it like this : which enemy can
you afford to lose sight of longest ?

MRS S:

You and your theories- can't you listen either
for a change ?
^ I just told you ; there is no bleedin' enemy.
I had plenty of time to think, and I started to
A listen for rustling in the night...

LINA:

Oh god, were we making a lot of noise ? I tried
to push her face into the banana leaves, but
-she just gets carried away.

MRS S:

That'll be enough of that, my girl.
I'm not talking about here anyway.
Out there ... signs of the enemy...
~~But~~ all I could hear was the distant disembodied cry,
an unearthly throbbing Didn't sound like men in battle
at all

LINA:

It's the birds, they're everywhere. Beautiful.

MRS S:

It wasn't any birds. It was something else,
nasty... Anyway, the only bird I'm interested
in is the old goose over here who got herself
cooked, and all of us into the bargain.
We had it right at our fingertips : the perfect
moment to do it our way at last. Now look at
us. It could be twenty years , or two hundred.
They're running the show again. And how, I ask
you, did it bleedin' well happen ? Δ We were
doing so well. Not that it matters - they
always find a way.
Divide and conquer, that's how they do it -
Couple of choice lies. Victory.
When's it ever been any diferent ?

LINA:

It could be

LADY A-N:

Not in my lifetime. Irreconcilable differences.
You can make all the plans you like, talk
yourself blue in the face...

MRS S:

Not too hard for you...

LADY A-N:

... when it comes down to it, we're a race
apart... θ

LINA:

That depends a bit on how you look at the
race. Δ Wotcha Lady A !

(B) Pt 6 length in.

2.

Pearce enters. She's dressed as a Diana of the Tropics. Power pads for the pioneers.

LINA:

Hi ! How is it out there ?

PEARCE:

Brilliant. Absolutely brilliant.

Couldn't have done a better job myself.

It's so spare.

Apart from this little oasis here, it's sort of barren - tones of terra cotta, with a dash of umber to underscore it - roads, tracks, tree-trunks, that sort of thing. And the sea a bright, clear blue - matches the sky, sparkling...

- I'd like my office done exactly like it.

+ And you know those cupboards you put in the kitchen?

(to the others)

Brilliant job, you know, all my friends think she's...

MRS S. (to LADY A-N):

She did a course, you know...

Hang on, you've been out there ?

PEARCE:

Yes, naturally, if I wasn't in here, it goes without saying, Mrs Swingbin, that I was 'out there'.

She plants a kiss on Lina and dumps some designer beachcomber findings

LADY A-N:

* The enemy ?

The hordes of savages ?

PEARCE:

Not a sign

In the background we hear an unidentifiable but slightly threatening sound which they all ignore

MRS S:

What did I say ?

LADY A-N : Well what is out there ?

PEARCE: Practically nothing, as I far as I can see

LINA: How far could you see ?

PEARCE: ~~X~~ Well my guess is that it is an island, but I couldn't get all round. It's big all right. Perfect resort stuff, with the right kind of management, that is...

LADY A-N: Do you mean we're all alone ?

LINA: Could you hear anything ?

MRS S : Any sign of the men ?

PEARCE: Nothing - but I expect they're around.
^ I did hear something - but it wasn't them.
^ It was bigger, distant, pounding - I expect there's a surf beach round the other side - the bit I couldn't get to.

MRS S: Why ?

LINA: Couldn't go all the way, could you ?

PEARCE : No, something stopped me

LADY A-N: See, there is an enemy

PEARCE: No, something inside, something hidden.
You always know, don't you ?
① I don't understand - you're not old enough, but you do know...

2
Pearce and Lina kiss passionately. Lady Arty and Mrs Swingbin avert their eyes

LADY A-N (to MRS S):

Do you think it's possible we could exchange a civil word?

MRS S:

+ You be very careful if it's about my Lina. She has her quirks, she's headstrong I know. But she's young, and she's me only.

LADY A-N:

The sanctity of the family is something I respect, Mrs Swingbin, and under other circumstances I wouldn't comment on what others do in private - or others' daughters do in private...

MRS S:

I'd hardly call that private, would you?

LADY A-N:

Mrs Swingbin, have you considered the implications? Seriously, now. We could be on very delicate ground here... What if this is an island?

MRS S:

Well, we have been stuck here for longer than I like to think

LADY A-N:

Precisely, and apart from a few undecipherable rumbles, nobody has seen sight nor sign of anyone but us...

MRS S:

...and the men...

LADY A-N:

Yes, that's what I mean, 'us'

Lina and Pearce have broken their clinch

⊖ LINA:

Funny thing 'us and them'. Watch it, Mum.

— MRS S:

Come up for air have we?

LADY A-N:

My point is, what if we're the only ones?

PEARCE:

Brilliant !
No one to mess it up.
We really can call the shots

LADY A-N:

What if we are on an island, and it is just us,
and no-one else comes for a very long time ?

MRS S:

What are you getting at ?

LADY A-N:

It's all very well for you. You have your
husband, but what about the rest of us ?

LINA:

No problem here

She touches Pearce

LADY A-N:

I do think this typically short-sighted of you
all.
If you're all spoken for, do you realise what it
might mean for me - when the other two strong
able-bodied men on this island realise that we
may be the only women they will encounter for
the rest of their lives ?

-- MRS S:

I'd say you better hope that what she's
building is a shelter with a big lock on it !

Lina and Pearce have a suitably dirty, somewhat unkind giggle

PEARCE:

Or start using that tree there to mark up your
evening engagements...

LINA:

△ No hang on, there's more to this .
I sniff a lizard in the logpile.

LADY A-N:

Thank goodness someone 'on the scent'
... Don't you see ?
This could be a matter of destiny ...

LADY A-N (cont):

If there's no-one else here, and no-one else comes, we have a major issue of survival on our hands.

~ Who's to say we're not the last on earth? And even if we're not, we won't know - so we shall have to start behaving as if we are anyway...

LINA:

Rubbish. You can't ever tell what's on the other side. There's probably a Club Med across the bay - then we'd look bloody silly..

PEARCE:

But what if she were right ?

LINA:

~ What does it matter ?
Get on with it; do what you do.

LADY A-N :

If I were right, and we were the only ones, then the survival of the race would depend on...

They all look at each other, a moment's consideration

PEARCE:

Oh my god.

MRS S:

It's true.
She's past it

LADY A-N:

Now just a minute

MRS S:

All right, all right, off the horse.
Childbearing, I mean. So am I.
That leaves...

PEARCE:

The two of us

LINA:

Not on your nellie. No. Absolutely not.
Never. Not for an instant.

PEARCE:

Me. The hope of the race.

Pearce is visibly swelling with a sense of her new importance

LINA:

Come off it.
What about us ?

PEARCE:

It doesn't interfere with that.

X Lina ?

Where's your sense of history ?

Destiny - that's what Lady Arty-Nicey called it. That's what it is.

LADY A-N:

At last, a sense of responsibility is in evidence. Don't you see, in the face of a situation like this, the smaller details are irrelevant - there's no room for personal predilection. Queen and country. That's the noble call. ⊙

My dear, this is Eden, and you are our Eve. ⊕

MRS S:

□ Lina, if you let them get away with this, I'll never forgive you. Get in there girl, I'm not going to stand by and see any child of mine give up on the race.

LINA:

Forget it. I don't believe we're the only ones. Even if I did, I wouldn't do it. ✓

MRS S:

But we're going to have to make some decisions about this before we see the men. ⊕

LADY A-N:

9 Quite correct. We must have our position clear. Otherwise they'll just use brute force. They have to be appraised of the situation - the possibilities are drastically limited.

MRS S:

There's always that in vitro stuff, love.

LADY A-N: △

Exactly. On that score, Miss Swingbin we do have an understanding. I myself have known perfectly reasonable women who have sincerely felt that there's never such an untidy sight as a naked man coming towards you. +
But these new methods - wait for the right moment, constellations in the right place, everything at the right temperature, ~~all the bits in the right place~~ - presto!
You never have to catch sight of it at all.

LINA:

Knock it off. You too Pearce. You're just getting carried away.
Who cares about the race? Look where it's got us - we don't know where we are, or when. I care about me, now! What makes the race so worthy of being saved? I just can't see the point of the sacrifice. I want what's still in my grasp - better than ever...
Just feel the air in this place, that sky.
I've got to get this worked out X

She continues to build

MRS S:

Lina: Child! I'm almost ashamed.
Look at us. I'm a woman of little education, but even I can see how far we've come. If there was a monkey in that tree I'd point at it right this minute.
Think of the great cities, the advances in medicine, supermarkets, satellites...

LINA:

e All I can see in front is horizon, and behind me - a few bits and pieces I find useful.
If you think I'm going to sweat over what might happen, you don't know your girl at all - any of you. The way I see it, what happens around me will be because of me...

D She's building and spots a connection

... oh Christ, why couldn't I see that before... ?

and fits in a tricky bit

LADY A-N:

I'm sure I don't see anything at all in it..

LINA:

Oh you will, Missus, you will

LADY A-N:

Will is will, young woman, and now is now.
What we urgently need just now is a spot of
reconnaissance. ^

△ Before we encounter any delegation from the
men, I think we'd better double check. If
there's no evidence to the contrary, then we
must assume the worst and make plans, draw
up a roster

LINA:

Leave me off. I've got enough to do here

MRS S:

We'll see about that

PEARCE:

Come on, we'll go in the other direction -
the one I didn't take. Shouldn't take long.

LADY A-N:

You're sure there's no enemy

LINA:

Can't be sure of anything...

PEARCE:

I didn't see anything, anyone

MRS S:

Oh, she's got her head on straight - X
worth a look anyway. Come on.

⑥

Pearce goes to give Lina a peck on the cheek

LINA:

Whose side are you on anyway ?

PEARCE:

Same as always, Chippie -the winner's.

LADY A-N:

Right you are. This way, now. +

The three women leave

Misc.

3.

Precisely as the last bit of female body leaves the stage, save Lina who quietly searches and builds, a bit of fern starts shaking, not unlike the mating dance of the lyrebird, it quivers violently. In creeping succession the three men appear out of earshot of the industrious Lina who may even leave the stage for a moment in her hunt for materials.

Go to Go to Go, reccy *

SWINGBIN:

How long do we have to keep up this creeping around? I could have had a bit by now. *Exit*

STOCKMANN:

You have to treat women like any other commodity. Get in, lots of bold activity; then pull out suddenly - ignore it while it tries to gain ground. Affect indifference. Then they're begging for you to get back in there. Risky business, but it's worth it, there's not a feeling in the world to beat it. You see how they come round. I told you you could trust me

SWINGBIN:

Well, I must admit, I didn't at first - not my type at all. But I have to hand it to you, you certainly pulled it off.

TIM:

Look here, I have to say - and I've been quiet up until now¹ but I am going to say it, because I think it needs to be said...

SWINGBIN:

Get on with it

TIM:

... I wasn't at all happy about the way you handled that situation back then. We all have to learn and change together ... I meant it when I said they should be the generals. And I was being perfectly sincere when I said their rights must be considered when we draw up the laws. I actually believe in the equality of the sexes. I don't believe the planet has any future unless we take that one on



SWINGBIN:

He's got something there, hasn't he ?

STOCKMANN:

It's rubbish. The minute the boys in advertising were able to proceed with confidence, the world changed. Sex came back to car sales ; men could wear stubble again. In the movies those stubbly-faced heroes were slapping their women around again. And the women loved it ! Secretly they do love it !

SWINGBIN:

I don't know about that. I slapped her at home once. That's how I got my jaw bust

STOCKMANN:

You can't go too far, just a sting you know, a touch. The mating game , all part of it. Bit of claw and bite : have you seen lions at it ?
Rooaawh !

TIM:

You make me sick

The lion call has alerted Lina



LINA:

Hi guys !

They creep awkwardly out of hiding

STOCKMANN:

Where are the others ?

LINA:

Out on a reccy

SWINGBIN:

Your mum too ? Weren't they afraid ?

LINA:

What of ?

STOCKMANN:

✠ The enemy , of course, thundering down from those hills.

LINA:

Grow up,
ago. Enemy !

They worked it out ages

(i)

She laughs , shakes her head

SWINGBIN:

Smart kid, that
Here, give your old dad a hug

LINA:

Get off, I got work to do

X TIM:

What is it ?

LINA:

What does it look like ?

Tim and Stockmann look at each other

SWINGBIN:

(i) She's a hell of a carpenter
She can tell at a glance what's useful -
I've seen her knock up some real things of
value - out of old stuff you wouldn't
have given twenty p for

STOCKMANN:

△ No time for that.
Let her do what she wants. It doesn't matter
anyway. We need a game plan, quick.

SWINGBIN:

□ Why ? I just want me old lady.
I miss her. Nights like this. I've never been
abroad! It's not like Southend Sort of soft
and warm of an evening. It's enough to get a
man going. For all the plotting and planning,
I have to say, making that one there was fun.
And even though we're getting on a bit, I'll
say this for Mrs Swingbin - she's still a bit
of all right in the sack.

STOCKMANN:

~ All in good time, my friend, all in good time.
First things first. Before we see them again
① we have to have a plan - not a step out of
place. What we need's another enemy - more
convincing this time.

TIM:

Look I'm...

Tim's protest is interrupted by the sounds of the women
returning to camp

STOCKMANN:

Quick, here they come. Let's go. X-

SWINGBIN:

What for? I want to see Jenny.

STOCKMANN:

△ You fool. If you go off too soon you'll get no
~~satisfaction~~ ^(satisfy) at all - it'll be hell here.
Use your brains man. They're cunning, as a
chancellor on exchange rates. They'll have you,
mate, - come
on.

SWINGBIN:

What about him?

STOCKMANN:

~ He squawks a lot, Bernard, but he's not ready
to perch in the hen-house just yet. He'll
follow. Won't you, pet? *

TIM (aside):

~ Bastard.
We'll see who gets first into amongst the
fowl.. □

Music

Stockmann dashes off, followed by Swingbin trying to catch a
glimpse of his wife. Tim does catch sight of the women and
ducks away from the other two men, while avoiding being seen
by the women.
There's another hair's breadth crossover, as the women enter
hot on the exit of the men

4.

LADY A-N:

That's decided then [schedule].

MRS S:

Bit premature if you ask me

PEARCE:

But we didn't see anyone

LADY A-N:

And it's been a long time.
I say play it safe, one jump ahead of the mob
- what harm can it do ?

MRS S:

Well if you weren't so fired up about keeping
the place populated, we might be able to put
our minds to less high-faluting things

LINA:

Such as ?

MRS S:

You know, rights, duties, whatever it was we
were all so excited about before X

PEARCE:

Times change, Mrs Swingbin, priorities have to
change with them.

MRS S:

Yes, dear, I can see you have the main chance
on your 'agenda' as you call it. ^{you and my Lena,}
Not that I ever really approved, but you
certainly changed fast enough

LINA:

Give it a rest, Mum, I think Pearce knows what
she's doing - she usually does.

PEARCE:

Perhaps I do - is that such a bad thing ? Δ

LINA:

Dunno. Which bible do you keep by the bed these
days ?

PEARCE:

A No bibles I'm afraid... but I picked these up
on the way back - might be useful X

She tosses her some more collected junk she's brought back from the reccy

No hard feelings ?

LINA:

I'll tell you when the moon rises.
Thanks for these - something's bound to come in handy, though I can't quite see it just yet

MRS S:

I don't understand.
Thank god I'm not in all this.

LADY A-N :

We're all in it.
So let's sort it out
You and I are out of the running.
That leaves Miss Pearce and young Lina
And for the men, Mr Stockmann, Mr Tim and Mr Swingbin are all eligible...

MRS S:

Not my Bernie, not him,

LADY A-N :

If we're to avoid a very nasty strain of in-breeding, he'll have to be, I'm afraid.

PEARCE:

But I'd be the only one he could...
I couldn't. Not Lina's father.

MRS S:

You got something against my husband ?

PEARCE:

No, it's not that, he's perfectly...

LINA:

In it right up to your neck, darlin'
Far be it for me to tell you what to do, but you're playing with fire, Pearce

PEARCE:

You know me, Chippie, nothing's too hot to handle if it gets you into the frontline

Lady Arty is intent on her schedule

LADY A-N:

Miss Swingbin, you have to go with Mr Stockmann and Mr Tim

□ LINA (shouting) :
Just cut it out !
I'm not playing

MRS S:
I don't think it's a game, love.
This is serious business.
Life and death

LINA: ○
It'll be death if any of 'em try it on me.

LADY A-N :
Come, now, I'm sure it doesn't have to ...

X They are interrupted by the entrance of a strange woman. It is Tim in drag - a terrible dress he has sewn himself.

What's this ?

LINA:
Looks like you might need a recount, Lady A!

MRS S:
Where did you come from, love ?

TIM (in drag): it was
Washed up, ~~terrible it was~~, the waves,
couldn't see back from front, night from
day - the confusion of it all.
Drenched and dazed I dragged myself ashore.*
If I'd had a mirror I'm sure I would never
have recognised myself. +
I had nothing.
Took me ages to sew this together

LADY A-N:
You did well, dear.
○ Now, tell me, how old are you ?

TIM:
Not much of a welcome.
I sort of thought you'd be less direct

PEARCE: △
You've arrived at the height of negotiations
Don't take it personally. How old ?

TIM:
Just the right side of thirty.

LADY A-N:

Yes!

MRS S:

Takes a bit of the heat off you, my girl

LINA:

Couldn't be cooler, Mum.
 There's nothing you can do anyway

She continues to build the structure which is getting quite high by now

MUSIC

△ Lina:

This thing's going to work if it kills me. I know I'm young, I know you all think I don't know my own mind, but you're wrong. Others have done it before, and I have a choice. It's not *about being* saved by the neck by some woman we've never seen before - it's what I choose to ...

5. *

There is a ferocious sound from quite close by. All the women jump, including Lina. They stand there quivering.
There is another quiet sound, they jump again.
This time it's Stockmann and Swingbin, who seem to be just as alarmed as the women. They have with them a few possessions.
Swingbin is brandishing a big stick which Lina eventually uses for the structure. Stockmann is carrying a portable laptop computer

STOCKMANN:

Did you hear that ?

MRS S: +

Bernie, baby

She rushes to her husband's arms
Swingbin winks at Stockmann

LADY A-N:

Thank god you're here

LINA:

What is it with you lot ?

TIM(in drag):*

I agree with her, how do you know it's not a trick ? Types like these can't be trusted +

Stockmann and Swingbin look curiously at the new arrival
Pearce starts assessing Stockmann

STOCKMANN:

You don't think that sound came from anything human do you ? Scared me shitless.

LINA:

△ Maybe it is, maybe it isn't.
Beside the point.
In two cracks of the cocoanut, you can bet the mob in here'll be worse than whatever that is out there.

(specifically to the women)

I don't see why you're so amazed when they bully you and take over, attack and grab control.
When it comes to the crunch, you want them to protect you - get them to kill at all costs. Don't you think that sort of thing takes its toll. Don't you see they're always at the ready? Why should you be surprised when they turn round and rape you . War or peace, if that's their brief, they'll keep on thrusting. —

TIM(in drag):

Absolutely. I agree. Let men off the hook. Let them quiver, let them hide. We should take over - protect them for a change

SWINGBIN:

Who is she ?
The voice is familiar, but...

LINA:

She can put her toolkit under my bench any day.
□ Good on you.

She shakes hands with Tim(disguised). feels the firmness of the handshake and enjoys it

STOCKMANN: +

Look, we just want to hang in here for a while.
Strength in numbers. It's not how she says at
all. We just want a bit of security.

LADY A-N:

It's just that we were at a very delicate stage
of our deliberations.

Δ Mrs Swingbin gently pushes Swingbin away, then notices that Pearce has started to look him up and down. Mrs S moves subtly nearer her husband but refrains from touching.

MRS S :

I'm not so sure it's such a good idea. We
were hoping to have things a bit better
organised.

SWINGBIN:

Have a heart, Jenny.
That thing sounded really dangerous

He gives Stockmann a wink and nudge

LINA:

Where was your heart when you cheated us last
time? Those things were important too.
Now look at us all - back to basic grovelling.
Well, not me - I don't give a damn if they
stay or go.

She goes back to her building

STOCKMANN:

Look at at this way - if we shelve the rule-
making for an agreed time, then it won't hurt
to have us around for a bit. We can fix things
up, make life a bit more bearable, one way or
another...

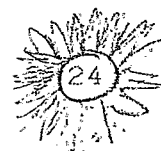
He gives Swingbin a wink and nudge

... and then we can work it out later, once we
find out what the hell made that noise. Now,
Bernie here, and myself will...

LADY A-N :

I've got it.
You can stay as long as you don't speak.

don't "Hooray"



PEARCE:

What ?

TIM(in drag):

First class. I agree one hundred percent.

MRS S:

I don't get it

SWINGBIN:

X I don't either - but if we're allowed to stick
around that might change. ©

Now he winks at his wife

LADY A- N:

Shutup
(to Mrs S)
Sorry □

TIM(in drag):

It's perfect. You're a genius Lady A.

LADY A-N:

I believe the problems stem from the fact that
they have louder voices, and they never seem to
listen.

TIM (in drag):

It's because they go through life with everyone
expecting them to have all the answers , never
showing the cracks...

LINA:

Too Right!

LADY A-N:

9 I think if you are forced to stay and listen to
the way we go about things, you'll have to
admit that we are in fact equal to any task,
and can cope with any crisis.

TIM(in drag):

△ Here ,here. That'll show 'em a thing or two.
Conniving ,double-dealing, mealy-mouthed...

SWINGBIN:

She's got a bit of a chip on her shoulder, this one.

MRS S:

Shut it

PEARCE:

What do you say ?

Swingbin looks to Stockmann. Stockmann deliberately shuts his mouth tight, and nods.

LADY A-N:

Bravo ! Small victories.
The way forward presents itself.
Ladies, we have work to do.

Lady A sets about her scheduling

LINA:

Listen I could use a hand over here. - can you spare me. Someone

MRS S:

I don't see why we should.

PEARCE:

It might turn out to be something we could all make use of

TIM (in drag):

I'd like to help. Not much good at it, the heavy stuff. But I can cut and paste, that sort of thing.

LADY A-N:

Very well, I'm sure we can draw up the first roster, then we shall consult everyone.

She makes a point of ensuring that the men have noted her sound procedures of consultation and accord. Lady A is now into full-blown demo.

Stockmann sets up his laptop and brings something up on the screen

Swingbin gets into some old-fashioned calisthenics

Lady A and Mrs S are right into the drafting of the roster.

Pearce is finding it hard to concentrate.

(Brent) all ready for propeller. (cross piece in.

LINA:

Here. If you just keep at this bit, I can go on to something else

TIM(in drag):

Thanks so much. I'd much rather be with you, doing something really useful. I mean all that talk is necessary I suppose, but I don't know, somehow, this sort of thing seems much more basic, gives a girl a chance to meditate while she works, exchange a few views, get to the bottom of things. *e*
You see, when I was little, my Dad always used to say...

LINA:

Hang on a minute. Yes, just like that

Lina notes Pearce's distraction and pulls her away from the POW WOW

You're not seriously going along with all this crap are you ?

PEARCE:

I don't think it is crap, Lina

LINA:

But after everything we've been to each other You're just going to go off and do it with them —

PEARCE:

We can still mean a lot to each other, darling. It was wonderful with you - you are wonderful. *~* But I've been bumbling my way around for years. Now I've been shown a higher purpose - I have to follow through. What we were to each other was perfect for the time, but the ground's shifted, Lina, the stakes are higher. I want to be on top, Lina, whatever it takes -and whatever it takes I'm going to be completely committed to.

*** Lina goes to walk away

And, incidentally, I think you'd better start some serious consideration yourself ...

LINA:

Just checking
That's all I needed to know

Lina goes back to the structure and moves intimately closer to Tim(in drag)

LINA:

No, not like that love, here let me show you

TIM (in drag):

You're so good at it. And I'm so useless.
You'd think that someone like me could have
learned a few useful skills along the way,
but I was never given the chance. ✓
You see, when I was eleven, my mother...

LINA:

You just have to decide, that's all.
You can do anything you want

TIM (in drag):

That's what mother said. I hated it. ✓
I wanted someone to be forceful, to
guide me...

This is clearly turning Lina on and she starts to interpret what he's saying sexually.

... sometimes even the strongest want to be led, need to be taught. Meeting someone like that can change a woman's life. I'm all for independence - you for instance, you really seem to be in control of your life, you call the shots; but we're not all like that, sometimes we have to be encouraged a bit, to do something we hadn't considered before....

Lina starts a bit of a grope. It should start somewhere innocuous on the body, with Tim only gradually realising what's going on. Lina's assault shuts up his rambling, but produces a few grunts and squeaks as he tries to avoid being found out

The others are preoccupied with their tasks and remain oblivious to the mounting confusion as Lina manoeuvres Tim around the structure in an attempt at slap and tickle.

At last she gets him in a clinch, a kiss on the lips should be followed in quick succession, by a grimace and a touch of her cheek where his beard has scratched her, a hand to the tit, and feeling around to find any bosom at all, and ultimately a grab between the legs which evokes a hideous squawk
Everyone jumps in the same way as they did when they heard the 'terrible sound'.

LINA:

Bloody hell
 You conniving little shit
 You wimp
 You, you, traitor

By this time she has the attention of everyone in the camp
She rips off his disguise

LADY A-N:

I say

PEARCE:

You little cheat

* MRS S (to Lina) :

How was it ?

LINA:

Not a hope in hell

Swingbin is about to open his mouth, and Stockmann shuts it.
They fold their arms in silence, shaking their heads at Tim

TIM:

You pack of hypocrites.
 What's a man meant to do ?
 You try and try and what do you get ?
 She's [Pearce] making googly eyes at that,
 that power pack in pants [Stockmann]
 The rest of you can't get your brains out
 of the bedroom, and when I do strike up a
 decent relationship with her, she caterwauls
 like the hound from hell.

LADY A-N:

He's been talking his head off

PEARCE:

Bloody cheek

MRS S:

Gag him !

Tim starts to run

TIM:

Me ?

She's the one that needs jumping !

He points at Lina

△

She's the thorn in the side.

How can you put up with selfishness like that ?

If we're going to green the planet, then
there's no room for her kind.

I'm all for equality - but everyone has to
pull their weight.

LADY A-N :

I agree !

Tim grins at the momentary thought of reprieve

X

Now gag him !

The men look on

PEARCE:

Now's your chance boys

LINA:

Unbelievable -

LADY A-N:

○ If you want us on side, gentlemen, do your
duty.

★

MUSIC

Stockmann and Swingbin nod to each other and rush Tim
Mrs S applies the gag

LINA:

Happy now ?

Tim is unceremoniously tied up and secured

MRS S (to Lina):

You're coming with me my girl

l MUSIC

She grabs Lina roughly and hauls her off

Tim is struggling and grunting in a most undignified manner

Stockmann and Swingbin have a good giggle, and mime Tim in his dress and his wimpy manners. They do a pantomime of Tim's betrayal, and end up pissing themselves laughing soundlessly.

Swingbin drifts over towards Lina's structure and starts examining it in detail. He admires the joins, checks lots of the material, enjoys the texture. Though it's a ramshackle affair, shapeless and meaningless until now, it has a certain rough-hewn charm. It obviously begins to give Swingbin considerable pleasure.

Stockmann returns to his computer and instantly finds himself with an audience of Lady Arty and Pearce

They watch him at work for a bit

Pearce seems more focused on his body, while Lady Arty is intent on the screen

6.

Mrs Swingbin and Lina off the main stage

MRS S:

Lina, I love you as I should, and as I want to. You're my daughter, and that's that. It means I care about you. So I tell you this for your own good... when things get tight, people turn nasty. I don't like the way it's looking back there...
I wish you'd put on a dress...

LINA:

Christ, Mum ! Haven't you picked up anything ?
I can put on a dress with the best of them - it doesn't change anything . I'll still look like what I am , what I want to be - the wrapping just don't matter...

MRS S:

Well if it doesn't matter, do it for me, love. I been through wars, I know what the length of a skirt means.

A considered silence, looking, between them

LINA:

OK, OK, but nothing more, right?
I know my mind, mum. ☹

Lina gets into a dress that Mrs Swingbin has brought for the purpose

7. -

Back at the camp

LADY A-N:

Where did you get these figures?
My lord, this takes me back - gold, oil,
property development, water futures...

Stockmann tries to indicate 'the past'; and his astonishment that she should know anything about the financial world

LADY A-N(cont):

You're surprised .
Don't worry, it's a common fallacy.
How do you think 'old money' keeps its youth ?
Doesn't get bigger under the four poster,
you know.

PEARCE:

Well, I'll be.
I had no idea you were so progressive
I do believe we're in for a few surprises with
you, Lady Arty...

Stockmann indicates to Lady Arty another spread of figures. But Lady Arty's attention starts to drift to the sight of Bernard Swingbin who is now using his considerable strength to straighten out something bent on Lina's building

LADY A-N:

Hmm. Very interesting. *l*

Lady Arty is clearly beginning to flex a bit of sexual muscle in the wake of her new power base amongst the 'youngsters'. She makes her way idly towards Swingbin This leaves Pearce free to flirt with Stockmann

PEARCE:

How the hell did you get batteries to last that long ?

Stockmann makes an elaborate mime to indicate that it's solar powered.

Solar ?

That's foresight.

But you couldn't have known we'd get ourselves into this sort of pickle

Stockmann makes the Boy Scouts' 'Be Prepared' sign Pearce laughs

Don't know what I've been missing, do I ?

You know, I actually think we could make a a bit of a team, you and me - when things get sorted out, that is

Stockmann flashes her his most fetching smile, then gets on with his game. Meanwhile back at the building

LADY A-N:

Like daughter, like father eh Mr Swingbin ?

Swingbin observes his work with pride, smiles and nods

I like to see a man take pride in his work

Swingbin heaves or twists something with great force, and hurts his hand. He mimes soundless scream of pain.

Oh dear dear dear.

Dear Mr Swingbin. Let me look at that

Lady Arty takes his hand

In all this Tim watches and fumes, still struggling

9.

Enter Lina, fuming, storming, with Mrs S in hot pursuit

★ LINA:

I told you ! A dress is a dress, but my
mind is something else !
How many times do I have to say it ?
No ! No ! No !
Even if I thought they were on the level,
which I know they're not, I still wouldn't
want to sleep with them.
And I do think it's shitty of you even to
bring it up when I agreed to the dress

MRS S:

I don't want to see you come to harm, Lina.
It wouldn't take much of an effort, you'd
keep the peace here, and keep yourself out of
trouble

LINA:

But mum, it's my life.
It's the way I see the world.
Even if I only had half an hour left, it
wouldn't be worth my thinking that this is it.
For me, that out there, is it..

She indicates the broad horizon

LINA:

For all we know, there're things out there
we've never even begun to imagine.
I don't care if I go down in the attempt.
What is it you think you're all so desperate
to preserve here ?
Get real, you lot. Look at it. It's barren,
worn out, dry.

I prefer dad's version in some ways - at
least he's tuned into the soft nights, the
quiet breezes, the moist air. Make love,
but don't talk to me about saving the bloody
race - look at us !

MRS S :

Where is your father ?

She goes on a brief hunt to find Swingbin

PEARCE:

✱

You're such a plodder, aren't you ?
 Beautiful in an inchoate sort of way, but
 you just don't capitalise on the opportunities.
 Herman's just thrown up some...

LINA :

✱

Herman is it ?
 Writing's on the screen eh ?

PEARCE:

Perhaps it is .
 If this place really is some uncharted
 territory, then we'll be made - think of
 it - mineral wealth, leisure industry, I
 bet the seas are teeming...

LINA:

✱

But I thought this whole push was about there
 being no-one else ?
 Who are you marketing to ?

Pearce and Stockmann turn to her together and wickedly grin
 while making the 'Be Prepared' sign

You're all raving mad.
 I've got to get this finished X D

She continues her search for building materials - a little
 more frenetic now, and one of her forays takes her offstage,
 perhaps, or at least to an unexplored corner of the stage.
 Just at that moment, Mrs Swinbin finds her husband in too
 close proximity to Lady Arty

MRS S:

What the hell's going on here ?

LADY A-N:

Your husband had a bit of an accident

MRS S:

△

He'll have more than that if this is what it
looks like.
 What do you think you're doing with my Bernie

LADY A-N:

I was just trying to...

MRS S:

Don't give me any of your speeches .
Woman to woman, Lady A, this is my man
we're talking about

Swingbin starts to feel a bit flattered by this contest

LADY A-N:

All right, if that's how you want it - it's
true.
It's all very well for us to draw up these
cursed productivity spreadsheets...
But what about sex ?

Pearce and Stockmann and Tim prick up their ears

It's all very well for all of you, either
baby machines, or married , but what are my
options ? I'm not entirely devoid of feeling
you know - and these nights are getting warmer
and moister with every phase of the moon.
You have to be prepared to share, Mrs Swingbin,
it's the only decent thing to do .

Swingbin is clearly quite pleased about this

MRS S :

Share ? Over my dead body !

LADY A-N :

You're always on about sharing. You wanted me
to do away with privilege, with the advantages
of my birth. All right. You too.
Share the wealth. One for all and all for one.

PEARCE:

Top hole, Lady A !

MRS S:

You silly bloody women !
You think I'm going to fall for that ?
You think a woman like me sweats and toils
to keep a marriage like ours together, and then
just throws it in like that -just because some
snooty old broad's starting to get the hots in
the tropics. This isn't your bloody QEII, lady.
You and your facelifts, and your perfume,
your skin e-bloody-mollients.

MRS S(cont):

You can dabble around as much as you like
because you can always run in for a grease and
oil change, and come out with a brand spanking
new MOT.

Well, not this one, lady, this one's...

They are cut off in their dispute by the unmistakeable sound
loud, screeching, distorted, which had frightened them all before

STOCKMANN:

Jesus Christ !
keep calm every body

LADY A-N:

Gag him !

* Pearce throws her hand over his mouth
Tim scrambles towards the others
Swingbin rushes in front of Mrs S and Lady Arty
They hold their breath as the noise gets louder

Lina enters slowly, holding a battered cassette recorder of
some description.

She walks deliberately towards Stockmann

LINA:

I suppose you wouldn't know anything about
this, would you ?

N (to Pearce)

Solar powered. Cute eh ?

Super-techno.

How could you lose your senses so easily ?

(to Mrs S)

You too.

Well, this is what I think of your stupid
little games.

She tries to stop the tape recorder, but it keeps delivering
its scary sound message. The more she rips it, pounds it,
tears at it, throws it about, the more insistent and louder
the variations on the scare message become.

LINA (starting to weep in the distress of frustration):

What do you have to do ????

She sits down and starts to cry

The tape recorder stops. Everyone looks. Suddenly it explodes into pieces.

I don't believe it ...

This piece could be the last

Lina has clearly found some vital piece towards her structure. She grabs the piece and rushes towards the thing she's building.

Everyone watches her try to fit the piece in. In the distance we hear something we've heard before, the pounding threatening sound which has periodically surfaced without being focused before. For a moment everyone stops in their tracks as if they've really heard something for the first time. They look at the broken tape recorder, then at each other. The strange sound threatens again in the distance.

From now on it will keep returning more frequently, and louder, finally more distinctly.

LINA:

(fist hitting wall)
Any piece could be the last ... how do you tell ?

They just think it's how old I am - but it's not. Pearce had hope, for two seconds, and Mum.

Everything they ever thought could work. Dreams - ideals. It isn't just me.

All of them, if they could just breathe once and remember.

MRS S (to Swingbin) :

You silly old bugger, you silly old bugger

Mrs Swingbin starts angrily, but at his smile she starts to grin, then he laughs more, and by the time she starts to chase him we wonder whether this is in anger or in playful regained lust

She sets off after him. He takes off, Mrs S in hot pursuit

LADY A-N:

What does she mean the last piece ?

Stuss E. Start

(38)

PEARCE:

I've no idea .
Lina ?

Lina looks down at the dress she has put on. The eyes of the rest of them turn to her in her self-consciousness. Herman looks at Pearce, Pearce looks at Tim, who in turn struggles even harder at the ties that bind him, then stares at Lina. Lina looks scared and takes off in the opposite direction from her parents.

PEARCE:

Lina !

Pearce takes off after Lina

Stockmann looks at Lady Arty. Lady Arty looks confused
He makes an appeal to her to let him speak

LADY ARTY:

~~Oh I don't know.~~

Sound of the distant pounding, sounds like chanting

I'm all confused.

Yes, go on

STOCKMANN:

He's right [Tim]. She [Lina] is the one.
She knows something, and that ^{this} thing ^{here} there's the clue. Come on! Lets get her.

He takes off, after Lina, looking back at Lady Arty. Lady Arty looks around, sees herself all alone, screams and goes to follow them. Tim makes an enormous grunt and stops Lady A in mid-tracks. She stops, goes back, unties him, but leaves his gag on. He defiantly removes as much of his drag as he can, and grabs up any semblance of male attire. The effect is that he's dressed half and half - in some light he looks like a woman, in others a man. They race after Stockmann and Pearce. The light is fading, casting strange shadows in the moonlight.

Propellor up

10.

MUSIC

THE CHASE IS ON

(i)

Swingbin is running hard
Mrs S comes after him

(ii)

Lina enters, searches, picks up, throws away
She hears tramping getting closer
Runs and exit

(iii)

Pearce follows soon after. Stockmann, Tim and Lady A bringing up
the rear follow and exeunt

(iv)

Swingbin enters, hears tramping, ducks behind tree

(v)

Mrs S enters, runs across stage, misses him and exit

(vi)

Lina enters on hands and knees, from the other direction,
frantically grabbing at stuff and throwing it away again.
Exit.

(vii)

Pearce enters in the lead. Stockmann (who's losing bits of
clothing) and Tim follow *stay on stage*

STOCKMANN:

Pearce ?

PEARCE:

What ?

She's shocked to hear him speak

STOCKMANN:

It's OK. We got the nod from Lady Arty

PEARCE:

What are you after ?

STOCKMANN:

I have to warn you . This is serious.
It's the Swingbin kid, she knows something.

PEARCE:

You're telling me ?

~ She notices Tim. He seems totally confused. At first he tries to be very manly, having regained his appropriate status- he does some very strange macho posturing with the male side of his garb. Then he thinks it might be the wrong tack, and softens to the female side.

Haven't you made your mind up yet ?

△ Stockmann slaps him. Tim is utterly shocked

STOCKMANN:

Come on, we can't stop

⊖ They race out

(viii)

⊖ Lady A runs in panting. She leans against the tree to catch her breath
+ Swingbin can't see it's not his wife

SWINGBIN:

Now we're alone, no-one'll know what we're up to. You're not going to tell on me are you ?
You want it as much as I do, don't you , love ?

He puts his hands round the trunk and gently strokes her breasts. Lady Arty laps it up and starts moaning. then she makes the mistake of verbalising...

LADY A-N:

Oh yes,

SWINGBIN:

Jenny

LADY A-N:

Oh no (with unbearable pleasure)

SWINGBIN:

Jenny ?

LADY A-N:

Oh, I say, jolly good !

①

Swingbin leaps out from behind the tree, sees who it is, screams, and runs.
Lady A in hot pursuit

(ix)

X Mrs S enters

MRS S :

Bernaaaaaard !

She catches the tail end of Lady A disappearing

MRS S:

You, you, Hunt-club whore !

She gives chase and exit

(x)

~ Tim comes in alone, whirling, twirling, somersaulting, bumbling trying to get rid of his gag. He trips

(xi)

△ Stockmann follows, treads all over Tim. He roars

STOCKMANN:

Pearce ! Come on !

Stockmann exit. Tim gets to his hands and knees

△ (xii)

Pearce comes at a run and treads Tim down again and exit.
Tim tries to get up again and peers into the direction they
took. He seems dazed, confused

○ (xiii)

Swingbin backs in from the other direction.
They back into each other.
Swingbin roars, swivels round and knocks Tim to the ground
again. EXIT. SWINGBIN

⊖ (xiv)

Enter Mrs Swingbin riding on Lady Arty's back

MRS S:

I'll give you horseplay

Swingbin runs off. Tim lays down on the ground before the
horse and rider get to him. They jump him elegantly and
exeunt. Tim stands up, calmly rips off the gag and walks away.

~ (xv)

Lina enters backwards, dragging a huge mouldy canvas with her

+ (xvi)

Pearce enters forwards from the other direction at a rush and
bangs into Lina. She grabs her from behind.
Lina freezes, shivers, clings to her canvas.
The sound of the tramping increases, sound like voices too now
Pearce tightens her grip, both arms around Lina, there's a
moment's stillness, and then she impulsively kisses
passionately into her neck. Lina grabs her hand for a moment.

They do not look at each other.

Pearce exit the way she came.

Lina catches her breath, flings the canvas up onto the
structure and hares off after Pearce

□ (xvii)

Lady Arty comes in reeling - her wig awry, her pearls bust,
her twinset in disarray.
Stockmann follows her, tearing at his clothing like Dr Jekyll
about to transmute

STOCKMANN:

Where is she ?

LADY A- N:

They're all animals X

STOCKMANN (shaking the distressed Lady A):

The kid ! Where is she ?

If she gets the last piece there'll be no
stopping her

The sounds of the tramping hordes are becoming ever more
distinct

⊖ Lady A screams and runs.

Stockmann hears Lina's voice yelling 'Pearce ! Pearce ?'

He backs himself up against the structure

*Propellor
screws*

X (xviii) Pearce - Pearce

Lina rushes in. Sees Stockmann just in time, and brakes.

They are face to face - a showdown

STOCKMANN:

You've got no idea, have you ?

But it's about time you found out.

△ Stockmann unbuckles his belt. Lina screams and runs

Stockmann is wrenching at his clothing as he gives chase

2 (xix)

Enter Swingbin carrying his wife in his arms

MRS S:

This'll do. Put me down.

You just take three deep breaths while I grab
a bit of greenery - the old back's not quite
what it used to be...

□ Mrs S exit. and crosses with Lina whom she doesn't see.

Lina stops dead in her tracks, facing her Dad. She stares at him

LINA:

Dad ?

You've got to help me.

Please ?

He puts his arms out to take her in

SWINGBIN:

bang
Come on ~~cherub~~...

LINA:

No, stop there, not that.
That's not what I want, Dad.

SWINGBIN:

bang
But if you're in trouble, love...

LINA:

You don't know how much. It's life or death,
Da, god's truth. But I don't want that

She stares at him hard and points at his braces

I want those

SWINGBIN:

What ?

LINA:

Those

SWINGBIN:

These ?

LINA:

Yes, those.
I can't believe it - the last piece.
I don't need anything else .

SWINGBIN :

But...

He indicates that he'll lose his pants

LINA:

I really need them, Dad, you can't imagine how
rough your mates are playing out there.

SWINGBIN:

But I don't see..

LINA:

No, you won't for a minute.
You'll have to trust me
It just has to be an act of faith.
It's my salvation, dad, yours too, if you only
knew
Do you think I'll love you any the less ?

The noise of the tramping, and shrieks from the beach is really starting to impose. Swingbin thinks for a moment, then removes his braces and holds them out to Lina. His pants slowly and ceremoniously fall to the ground. He steps out of his pants and starts to remove his other clothing as well.

SWINGBIN:

Quickly, give us yours.
It'll give you more time to do what you need
to. Come on.

They quickly exchange clothing

LINA:

Dad, I...

SWINGBIN:

Go on, hurry now

She goes and Swingbin goes in the opposite direction.

11.

Lina in her father's clothing is hell bent towards the structure. Suddenly she trips and falls. She has fallen on a glass bottle. She desperately wants to read the message inside, but keeps looking over her shoulder for the mob after her. Suddenly she fishes the note out and reads quietly

*

LINA(reading):

The United Kingdom Its an old copy of the Guardian
'seen by all of Europe and the more humane
areas of Britain, as an already insular and
self-interested entity, destined to sink
beneath the weight of Tory arrogance....'

She turns the paper over to see what it is

LINA(cont) :

~~It's an old copy of The Newstine...~~

...steps have already been taken to cut the offending area off from the main body of Europe and set it adrift. Already referred to as the Untied Kingdom, recent climatic changes have...

Oh my god... *This is England*

The distant voices have now become articulate

MOBVOICE:

Here we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go

⊖ Lina races off

12.

* Pearce, Stockmann, Lady A. and Mrs S all appear at a rush.
They stop pant, bend.

Enter Swingbin in Lina's clothing. He waits, crouches, then puts his fingers in his mouth, pulls a face and yells

SWINGBIN:

Nya nya nya nya nya nya !

STOCKMANN:

Grab her ! quick !

He tries to get away, but they throw a coat over his head and bundle him off.

STOCKMANN:

Now we'll see what's what

⊖ Pearce and Mrs Swingbin look at each other a bit warily.
Lady Arty tries to pull herself together

EXIT ALL?

13.

Back at the camp, Lina hauls herself up into the structure. She is pushing and pulling it into shape, and fixing her father's braces to the big canvas

Suddenly the others rush in with the bundle. They stop dead in their tracks just as Lina hoists the mouldy old sail on her Dad's braces. The structure is clearly a barque, shuddery, pieced together, but beautiful, romantic, and ready to sail

They look at it, at her - see that it's Lina - and look to the bundle which they dump.

PEARCE:

But if you're there, who's this ?

STOCKMANN:

If that lame excuse for a male has fouled us up again...

They unravel the bundle and Swingbin in his daughter's dress tips out.

MRS S:

Bernard Swingbin ! What the hell are you up to ?

SWINGBIN:

Search me.
Ask her

MOBVOICE:

Ere we go, ere we go, ere we...

LINA:

It's England

LADY A-N:

Pardon ?

LINA:

That's where we are ..
The south east. They cut us adrift.

MRS S:

The suns' got you, luv, I knew it'd happen

LINA:

I don't know how long we've been drifting

SWINGBIN:

Δ The weather

~~It~~ had already started to change...

PEARCE:

The bloody Chunnel - I knew it all along. They got wind of this didn't they - it didn't have anything to do with transport at all - solid concrete mooring, to try to stop us from drifting

Lina's nodding

The noise is getting quite violent

Δ STOCKMANN (who by now bears an uncanny resemblance to a skinhead):

What about them ?

LINA:

God knows how long they've been roaming around out there

MRS S:

But who are they ?

LINA:

** Δ*

Who else ?

Poor boys, ... boys without hope .
When's it ever been different ?
What else did you expect ?

LADY ARTY:

Then we must remain, and defend the realm !

LINA:

☐

Not me. I'm off. I'm not swearing allegiance to the Flag . I don't care how tiny the island is - if it's still punch-drunk from the days of glory then I'm not interested . ~~I don't care~~
~~perish in the attempt to uncover some truth~~
~~that never had glory, never had glory, never had~~
~~slavery...~~

LADY ARTY:

Oh it's all in ruins.

MUSIC

LINA:

Maybe not, Lady Arty.
 Let me tell you something, all of you.
 From up here it looks beautiful.
 The moon's picking up the wet pebbles on the
 beach. And I know that out on the high seas,
 there's the most unimaginably tender breeze.
 A perfect moonlit night, a moist warmth to
 caress your limbs on deck. The perfumes on
 the night air might have wafted in from spice
 boat four hundred years ago - from the exotic
 east.
 It's the kind of night when people fall in love
 That is also the undeniable truth

SWINGBIN:

Is it safe?

LINA:

Nothing's safe.
 But I've built it as best I could.
~~And it's still afloat.~~
And I think its gonna be V. good

Mrs S looks about, and climbs aboard. Swingbin offers Pearce a hand. Lina looks at her.

PEARCE:

Like I said, Chippie, the winner's..

+ Pearce starts to climb aboard

LADY ARTY:

Where's Mr Tim?

PEARCE:

I saw him wandering around up in those sand
 dunes

LINA:

I think he's lost...
 Lady Arty?

LADY ARTY:

Sorry my dear.
 I simply can't do it.

PEARCE:

But ...

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They all turn to look at Stockmann. He is unrecognisable from what we assume to constitute the mob. He walks away, and calls back amid the chanting

STOCKMANN:

Why not ?
They need leaders too

+ He growls ferociously at Lady Arty who is spurred into jumping ship. She bursts into tears. Pearce goes to comfort her. Pearce has also undergone a clothing transformation. She is stripped of most of her smartness, but the powerpads remain fixed firmly to her shoulders

LINA:

Get rid of those.

PEARCE:

Why ?
I'm practically naked as it is

LINA:

They'll sink us.
Get rid of them.

Pearce rips away the power pads and heaves them off. The effect is of weighing anchor. The boat creaks forward.

NAUGHTY
LINA:

Dad, can you handle the rudder ?

SWINGBIN:

Right

LINA:

Pearce, you get up front, and watch out for snags.

We hear again the noise of the roaming hordes, now intermingling with some sound of the hopeful sea

Mum, Lady Arty, get on those oars, this old crate's going to need all the help she can get.

Oh my eyes, will you look at that moon

X-TIMER

Mum (29)

END

→ LXQ 29 Go (3 Secs) as Actors Leave.
H/L 10