

DREAMERS

a three act play

by

B E Turner

CAST:

THOMAS: Thomas Young-Felo MA. The proprietor of a second hand bookshop. Felo is pronounced "Feelo". He wears a suit, with a waistcoat, which is old or second hand but well cared for. Aged about fifty or so.

KATE: Katherine de Bris BA. A school teacher in her early to mid twenties. She dresses in an individual style. Sometimes the colours clash. She has a navy blue top with yellow parrots on it. (The surname is a terrible pun on "debris".)

RUTH: Thomas's daughter as a dream figure. A child.

DOMINIC: Kate's father as a dream figure. These two parts played by the actors that play THOMAS and KATE.

SCENE: Various. The play is set in Wellington, New Zealand, however the director could set it in any city if the locations can be simulated.

SET: The set should be kept simple. The scene and mood changes can be indicated by a lighting plot which provides cross fades, and should avoid black outs. It is not necessary to restrict the various locations to specific areas of the stage. For the dreams a single spot for each actor with a suitable "dream" colour could be utilised. Cross lighting, slightly forward of vertical, is quite effective. (However the designer need not feel restricted by these comments.)

MUSIC: The piano version of the Gymnopedies by Erik Satie. No 1 for DREAMERS, No 2 for LOVERS, No 3 for FRIENDS.

NOTE: Act 1 was originally written as a one act play and may be presented as such.

DREAMERS ACT 1.

(Thomas's bookshop. Enter Thomas with a book.)

THOMAS: Good evening.

This is my shop.

Just a second hand bookshop you might say, but it is my kingdom, and second hand objects do have a quality; often more quality than the flashy trash turned out on the modern treadmills.

The set is not intended to be representational; you'll have to paint it with your own imagination.

I'll place just one book on the table, as a symbol of the many we have here.

(Reads from flyleaf)

"Letters
of
Thomas Carlyle
to his Youngest Sister.
Edited with an
Introductory
Essay by
Charles Townsend Copeland.
Lecturer on English Literature
at Harvard University.
With Portraits and Other
Illustrations.
London.
Chapman and Hall
Limited.
1899."

Almost as old as myself eh? Well not quite. Marked down from six dollars to three dollars. How are the mighty fallen?

(Enter Kate looking around the shop)

THOMAS: *(Aside)* What an attractive young lady. A more gracious adornment to the room than all my tattered decorations. I should avoid such feelings.

KATE: Excuse me.

THOMAS: Yes?

KATE: I'm looking for an old volume.

THOMAS: At your service madam.

KATE: *(Aside)* Beware the careless word. *(Real)* I mean an old book.

THOMAS: The shop is full of them madam. Did you have a particular title in mind?

KATE: No. I need one for the set of a play.

THOMAS: Then you would do best to chose at random.

(She picks up the book)

KATE: "The letters of Thomas Carlyle". That looks stuffy enough.

THOMAS: Stuffy? Thomas Carlyle? Stuffy?

KATE: Well he was a musty Victorian wasn't he? Has it been soaking in water?

THOMAS: Perhaps; it may have done. Perhaps someone with a heart wept over it.

KATE: Three dollars. I don't know.

THOMAS: Two dollars shall be sufficient. *(Aside while she looks in her purse)* Musty Victorian indeed. You might say that Dickens was a musty Victorian mightn't you. *(REAL)* We have some Webster also madam, if you would prefer a fusty Elizabethan.

KATE: He was Jacobean wasn't he? Here are your two dollars. *(She hands the coin or note to him. He puts it in his pocket not the till.)*

THOMAS: Thank you. Shall I wrap it in crepe madam?

KATE: Did I say something wrong?

THOMAS: I do hold Carlyle somewhat in esteem.

KATE: Do you? We have made different value judgements on the matter.

THOMAS: You have studied Carlyle, enough to form a judgement?

KATE: No. I shall read the book and come back and tell you what I think. Don't worry about the wrapping paper.

(She goes)

THOMAS: Value judgements. Cheeky young thing wasn't she. It's nice to see a bit of spirit nowadays. Time to shut up the shop and go home. I said it wasn't representational didn't I. The magic of your imagination will have to whisk away time and space also. *(He goes into his flat and hangs up his jacket. Very tidy.)* Baked beans for tea. Once it would have been clam soup with fried croutons, to be followed by chicken and asparagus; and a chilled white German wine. How are the mighty fallen?

(Kate comes into her flat carrying a letter and the book)

KATE: "The letters of Thomas Carlyle to his youngest sister" Why do I get roped into these things? *(Mimics)* "You can't use books out of the school library, you never know what the little brats might do to them". I don't indeed. Who'd have third formers prancing around the stage crying out at the top of the question? Oh well they'll be clapped for it. Most tyrannically. *(The letter)* Another outpouring from long lost Bruce. Dear Bruce, I must write to you and say that I have found another lover, that might shut you up. Another lover? Not if I can help it. Not for a while. *(Sudden flash)* Why don't you just go away and lose yourself? *(She tears the letter and throws it in the bin)* *(better)* Now that man in the bookshop; I should have an affair with someone like that. Maturity. Old fashioned charm. He wouldn't settle his mind on his lustful requirements. Maybe it's you old girl. Maybe you are just a, a sexual object.

(Thomas asleep. Kate asleep, playing the part of Ruth. The first dream.)

RUTH: Daddy. Can you hear me?

THOMAS: Ruth. It's Ruth my daughter, my little girl. Where are you?

RUTH: Over the sea daddy.

THOMAS: Where?

RUTH: Over the sea. Over the storm-tossed waves.

THOMAS: Will you come to see me?

RUTH: No Daddy. I'm drowned.

THOMAS: What? Drowned? No not drowned.

RUTH: I'm drowned by time. I'm drowned by neglect. I'm over the sea. I'm drowned by forgetfulness.

THOMAS: Drowned?

RUTH: In your mind, I am drowned.

(Thomas wakes up.)

THOMAS: Is it morning? Did I sleep? What dreams of... Cold morning. *(He opens the curtains and the dawn light shines through)* "Look the morn with russet mantle clad..." The image transcends reality, but it sits poorly in the scene. I would censure the Bard for his lack of care. "Russet mantle clad." We look backwards through the centuries at his brave words and wonder at the magic. What did I dream of? My dear lost daughter. The dear drowned, the abandoned drowned, the living drowned, a castaway of a dead father. No, not really dead; alive now, under another sun. It goes down as this comes up. How are you now my dear, my milk-warm darling, my bundle of once-infant joy? And your mother? Oh your mother; I knew her well. Still in the bawdy bar. Still seeking the tinsel pleasure. It's gone in an instant and her face is tired lines and smeared lipstick. Cold morning. Why did I dream of my daughter? What prompted that? Grown up now. I'll never know her like that. I put her from my mind I did. The opium of neglect. Did you grow up to be like that young girl, the one that came into the shop seeking dunnage? Over the storm-tossed you are, over the wine-dark.... Take a sip. Put on your jacket. It's off to work.

(Exit Thomas and then enter bookshop. Enter Kate carrying the book looking at the shelves.)

THOMAS: How is the play going?

KATE: The play? Oh... Yes... we open next week.

THOMAS: An amateur production?

KATE: Amateur? It's a school play.

THOMAS: Hardly amateur.

KATE: I read your book. It's commonplace. Look, I'll quote at random. *(She opens the book at random and reads mimicking a Scots accent.)* (Page 60) "My Dear Jenny, According to promise I set about writing you a word of Scotch news, now that I am fairly settled here and know how things are. The railway train whirled me away from you rapidly that evening..." Shall I go on?

THOMAS: *(Aside)* Please do dear lady, the tone of your dulcet voice is most pleasing to the ear. *(Real)* The actual lives of the great are usually commonplace are they not?

KATE: If they are why publish them, why sell them?

THOMAS: I only charged you two dollars madam, I did not represent it to you as a great work. After all it was only intended to prop up the leg of a table in a play.

KATE: How did you know that?

THOMAS: You told me it was for a play.

KATE: I mean about the leg of the table.

THOMAS: It's the only reason for the existence of book like that. How else can one correct faults in carpentry?

KATE: I thought you said you held his works in high esteem.

THOMAS: I hold the works of Shakespeare in high esteem, but that doesn't mean to say I have to like Titus Andronicus. You can't judge a mans life-work by a few inconsequential letters published by some don with a eye to sifting prestige from another's reputation. Have you actually read any of Carlyle's works?

KATE: I read this one, and the introduction. I thought he was a nice man, wasn't he?

THOMAS: I think he was.

KATE: But didn't he love the Nazis?

THOMAS: He died before the word was coined.

KATE: Well the Nasties loved him.

THOMAS: Indeed they did.

KATE: Why was that then?

(Thomas walks about pontificating.)

THOMAS: A matter of a, a corrupt regime needing a respectable philosophy to bolster it's image; but he had no affinity with a that rabble; all he said was that the salvation to our political problems lay in a return to a simpler society and the rule of the strong just man; a man who could not be obtained by a popular election. Of course there are flaws in the argument; the system that gives you a Perikles may also give you a Kleon.

KATE: Kleon?

THOMAS: The little Hitler of ancient Athens.

KATE: You prevaricate, you prevaricate as much as the introduction; still I like you; and I like your Mister Carlyle. Do you have any more books you can sell me?

THOMAS: About Carlyle?

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: Not in the shop madam.

KATE: What's all this madam business. You can call me Kate.

THOMAS: *(Aside)* Altogether too familiar isn't she, for such a brief encounter. Call me Kate. Kiss me Kate. Love me Kate. Sweet Kate. *(Real)* Certainly madam.

KATE: Kate.

THOMAS: Certainly, Kate.

KATE: And what is your name?

THOMAS: Thomas. Thomas Young-Felo madam.

KATE: Call me Kate.

THOMAS: Yes, Kate.

KATE: That's better. Are you one of the original Young-Felos?

THOMAS: I am no longer a young fellow.

KATE: Oh I'm sure you are. And you have no books on Carlyle?

THOMAS: Only in my personal library. I could lend you a volume if I could be sure that it would be returned.

KATE: Oh thank you. Thank you very much. I would be certain to return it.

THOMAS: I'll make a selection and leave it at the desk. If my partner is here when you call will you ask him for it?

KATE: All right.

THOMAS: And if you would leave your name and address, when you come.

KATE: Katherine, de Bris.

THOMAS: de Bris?

KATE: Yes, the remnants of a war.

THOMAS: Oh surely not.

(But she has gone)

THOMAS: Sudden departures. Life is full of them. I would like to call her back, into my dreams, to talk to me. To engage in a stimulating intellectual discussion. As a student... as a daughter... as a votress, seeking wisdom together. Dreams.

(Thomas's dream. Enter Kate as a dream figure)

THOMAS: I'm a little careworn, a little shop-soiled. Will you accept than?

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: Once I was an Oxford scholar, but I made the wrong attachments. It was my fault. I made a mistake.

KATE: Tell me about it.

THOMAS: Will you understand?

KATE: Tell me.

THOMAS: I was a brilliant fellow in my school days. Hear my confession. I was a brilliant fellow... Blessed with a retentive memory and the ability to re-arrange and organize facts; along with a modicum of skill in the arena. They made me a Rhodes scholar and sent me to the famous English university to pursue my studies.

KATE: And you were successful?

THOMAS: I was a brilliant student. I made the boat crew also, but I was not successful.

KATE: What happened?

THOMAS: I married a barmaid.

KATE: Was that a tragedy?

THOMAS: Yes.

KATE: Why?

THOMAS: We were incompatible. I left England in order to escape from the situation. I had made a commitment to finish my studies but I broke it. I could not ask my parents to continue with the financial assistance. I had to make my own way. So here I am, the proprietor of a second hand bookshop.

KATE: How the mighty are fallen.

THOMAS: Yes,

KATE: And were there any children?

THOMAS: Children? Yes. There was a daughter. She would be about your age now. And you? You have a brilliant degree?

KATE: Of yes.

THOMAS: And you have a brilliant future ahead of you?

KATE: My future is assured.

(She leaves the dream and dissolves into the darkness of reality.)

THOMAS: Her future is assured. My past is abhorred. It's the old story. You make a mistake at one time in your life and live thereafter in the shadow of regret; and it is your conscience that denies you salvation. There's no cure in these dream shadows.

(He goes into the dark. Kate in her flat with a book)

KATE: So. *(Reads from title page)* "The Last Words of Thomas Carlyle. London Longman, Green and Co 1892 All rights reserved" *(Turns to the back)* And a note here: "What a boring book." So that's what you really think Mr Young-Felo. You really are an old volume, picked up at random in a second hand bookshop. But what do I feel? Something special? Would he have a place for me in his heart?

(Kate's dream. Enter Thomas as a dream figure.)

KATE: I'm a little careworn, a little insecure. Will you accept that?

THOMAS: Of course I shall.

KATE: I've a good mind, I know I have, but I never see to make full use of it. I have a degree, but it is mediocre. My achievements as a teacher are, average.

THOMAS: It doesn't matter.

KATE: I put on a big show, but inside I don't feel confident.

THOMAS: And what is the cause of that?

KATE: I never had a father you know; not a real one; not someone I met. He was a Frenchman and he left mother when I was two. Sometimes I have vague impressions. She loved him, but he betrayed her. All the men I've ever met, they always seem to disappear for some reason or another.

THOMAS: Did your mother ever re-marry?

KATE: Just one man after another, and they all treated me with such deference. We came to New Zealand with a man she met, but that didn't last. She's living with a sheep farmer and his children now.

THOMAS: Is she happy?

KATE: I never liked her men.

THOMAS: Why is that?

KATE: I wanted my own father.

THOMAS: Will you let me be your father?

KATE: You?

THOMAS: Yes. Let me try.

KATE: *(Pause)* Perhaps. *(Pause)* The Youngs, and the Young-Felos, they're among the richest families in the city aren't they?

THOMAS: Yes

KATE: Why do you work in a second hand bookshop then?

THOMAS: I need to do something to keep myself active, and I love my books.

KATE: And you are, well educated?

THOMAS: I have degrees, cum laud.

KATE: "With praise", yes. And you are not married?

THOMAS: I was married once, but my wife died, of consumption.

KATE: Was it consumption?

THOMAS: Perhaps a difficult childbirth. Ask me when you see me in the flesh.

(He goes into the darkness of illusion.)

KATE: I know he has had a sad life, you can see it in his eyes. How shall we meet again? Something more intimate than a shop conversation. I know, I shall invite him to my next soiree. What did he say? Leave my name and address: I'll write a letter in case he isn't there.

(Exit Kate. Enter Thomas in his shop reading her letter.)

THOMAS: "Dear Mister Young Fellow" She knows how to spell my name. F.E.L.O. Felo. "Thank you for the book, which I have read assiduously, albeit with some difficulty owing to the convolutions of style. I think he is a nice man although I do not particularly agree with what he has to say. I am holding an intimate soiree on the twentieth instant at number sixteen The Terrace Gardens to commence at six post meridian (approx). You would be welcome to attend. One of the rules of these occasions is that intellectual matters are never mentioned. Your obdt Servant, Katherine de Bris." She's having me on "P.S. I have deliberately couched this epistle in the manner of your mentor in order to prove to you that I have actually read the book." Well well. Yes I might just go.

(The soiree in Kate's flat. Party chatter. The guests are imagined [probably] and these imaginary people may be described as follows:

Marion: plump friendly blonde with curly hair and yellow dress, sitting on the couch with cat.

Ted: enthusiastic young schoolteacher. Leather elbows. Curly brown hair. White wine in tall glass.

Mary: teds wife. Tall. Slim. Black party frock.

Paul: poet. 6'3". Bushy moustache. Dalmatian.

Adrienne: blonde attractive guitar playing anorexic.

Jack: middle aged barman who writes limericks.

one or two others.)

KATE: I'm glad you could come.

THOMAS: I'm glad to be here.

KATE: And you haven't felt neglected?

THOMAS: No. I had an interesting discussion with the young lady sitting on the couch, about cats,

KATE: Marion.

THOMAS: Yes. I was going to mention T.S. Elliot but I wasn't sure if that could be termed intellectual.

KATE: Oh, that was just me being silly.

THOMAS: In what way?

KATE: *(She smiles and touches his arm)* Do you like cats?

THOMAS: Personally I am neutral; but still I would fight for their continued survival.

KATE: Why is that?

THOMAS: If I were to explain that Kate I would have to involve you in a philosophical discussion.

KATE: Philosophical?

THOMAS: Or intellectual.

KATE: That would never do. *(She turns aside to speak to a guest for a moment)*

THOMAS: *(Aside)* I feel something when I am with her; something special; a form of energy. I should ask her out for dinner. Do you think she would go with an old chap like me? Would she tell me I was foolish to want to?

KATE: *(Comes back)* Sorry. What were you saying?

THOMAS: We were talking about cats.

KATE: Yes, now tell me about them.

THOMAS: All about cats?

KATE: Yes. How you fight for their existence even though you merely tolerate them.

THOMAS: Well you did say there were to be no intelligible discussions.

KATE: Give me your unintelligible observations then.

THOMAS: Say I hated cats; it would not be a good idea for me to kill one of them because it would be detrimental to the common good; it might even be detrimental to my own good.

KATE: Why do you say that?

THOMAS: When a creature dies all nature is diminished, and so are we because we are part of nature. No man is an island.... You know the saying.

KATE: But what will happen if a cat kills a mouse.

(Thomas moves about quite a bit when he pontificates)

THOMAS: Then cheese will survive.

KATE: And if I eat cheese then I shall survive.?

THOMAS: And the mouse will die because there shall be no cheese to eat, and the cat will die because there shall be no mice to eat, and my friend that is fond of the cat, shall be unhappy because the cat has died, so she shall not be hungry and will not eat the cheese, so the mice shall have cheese to eat...

KATE: Do your arguments always go around in circles.

THOMAS: Only when discussions are not permitted.

KATE: Oh yes.

THOMAS: There is a balance, an interaction, between humanity and nature. Man was made by God to live in the world. It is his nature to live in the world and once he departs from that he becomes lost. Do I sound pontifical?

KATE: Not at all. What you say is most interesting. *(Aside)* What is all this talk about? Idle chatter at a party. It's the superficial semblance of reality. But is it reality? No. Underneath the words, the particles of speech, there is a deeper reality; in between the lines I feel that flow. Magnetism. But would he want to ask me out? someone young and frivolous... Why is it always the man that has to ask?

THOMAS: I wonder if I might...

KATE: Might what...

THOMAS: Return the favour....

(There is a knock at the door (or the doorbell rings)).

KATE: Favour? Oh, excuse me there's the door.

(She goes to the door. He moves back a little. Her mimes are done in keeping with Thomas's aside. The man who enters is young and handsome. He

is carrying roses and a bottle of wine. He is just a friend. He does not appear on stage.)

THOMAS: *(Aside)* Look at the young stud. That's more stag for her satisfaction. He gives her flowers and she kisses him on the cheek, and leads him to the wine, and they shall dance together, Bacchus with vine leaves in his hair, and Ague trailing leaves of myrtle, columbine, sweet herbs of the earth. The spring satyr for you my dear, not the autumn sedge.

(She leaves the young friend by the table and comes back to Thomas)

KATE: I'm sorry, he had to change the tyre, so he was late.

THOMAS: You have some good friends.

KATE: Yes I'm lucky.

THOMAS: And roses. *(She is still holding them)*

KATE: Aren't they beautiful?

THOMAS: Pristine. Dew kist. All that is fresh in the world. You should hold such things to your heart.

KATE: Now you are being romantic.

THOMAS: Hardly romantic. Just...

KATE: Yes?

THOMAS: Oh nothing, just an old pedant.

KATE: Don't be silly.

THOMAS: No. *(Pause)* But now my young friend, I must go.

KATE: Must you?

(She touches his arm. The lights and background conversation fade. The lights come up on her alone in her flat.)

KATE: He left. There had been some sort of warmth between us; a kind of tingle. He became distant. The switch had been turned off. Flat somehow. I don't know why. They've all gone. The only thing left to do is clean up and go to bed.

(Thomas's flat. Enter Thomas.)

THOMAS: I enjoyed the party. Foolish of me to think I could get close to her. And so to bed.

(The dream. They both appear as dream figures. They cannot see as their eyes are closed and although they reach they cannot touch.)

KATE: Are you there?

THOMAS: Where?

KATE: Can I see you?

THOMAS: No.

KATE: I try to reach you. You are not there.

THOMAS: I ride the night-horse, riven by the billowing waves of sleep. I cannot cross the gulf.

KATE: Are you there?

THOMAS: Where am I? Where do I sit? On the mermaids knee?

KATE: Are you there?

THOMAS: I cannot give coherence to my thoughts.

KATE: I would like to meet you.

THOMAS: Where?

KATE: In my dreams, in the netherland, in the primrose centre of your heart, where peace resides.

THOMAS: I cannot.

KATE: What?

THOMAS: See.

KATE: Why?

THOMAS: The clouds of sleep billow between us. We are deep-drowned, deep in seabed's caves. We are somnolent. Sleepwalkers, blind in our dream.

KATE: Open your eyes.

THOMAS: I cannot.

KATE: Why?

THOMAS: I would awake to the dream of the real world.

KATE: Are you afraid?

THOMAS: What?

KATE: Afraid.

THOMAS: What?

KATE: To see.

THOMAS: But we all are.

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: You also?

KATE: Yes. I seek dreams in sugar and silk. I am seduced by the soft pleasures of the world.

THOMAS: Yes.

KATE: Will you not come?

THOMAS: Come?

KATE: Touch me.

THOMAS: Touch?

KATE: Awaken me from that dream of death.

THOMAS: I cannot

KATE: What?

THOMAS: Reach.

KATE: What?

THOMAS: Touch.

KATE: You cannot?

THOMAS: No.

KATE: Why?

THOMAS: It is dark. It is a dream. In the dreamworld you cannot touch.

KATE: Cannot touch?

THOMAS: No.

KATE: Then I shall never awaken.

THOMAS: No.

KATE: Never awaken.

THOMAS: No.

KATE: Goodnight.

THOMAS: Goodnight my dear.

KATE: Goodnight. I shall rest on my bed of roses.

THOMAS: May the stars touch thy eyes. May the sandman come and carry thee to the mystic castle where kine graze and the swans see miracles. I cannot touch thy heart. I cannot see thy face. The night shall rock thee to rest on the billows of a dream and lead thee to peace.

KATE: Goodnight my father.

THOMAS: Goodnight my child.

KATE: Goodnight.

THOMAS: Goodnight.

SLOW CURTAIN.

ACT 2. LOVERS

(Enter Thomas.

Music: gymnopedie number two by Erik Satie.)

THOMAS: Hello friends.

Did you ever stop to wonder what you were?

It is a profound thought isn't it, the meaning of life, and all that.

We might be puppets, like Pinocchio, controlled by the strings of The Almighty's thought.

Or we might be actors controlled by the skein of the playwrights lines.

The Greeks had a legend concerning the three Fates.

They were women of power, who sat by their mystic loom weaving a tapestry into the warp and weft of our lives.

And if they dropped a thread, that's you gone down the gurgler, another entry in the books of Amnesty International.

What do we have here?

I'll just pick up this one and put it back in it's proper place.

(Mimes picking up a thread and putting it back in place. The soiree in Kate's flat as in act 1.)

KATE: I'm glad you could come.

THOMAS: I'm glad to be here.

KATE: And you haven't felt neglected?

THOMAS: No. I had an interesting discussion with the young lady sitting on the couch, about cats,

KATE: Marion.

THOMAS: Yes. I was going to mention T.S. Elliot but I wasn't sure if that could be termed intellectual.

KATE: Oh, that was just me being silly.

THOMAS: In what way?

KATE: *(She smiles and touches his arm)* Do you like cats?

THOMAS: Personally I am neutral; but I would fight for their continued survival.

KATE: Why is that?

THOMAS: If I were to explain that Kate I would have to involve you in a philosophical discussion.

KATE: Philosophical?

THOMAS: Or intellectual.

KATE: That would never do. *(The phone rings and she turns aside to answer it)*

THOMAS: *(Aside)* I feel something when I am with her; something special; a form of energy. I should ask her out for dinner. Do you think she would go with an old chap like me? Would she tell me I was foolish to want to?

(The thread.)

KATE: *(Comes back)* Sorry, one of my guests rang to say he can't come.

THOMAS: Problems?

KATE: A puncture, and a flat spare tyre. What were you saying?

THOMAS: We were talking about cats.

KATE: So we were.

THOMAS: I wondered...

KATE: Yes?

THOMAS: If I could return the compliment.

KATE: Compliment?

THOMAS: In return for the soiree.

KATE: Do you hold them too?

THOMAS: Oh no, not any more. I thought perhaps a dinner, for the two of us.

KATE: Yes, yes, I would like that.

THOMAS: I could cook something.

KATE: Cook something?

THOMAS: Oh yes. Never fear madam, I am a dab hand at cookery when I set my mind to it.

KATE: *(Aside)* He called me "madam".

(She touches his arm. They smile. The lights and conversation fade. Kate in her flat)

KATE: A week later. Tonight, dinner with Thomas Young-Felo. I know I feel something for him. Something special. But what do I want? A lover, or a friend, or a father? Or a glass of wine and a red rose in a silver vase. The family are leaders in the business world and the centre of the fluttering social scene. *(Puts on a poshe voice)*. How do you do Lady Carlton-Carruthers? Would he wear a dinner suit with a white carnation in the button-hole and sit back puffing a cigar after the meal?

THOMAS: *(As a dream figure)* Does the smoke bother you, my dear?

KATE: *(Coughing genteelly)* Not in the least.

THOMAS: Will you have a little more brandy?

KATE: I have had ample sufficiency thank you.

THOMAS: Not a bad drop. Can't say the same about the cigar though. Yes that will be all James. *(Waves the butler away)* Nothing like a decent Havana. Still Fidel put a stop to that didn't he.

KATE: I thought...

THOMAS: What?

KATE: I thought we might, become friends.

THOMAS: Friends? My dear girl, of course we are friends. Here, as a token of our friendship.

(He puts the imaginary mink about her shoulders.)

KATE: Oh, mink, how beautiful...

THOMAS: A mere trifle, and this, it's for you.

(He gives her a black jewel case. She opens it. It is all mimed.)

KATE: Diamonds.

THOMAS: See how they glisten with a diffuse glow, as though photographed by a camera out of focus.

KATE: And for all these, what do you want?

THOMAS: I want to be a father to you. I want your friendship.

KATE: Just my friendship?

THOMAS: I want to calm away life's troubles. I have no desire for anything else.

KATE: Let me...

THOMAS: What?

KATE: Let me hold your hand.

THOMAS: My dear girl... Yes hold my hand. *(Exit)*

(Back to reality)

KATE: What romantic twaddle. He can't be wealthy, those suits of his look like they've come from St Vincent de Paul. Is he the black sheep of the family? Surely they could find a place for him on the board - No need to run that seedy bookshop. Are we ready? As well as can be. Let us enjoy the wine.

(Exit. Enter Thomas).

THOMAS: It's all on the stove.

Potatoes and schnitzel, with asparagus in a wine sauce.

Best medium white Chateau du Plonk.

Bit of a far cry from German wine and croutons.

But what of my guest Kate? Is she a child, or is she a woman?

Is she the lover that I have always wanted, that I have always sought; the pure one that creeps into my dreams?

Or is she like the one I left behind?

As dead as the light in the cold cathedral of space between the mind and the moon.

Could we become lovers?

Or just remain friends?

Or shall we just dream?

(Kate enters into his dream)

KATE: I can give you warmth. The warmth of my smile. The warmth of my being.

THOMAS: Will I ever see it? Will I ever meet my ideal of love.?

KATE: I am your ideal of love. I am the girl with the tender heart and the bright mind.

THOMAS: And you will come to me? You will come to me and give me that warmth?

KATE: Shall I give you a big hug daddy?

THOMAS: I shall have no hugs now? I have no one to love me.

KATE: But I can love you, like a daughter.

THOMAS: Like a daughter?

KATE: Like a daughter. Like a friend. Like a student of knowledge. Like a lover.

THOMAS: Like a lover?

KATE: Yes, like a lover.

THOMAS: Will you hold me in your arms?

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: Forever?

KATE: Yes, forever.

(He enfolds her in his arms. A tender embrace. There is music and romance. Then the real world appears. He comes down into the light and she settles back into the dark.)

THOMAS: You silly old duffer. Your thoughts are a Mills and Boon rearrangement of reality. You make gorgeous sand castles in your fantasies and when you open your eyes the sea comes and they dissolve into the waves.

(Back to reality they sit at the table. This is the meal.)

KATE: Very nice dessert.

THOMAS: Only out of a tin I'm afraid.

KATE: Now we should have cigars and chocolates.

THOMAS: Well I'm sorry, I didn't think of cigars, and chocolates.

KATE: *(Pause)* You're not wearing a dinner suit either.

THOMAS: Dinner suit? It's against my religious principles.

KATE: Really?

THOMAS: I wore a dinner suit once. When I was in England. It was a terrible mistake.

KATE: Was it?

THOMAS: I had a friend, in a band in a Chelsea restaurant. I wanted to see him play so I borrowed a white tuxedo. Well it didn't fit for a start and I wasn't told that you don't wear white in winter. Then this woman took me for one of the waiters. They all wear white you know. "I'll hava shame agen shanks waida." Too much Chardonnay. She even called the manager when I wouldn't serve her.

KATE: *(Laughs)* Isn't proper dress to be expected if one is a Young, or a Young-Felo?

THOMAS: Why should it be?

KATE: Well,, the Youngs in particular have a reputation, I mean you're rich and social, and you have members of parliament.

THOMAS: True, my blue-stocking sister was once the member for Karori, when the labour wasn't right wing, and yes, the Youngs are rich and social, the Young-Felos are comfortable, and social, but you don't hear much about the Felos.

KATE: No you don't, you don't hear anything.

THOMAS: The Felos are left wing radicals and Aytalian fisherman from Island Bay, at least most of them are. My father was one of them until he changed his name to Young-Felo.

KATE: So your father is a left wing radical?

THOMAS: He was until he bought a fish and chip shop and became a capitalist.

KATE: There's money in fish and chips.

THOMAS: There certainly is. Then he sold the shop and bought a restaurant. A very high class restaurant too. And he fell in love with one of his high class customers. Caviar and chips.

KATE: And so you reverted to type did you?

THOMAS: Perhaps. *(Aside)* They never really want to see me do they. I married the plebeian woman; the fishwife that cries out fish-oh!, what-ho!,, Godot! *(Real)* Brandy and cigars for the Youngs, Ruffino Chianti for the Felos. Would you care for a drop more wine?

KATE: Thank you. *(Pause)* Where did you read Carlyle?

THOMAS: *(Pause)* Oxford.

KATE: And you think he's dry and dusty don't you?

THOMAS: I thought I told you the opposite.

KATE: You made certain notes a flyleaf of a book you gave me.

THOMAS: Oh well, he got people thinking. That's a good thing.

KATE: Oxford? Is that where you met your wife?

THOMAS: What makes you think I ever had a wife?

KATE: I thought you might have had a wife. Something about you. Some one with a degree or something. And several beautiful mistresses.

THOMAS: Mistresses? Just the odd dusty librarian. Just the odd undertaker's wife.

KATE: Did she die?

THOMAS: Who?

KATE: Your wife.

THOMAS: My wife? Die? That's a romantic notion. I had a wife, but we parted. How is your wine?

KATE: Fine. And there were children?

THOMAS: Yes. A child.

KATE: Beautiful?

THOMAS: Of course she was. Your children are always beautiful. You can't forget your own children can you, not in your hearts. Your wives and your husbands can go, but never your children.

KATE: I don't know. I never had any.

THOMAS: About your age now. *(Pause.)* How did you know I was from Oxford then?

KATE: I was born there. I think I recognise the trace of an accent.

THOMAS: But it might have been Cambridge.

KATE: Oh they are rather flashy aren't they? It could hardly have been Cambridge.

THOMAS: And you were University?

KATE: No. We were Town.

THOMAS: Oh? Town.

KATE: My mother was a barmaid.

THOMAS: A barmaid.

KATE: And my father was an itinerant fisherman, from France.

THOMAS: I didn't know that fishermen were itinerant.

KATE: Well he was.

THOMAS: Itinerant. One has an image of a travelling salesman with a suitcase full of cod, ogling you with their dead eyes.

KATE: Does one?

THOMAS: Just my foolish imagination.

KATE: He left mother when I was two years old.

THOMAS: Really? That young?

KATE: Over the years I received five letters from him, at Christmas, each one from a different town in Europe and each one smelling of a different species of fish.

THOMAS: And your mother was a barmaid?

KATE: Is there something wrong with that?

THOMAS: No. Not as such *(Aside)* Who was in all the bars? It was the barfly that I married, buzzing with the men while I sat on the student's stool.

KATE: *(Pause)* Wordsworth was a poet full of worthy words.

THOMAS: What?

KATE: You seemed to be in a brown study.

THOMAS: I don't even possess a study now-a-days. In fact no, I do have a brown study of a dusky maharajah, done in sepia tints... Will you take a drop more wine?

KATE: No thank you. Oh goodness, is that the time.

THOMAS: *(Looks at his watch)* Oh yes, it is rather late. The last bus leaves in five minutes.

KATE: I must rush. *(She is picking up her things)* It's been a lovely evening, I didn't realize the time went so fast.

THOMAS: I've enjoyed it, very much.

KATE: So did I.

THOMAS: Shall I, see you again?

KATE: Yes, if you wish.

THOMAS: I do.

KATE: Good. *(As an impulse she gives him a quick peck on the cheek.)*
Goodnight. *(she goes)*

THOMAS: *(He goes to the window)* Goodnight my dear. Yes, it was a good night. We met and talked for the first time. The world has changed. Until now my conception of the affair has been coloured by unreal fantasies but now the dreams dissolve, and common reality takes over. She gave me a kiss. Was it a kiss of friendship, or was it a kiss of love?

(The lights go down on Thomas and come up on Kate in her flat. She has just returned home.)

KATE: I thought he would be rich and prosperous and he turned out to be an ordinary pauper, like the rest of us. Don't we have strange notions at times, childlike dreams of love and romance. Now the feeling is different, as though we have finally met for the first time in the real world. We did meet before you know. When I first walked into his shop we met in a world of a deeper reality. But now, time to lay myself down on my virtuous bed.

(Kate asleep. Dominic is Kate's imagination of her father. It is probably best to avoid a French accent, or keep it minimal.)

DOMINIC: Ruth. Can you hear me?

KATE: It's my father, Dominic. Where are you?

DOMINIC: I'm sailing the sea my dear. Pulling in the nets, a harvest of little fishes.

KATE: Will you come to me?

DOMINIC: Yes, I shall come soon, scudding over the billows.

KATE: What? Come?

DOMINIC: My boats rides through a tide of foam. Soon I shall hold you in my arms.

KATE: Come to me soon.

DOMINIC: Do not forget me.

(Kate awakes.)

KATE: Is it morning? What a strange dream to wake up to. *(Goes to window. Opens curtains)* Oh God that sun is bright. *(Closes curtains)* Saturday morning and all those things to do. My washing. Bake a cake. See Lynn about tennis. And take those brats to netball. I'd better go back to bed. *(She jumps back into bed.)* What did I dream of? My father, sailing over the waves. What a strange thing to expect him to come to see me. Just a ship that stopped at a port of call and deserted the child he left behind. All vessels rode into that wide bay. Mother, you know how fickle you were - I could have been any man's daughter. Why did he ever bother to return and give you his name? Why did he write five letters to someone he never met? The least you could have done is take on your parental responsibilities - both of you. He deserves to lie on the sea-floor, with the sea centipedes crawling into those caves which once held his blighted eyes. *(Change of mood)* Last night was pleasant. The fragrant smoke of Havana cigars. *(Coughs politely)* Havana cigars? No I imagined that. But I did not imagine Mr Thomas Young-Felo. Perhaps that is where my future lies.

(Enter Thomas)

THOMAS: *(Aside)* Here we have just a few brief scenes to describe how a relationship might grow. A week after our dinner party I invited Kate to a concert by the New Zealand Symphony orchestra in the Michael Fowler Centre.

KATE: Didn't the conductor flap his wings like a penguin.

THOMAS: I think you have to do something dramatic if you conduct Tchaikovsky

KATE: Do you admire Tchaikovsky Thomas?

THOMAS: A better composer than I'll ever be.

KATE: But do you admire him Thomas?

THOMAS: I admire his music. I don't admire his flamboyance or lack of subtlety.

KATE: *(Aside)* He did not know whether to kiss me goodnight or not so we shook hands. That night I had vivid dreams.

THOMAS: *(Aside)* The following Saturday a play at the local repertory theatre.

KATE: I haven't been to a play for ages.

THOMAS: I thought they did very well for a bunch of amateurs.

KATE: *(She takes his arm. He is embarrassed)* But it wasn't very romantic was it.

THOMAS: It's not the sort of play you would see in a professional theatre. Only amateurs can afford to take a risk nowadays. Not everything that is good is necessarily full of passion.

KATE: But you are a very passionate person Mr Young-Felo.

THOMAS: Oh hardly.

KATE: (*Aside*) I wasn't going to take the initiative. I knew he wanted to kiss me goodnight but could not take that step. I had dreams in violent Technicolor.

THOMAS: (*Aside*) I sold a rare volume and neglected to put the proceeds in the till. We dined well and afterwards attended the cinema.

KATE: It was in black and white.

THOMAS: When I was a child all movies were in black and white.

KATE: That shows you the marvels of modern technology.

THOMAS: It doesn't matter what colour you paint a picture. If it has sensitivity and emotion then it will be a work of art.

KATE: (*Aside*) What bunk. This is not good enough Mr Young-Felo. You have kept a young girl waiting far too long. Why are you so reserved? (*Pause*) That night I dreamt of my father. He had dark hair, bright eyes and gold rings through his ears. He held me in his strong brown arms and carried me through the crashing breakers.

THOMAS: (*Aside*) A lecture at the university. I think she was bored.

KATE: Pedantry in Roman Mythology. Why did you want to take me to a lecture like that for?

THOMAS: I thought it might be interesting.

KATE: What a boring old fart.

THOMAS: Who?

KATE: That lecturer. Wasn't he the Quasimodo of the doddering academic fraternity? If you are going to take me out Mr Thomas Young-Felo then please take me to something frivolous and light-hearted, like *The Damnation of Christ*, or something pure, like *The Lesbian Vampire Women of Sodom*.

THOMAS: A very sound man in his field.

KATE: Oh, I'm sure. (*Pause.*) You've never talked about your past.

THOMAS: It's gone and finished.

KATE: You were married once. You never talked about it.

THOMAS: I did tell you, the first time you came for dinner. It wasn't a marriage. (*Aside*) I sent money. Later when I wrote the letter was returned 'gone no address.' It was then that I knew I'd lost my daughter to the stormy waves. Deep drowned she is, deep in seabed's caves, floating dead in a sea of neglect.

KATE: You had a child. A daughter you said.

THOMAS: Yes.

KATE: Do you see her?

THOMAS: She is overseas. (*Aside.*) Over the wine-dark. Over the storm-tossed.

KATE: Are you going to take me home then.

THOMAS: Yes, if you wish.

KATE: I hope there is something equally exciting next week.

THOMAS: Is there something the matter?

KATE: Our life together is one long intellectual discussion. There has to become a time when that is no longer sufficient.

THOMAS: (*Avoiding the issue*) I thought, we might do something different, tomorrow.

KATE: Oh, what's on tomorrow?

THOMAS: It's the annual blessing of the boats, at Island Bay.

KATE: Blessing of the boats? That does sound extremely interesting.

THOMAS: It's not important. Just a ritual I like to attend.

KATE: I'll come. Nothing could be worse than lectures on pedantry. But now, you can take me home. *(Exit Kate)*

THOMAS: *(Rises)* A walk along the beach. It's a pleasant spot here. Can you smell the salt air? Island Bay, where my father grew up. The island in the sea which provides shelter for the fishing boats rocking gently at their mooring buoys.

(Enter Kate with a big straw hat with a ribbon.)

KATE: An ice cream would be nice.

THOMAS: At this time of year?

KATE: Well don't worry about it. Where did you say it was that your father once lived?

THOMAS: Over there, in Reef Street.

KATE: It would be nice to meet them.

THOMAS: Who?

KATE: Your parents.

THOMAS: Why?

KATE: Why not?

THOMAS: There's the Minerva Ice Cream Kart.

KATE: It never stops here.

THOMAS: No. I can get you one at the store, later.

(She walks away. He follows).

KATE: What about visiting your parents?

THOMAS: Well, nothing has been decided, has it?

KATE: No. Nothing has been decided.

(They are walking along the beach).

THOMAS: I've never found any unusual shells on this beach.

KATE: Haven't you.

THOMAS: No. Pieces of driftwood sometimes.

KATE: It's sheltered. Storms don't wash things up.

THOMAS: No.

KATE: When are we going to see the blessings then?

THOMAS: It's tomorrow. I made a mistake.

KATE: You made a mistake?

THOMAS: Well it's on Sunday. We went out on Friday this week. We usually go out on Saturday. I just got the day wrong.

KATE: That is the first sign of geriatric senility.

THOMAS: Perhaps. Will you come tomorrow then?

KATE: No.

THOMAS: No?

KATE: No. I'm not interested in your silly old boats. Matter of fact I'm bored. I've been going out with you for months now and all you ever do is take me to academic lectures on pederasty.

THOMAS: Pedantry. And less than a month.

KATE: Don't be pedantic.

THOMAS: What do you want then?

KATE: I want a partridge in a pear tree Mr Young-Felo, that's what I want.

(A pause. They walk)

THOMAS: Will you marry me?

KATE: Marry you? *(Bursts into gales of laughter.)* You should get down on your knees.

THOMAS: Don't be frivolous. I'm being perfectly serious. *(Very annoyed)*

KATE: Sorry. You make it sound so ridiculous.

THOMAS: Well, if you think I'm ridiculous then you're not the person I damn well thought you were. *(Stalks off)*

KATE: Thomas.

THOMAS: What?

KATE: Come back. *(He comes back)* Why are you so stuffy?

THOMAS: It was a perfectly serious proposal.

KATE: *(She holds on to his hand)* I know. It just took me by surprise. Did people of your generation always marry a girl before they went to bed with her?

THOMAS: You might think I'm stuffy. I acted improperly once before and I'm not prepared to do the same again.

KATE: Well I don't care Thomas, I'm never going to ever get married. Marriage is not in my make up. You'll have to make me your mistress.

THOMAS: That's not marriage.

KATE: I didn't say it was marriage, it's requiting our mutual lustful desires, and if you don't want it then leave it.

THOMAS: But I'm not ready...

KATE: Then you never will be. *(She walks off)*

THOMAS: *(Aside)* I can't lose her, not like this. She will go. I must take that step. *(REAL)* Miss de Bris?

KATE: Yes?

THOMAS: Will you become my mistress then?

KATE: Yes.

(Lights change. Thomas moves into a spot.)

THOMAS: So here it is. The candles are lit, the wine is poured, the fire burns brightly and we are together awaiting our fulfilment. This is the ritual.

(Lights change. Illuminates them both.)

KATE: Red wine tonight.

THOMAS: To warm the heart.

KATE: I'll drink to that.

(They toast and drink - his goes down wrong - he coughs and splutters.)

THOMAS: I shouldn't drink red.

KATE: You've spilt it. Here let me take your jacket.

(She helps him remove his jacket and tie.)

THOMAS: "Why, there's a wench! Come on, and kiss me, Kate."

(They kiss)

KATE: Is it late?

(He moves away from the embrace)

THOMAS: Sweet Kate, dear Kate. "Come, Kate, we'll to bed." We shall pass our night in slumber and see in our dream the reality that we cannot find in this world of illusion.

(What follows is a dream where both are asleep together.)

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: Touch?

THOMAS: Yes, my fingers touch your skin. The sensitive tips of my fingers touch the soft velvet of your cheek.

KATE: Soft?

THOMAS: Yes.

KATE: Velvet?

THOMAS: My toes touch your ankle when we lie in bed. My fingers touch the sensitive spot just beside the shoulder blade.

KATE: The moths crawl over.

THOMAS: It's a sweet touch of sugar on the tongue. The sweet taste of your lips when you have eaten fruit. I touch. I want.

KATE: Want?

THOMAS: Need. Crave. Desire. To touch.

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: What?

KATE: I asked you.

THOMAS: What?

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: I touch your skin with my skin.

KATE: If we touch the skin does that make us lovers? Should we not touch...

THOMAS: What?

KATE: Something, deeper.

THOMAS: I lick the inside of your ear with the soft tip of my tongue. I touch the sensitive tip of your earlobe.

KATE: The skin?

THOMAS: Yes.

KATE: You touch the skin?

THOMAS: Yes.

KATE: Is that all.

THOMAS: What?

KATE: That you touch?

THOMAS: What?

KATE: That you touch.

THOMAS: What?

KATE: Nothing deeper?

THOMAS: Deeper?

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: What?

THOMAS: Fingers.

KATE: What?

THOMAS: Toes.

KATE: What?

THOMAS: The form of bodies, the outward shape.

KATE: The skin?

THOMAS: Yes.

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: What do we touch?

THOMAS: My finger touches your skin.

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: Under the skin?

THOMAS: What?

KATE: Do we touch under the skin?

THOMAS: What?

KATE: Under the skin?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: Touch?

THOMAS: I touch your skin with my fingers.

KATE: But under the skin, is there anything under the skin?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: We always touch.

KATE: Are we lovers?

THOMAS: We touch.

KATE: Yes. We touch.

(The dream ends. Thomas goes. A change of lighting - harsh and bright. Morning in Thomas's bedroom. Kate is sitting on the edge of the bed wrapped in a sheet.)

KATE: Morning. Cold morning. Shipwrecked among the soiled and crumpled sheets. Time to get out of here. I've been here before. What does it mean? It means I gave my body, I gave the sweet temple of my soul for a night of sweaty lust, and I did not see the smile of God in return.

(Enter Thomas in a dressing gown.)

THOMAS: There's a fresh towel, in the bathroom.

KATE: Thank you. I'll get dressed. *(Goes)*

THOMAS: *(Goes to the window)* "Russet mantle clad..." All wrong somehow. She came to my bed as a stranger. We had our cohabitation, sweated in the sheets, a moment of fumbling pleasure, a half-forgotten experience, that's all it

was. I couldn't find her heart, I didn't know how. That's the clay of our relationship, dried out, desiccated, turned to dust. I'm not worthy of that bright spirit? All I have to offer is a cold heart.

(Kate returns fully dressed.)

KATE: Thank you, for the toilette.

THOMAS: "Russet mantle clad..."

KATE: What did you say?

THOMAS: Whenever I see the sunrise I think of The Bard.

KATE: You do?

THOMAS: There's a phrase in the opening scene of Hamlet that comes to mind:

"But look, the morn in russet mantle clad
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

A rather pretty phrase to end a night of ghostly apparitions don't you think?

KATE: A matter of contrast. I think I should go home soon.

THOMAS: Will you stay for breakfast?

KATE: No.

THOMAS: A cup of tea?

KATE: No.

THOMAS: *(Pause)* The sun will be up soon.

KATE: *(Aside)* Then there will be a cloud over it. We shouldn't live in a country where clouds cover the sun.

THOMAS: What's the matter?

KATE: Nothing.

THOMAS: I wanted to...

KATE: What?

THOMAS: I should make a cup of tea.

KATE: We've had our time...

THOMAS: Must you go, now?

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: Well, it's good-bye then.

KATE: Yes.

(She touches his cheek, kisses him and goes. He stands alone in the middle of the stage looking after her.)

THOMAS: A cold morning, yes, as cold as a heart of stone.

SLOW CURTAIN.
END OF ACT II.

ACT 3. FRIENDS

(Enter Thomas.)

THOMAS: Good evening fellow inhabitants of this world of illusion.
Time to pick up the thread again.
Did you ever hear of the Goddess Minerva?
She was the Roman version of bright-eyed Athena.
Bit of a tough old girl, she carried a shield and a lance, and wore the helm of war.
Why do I talk about Minerva?
Because of MICK of course.
(Pause for effect) The Minerva Ice Cream Kart.
Ice cream from heaven.
I was walking along the beach with my friend one day when it came past.

(Enter Kate).

KATE: An ice cream would be nice.
THOMAS: At this time of year?
KATE: Well don't worry about it. Where did you say it was that your father once lived?
THOMAS: Over there, in Reef Street.
KATE: It would be nice to meet them.
THOMAS: Who?
KATE: Your parents.
THOMAS: Why?
KATE: Why not?
THOMAS: There's the Minerva Ice Cream Kart.
KATE: It never stops here.
THOMAS: But you are wrong, it has, I'll get you one.

(Kate walks off. A change of mood.)

A strange vehicle this ice cream kart.
A sort of tricycle thing with a van at the back.
Very archaic lettering.
There was an eccentric woman in it.
She said that her name was Clotho and that her two sisters didn't want to come.
Couldn't understand that.
Anyway she had a puncture, so I helped her fix it and as she was out of ice cream she gave me two roses, both in bud and she pointed to the smaller of the two and said "that is for your friend on the beach." And she pointed to the other and said "and that is for you, if you take the right road, one day they both shall bloom."
I drew Kate's name in the sand and left the small bud there.
I kept the other to myself.
I had thought at the time that I might ask Kate to marry me, but seeing the roses, as yet not in bloom, made me realise that something needed to be resolved before that could ever come about.

All I can offer her now is friendship.
Perhaps one day the buds will open.

(He sits on a rock with his back to the rose. Kate enters and picks it up - apart.)

KATE: One rose. It's a symbol of pure love isn't it?
I've had these before.

The florists around the world send out a million every day.

And yet just a bud.

What can that mean?

(Pause) A rose is nature's piece of perfection.

But what of our relationship, is that any piece of perfection?

No, I desire the tangle of flesh, and that has not occurred.

Now, I don't know, a rose-bud is something different.

If it has not yet bloomed is there any point in that tangle?

(They come together.)

KATE: You left me a rosebud?

THOMAS: Yes, I did.

KATE: Why did you do that?

THOMAS: It was from the lady in the ice cream kart. She said it would tell me what was in your heart.

KATE: But what can a rose say? Has it lips? Can it speak?

THOMAS: A rose by itself, no.

KATE: Well, you should speak. You should tell me what you mean, and how you think.

THOMAS: I know. We've been courting, is that what you call it?

KATE: That's what someone might call it.

THOMAS: Yes. I know I haven't taken any initiatives. *(Pause)* It wouldn't be right for me to take it any further.

KATE: Then what is wrong?

THOMAS: Nothing is wrong. It's just that something is not right. Do I make sense.

KATE: No.

THOMAS: Then you will have to ask the rose. Can we remain friends?

KATE: Friends? Yes.

THOMAS: And go out together, as we have done.

KATE: If you wish.

THOMAS: Shall we go out tonight then?

KATE: Tomorrow, the day after. Tonight I have to wash my hair. Excuse me, there seem to be no blessings of the boats today, I shall have to go home and put my rosebud in water. *(Goes)*

THOMAS: One day we met in the tea rooms in the Begonia House. A most elegant place with windows everywhere and the feeling of plants, of nature, alive around you. They serve the most delicious teas, Earl Grey, Blackcurrant; and a chocolate gateau with double filling. Your imagination will not only have to paint it, it will have to taste it as well.

(Enter Kate. They sit at a table. The tea things and cake could be mimed.)

THOMAS: Shall I pour?

KATE: Are you going to eat all that cake?

THOMAS: Yes, that was the intention.

KATE: You'll get fat.

THOMAS: That was the intention. I think I might have cream in my tea.

KATE: Cream in your tea? How revolting.

THOMAS: Well you know how I like sweet things.

KATE: Hedonist.

THOMAS: Have you been here before?

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: It's where I usually bring my rich clients for a business luncheon.

KATE: Your rich clients?

THOMAS: Yes. As far as the Inland Revenue Department is concerned this entertainment is a necessary expense for business purposes.

KATE: You are very dishonest Mr Young-Felo.

THOMAS: I am very poor Miss de Bris. How can I afford to be honest?

KATE: Let me pay the bill.

THOMAS: No. I can afford today, the business has temporarily become solvent.

KATE: Really? How did that happen?

THOMAS: It was all your doing, you sent Alistaire to me with his collection of Marvell Comics.

KATE: He's not selling his Marvell Comics!?

THOMAS: Yes, he needs the money for his trip to India. I must admit that I only took them out of a sense of obligation, but he had some good numbers and they've sold rather well. Now I've become an expert. I know all about the rare issue number 20 of "Infra Red Man" and the problems with forgeries of issue 13 of "The Black Demons of the Sinister Pit". It's a real study.

KATE: Those aren't real Marvell Comics.

THOMAS: How do you know?

KATE: I was a collector myself once.

THOMAS: Then, how about "The Incredible Hulk" number 184, and, "The X-Men" number 99.

KATE: That's better.

THOMAS: Just testing. *(Pause)* I even have "Journey Into Mystery" number 83.

KATE: Really?

THOMAS: He didn't know what it was worth, so I'll take a commission, if I manage to sell it.

KATE: *(Pause)* I might just go though.

THOMAS: Go?

KATE: To India. With Alistaire's party.

THOMAS: Are you thinking of going to... Whatever for?

KATE: I don't know. Find myself a dusky Maharaja. I've no ties here.

THOMAS: There's a Maharaja in the shop round the corner. Six dollars twenty.

KATE: *(Pause)* Well I don't agree with you paying for everything. You paid for the theatre the other night and then you didn't even want to talk about it.

THOMAS: I noticed you liked it. I didn't want to get involved in a difference of opinion.

KATE: You didn't like it? The Tempest? I thought you loved Shakespeare.

THOMAS: If they ever do anything like that again I shall write a letter to the newspapers. Shakespeare wrote some of the most marvellous words in the English language and I think I managed to hear five of them. If I want to watch a circus I'll go to Barnum and Bailey.

KATE: Well I liked it.

THOMAS: It wasn't Shakespeare. We should have gone to The Comedy of Errors at The Griffin instead.

KATE: You have no heart.

THOMAS: And you don't understand Shakespeare.

KATE: I do understand Shakespeare.

THOMAS: You don't. You think The Taming of The Shrew is chauvinistic.

KATE: Well of course I do, it's the most chauvinistic thing that was ever written.

THOMAS: It is not, it's about true love....

KATE: Well you try treating me like that and I'll show you what true love is.

THOMAS: You're not a shrew.

KATE: And you are not a bloody intellectual.

THOMAS: Another cup?

KATE: No thank you.

THOMAS: Well I'll have one, and some of this, cake.

KATE: It's the most sexist play that was ever written.

THOMAS: This is a nice cup of tea.

KATE: He was a chauvinistic, sexist, racist, warmongering pig.

THOMAS: Who was?

KATE: Shakespeare.

THOMAS: Hardly a pig.

KATE: Alright, a poet. He was a chauvinistic, sexist, racist, warmongering poet.

THOMAS: That's better.

KATE: I thought you'd agree.

THOMAS: To being a poet... *(Pause)* He just took some story by a popular Italian author....

KATE: If he was a real man he wouldn't have been prejudiced.

THOMAS: He wasn't prejudiced. It's a woman's nature to be submissive? Petruchio was just putting an aberration to rights. How can anyone live with a shrew and a nag?

KATE: *(She takes the cake knife and points it towards his balls.)* If you don't watch out I'll cut them off.

THOMAS: Oh, a female Petruchio.

KATE: You are on shaky ground.

THOMAS: Then don't take me seriously.

KATE: If I thought you were serious you'd have this pot of tea over your head. I'll speak to my liberated Sisters about you.

THOMAS: You wouldn't.

KATE: I might even supply the tar and feathers.

THOMAS: You would. Well I don't think that Shakespeare hated women. I think he understood them, which is more than I do sometimes.

KATE: Yes, we should all be in a nunnery, while the men go out and fight wars and kill each other.

THOMAS: In my father's day women gave out white feathers to the men who wouldn't go to war. If you women want equality why don't you go out and fight the wars yourselves.

KATE: If we women had equality there wouldn't be any wars.

THOMAS: No. Eternal knitting circles.

KATE: Sometimes you are not a very nice man Mr Young-Felo. You're like all academics, you put your Shakespeare, and your Mr Carlyle, and your Mr Stuffy Philosopher up on a pedestal and say they are perfect beings. And you use this so-called knowledge to pontificate and put down other people, especially women.

THOMAS: Really.

KATE: Yes. Really.

THOMAS: Well I think I think this boring old academic might just order another pot of tea.

KATE: If you wish. Get yourself another piece of that sweet cake. I'm going to look at the begonias.

(She gets up and leaves.)

THOMAS: How can I tell you what I feel about her?

The warm rush of pleasure when I see her.

I'm as much in love as a young man panting hot sonnets to his mistress' brow.

But I can't tell her? I don't know how.

(Enter Kate apart from Thomas. The delivery is an aside.)

KATE: We meet, talk trivialities, get into banal arguments.

A Platonic relationship cannot be sustained.

I feel too much for that crusty old pedant.

(Real) Will you take me to visit your parents?

THOMAS: My parents?

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: If you wish. *(Aside)* I didn't wish to visit my parents. After my return from England we had moved apart. But I decided at last. My mother, Celia, wore a pink frock and served lemon tea in bone china with cucumber sandwiches on a silver platter.

KATE: *(Aside)* Studied elegance in a Karori garden. As though we were in a time bubble, insulated from the rest of the world. He was ill at ease. Went to all sorts of lengths to ensure that they knew there was no, liaison between us. His father, Peter took me into the garden to see his roses.

THOMAS: *(Aside)*. I spoke to Celia. There was a photograph of Ruth on the mantelpiece. I had not seen it for many years. I had to ask Mother how she came

by it. She said I had given it to her years ago at the time when I was in that dark abyss after returning from England. She reminded me about how I ranted about cucumber sandwiches and blue stockings. Was I so unkind in my melancholy? What did she know about Ruth? Had I told her? Had she been in touch with my wife? I was going to ask about it but Kate and Peter returned from the garden. Afterwards I took Kate back to her flat.

KATE: You're dreaming.

THOMAS: Yes. Sorry. I think Celia thought you were my girl friend.

KATE: Did she?

THOMAS: Yes. She wanted me to give her more grandchildren.

KATE: How bizarre. Have you never taken a girl to visit your parents?

THOMAS: Oh yes, I took Bible Class Millie when I was a pimply youth.

KATE: Bible Class Millie. That sounds exciting.

THOMAS: If I want to kill off the affair I take them to see Mater and Pater.

KATE: It's not an affair Thomas. (*Sharp*)

THOMAS: No, I didn't say... (it was.)

KATE: If you want to kill off a friendship you're going the right way about it.

THOMAS: I don't understand what you mean.

KATE: You're just a bit bloody thick at times Thomas Young-Felo.

THOMAS: (*Pause*) It was a pleasant afternoon.

KATE: Of course they're going to think we're together.

THOMAS: I took particular pains... (to let them know different.)

KATE: Yes you did take particular pains Mister Thomas Young-Felo, you were a right and proper pain. What am I going to do with you?

THOMAS: Don't get angry with me Katarina.

KATE: My name is not Katarina and I am not angry with you Thomas, I'm just slightly irked.

THOMAS: Indeed, you appear to be. Why would that be so?

KATE: Because of you. You just hide yourself away on a dusty old shelf. You're too afraid to brush away the cobwebs and look at the real world.

THOMAS: (*Aside*) Kismet. The moment of truth. I know it will come. Something wonderful. This dull clay of words will melt. The obdurate beast will bow before her beauty. The knot has been tied, whatever happens now is inevitable.

KATE: (*Pause*) I think I will go on that trip to India.

THOMAS: (*Pause*) What trip to India?

KATE: Alistaire may have a spare place. There's nothing to hold me here. I might as well go.

THOMAS: Nothing to hold you?

KATE: The trouble is Thomas we can't remain just friends.

THOMAS: What do you mean, we can't be friends?

KATE: I said just friends. There is a difference.

THOMAS: We talked about it, before. I have nothing to offer... You would be best to find someone, your own age.

KATE: Oh why are you so bloody thick?

THOMAS: I'm what I am. Don't chide me Kate, you are a sweet person.

KATE: (*Sarcastic*) Oh, yes, sweet. A pretty sweeting. (*A pause*) It's August holidays soon. I'm going to see mother.

THOMAS: On the farm?

KATE: Yes. They have a batch at the beach. I thought I might stay there for a few days. I need some time to myself.

THOMAS: And when you come back you'll go to India?

KATE: Nothing has been decided.

THOMAS: No. Nothing has been decided. You will write, when you are away?

KATE: Yes. But I must warn you, the mailman comes but once a week.

(This could be any beach but I have in mind Kairakau which is a remote holiday beach in Hawkes Bay. Just a few batches on leased council land. A fade. They each have their own circle of light and cross-fade as required.)

Before coming to the beach I spent the evening with my mother and a cask of wine. There was a revelation. At the end of a tipsy evening she told me that my father had never abandoned me. He had been drowned in a storm. She could not bring herself to tell me that he had died. She kept up the charade by saying that the letters had come from his brother in France had come from him. This was her way of trying to avoid causing me pain. But what pain this simple misunderstanding created. And she told me how much she loved him and wanted to stay with him. So I'd had a father who loved me, who did not wish to abandon me for the wild sea-mistress.

Now, at the beach I must write to Thomas.

(Writing) Dear Thomas, I write this letter to tell you about the beach.

(Thinking) I have been sitting here in a study of apathy for three days now.

What can I say?

I'll write him something intelligent, something pedantic.

(Writing) I believe there is a tempest brewing within this couch of air...

(Thinking) How pontifical. I have nothing to say.

(Crumples up the page.) It's a wild place, islands of rocks in the sea, and steep hills behind, peaked with overhanging minarets of stone.

It's so comfortable in this room.

I should get myself off this window seat go for a walk along the beach.

Perhaps when the tide has gone out.

In the meantime I'll loiter like the pale poet, beside the shore, gazing at the ruffled sea.

The waves are like mouths, hungry mouths, full of cruel fishes which eat drowned sailors and leave nothing, neither a bone nor a tooth.

Oh why can't I move?

Dark clouds sit on the horizon.

Harbingers of rough weather.

Watch the night slowly darken the world.

The sea glistens in the fitful moonlight, full of strange sea creatures, moved by mystic tides.

(Gets up) Who is this fickle mistress-ocean?

My father drowned in her.

She enfolded him in her mysterious arms and carried him deep to the sea-floor where he lies, a bundle of bones, picked clean by sharp-fanged fishes.

I wept tears for him, an ocean of salt tears.

I called out but his boat never came scudding across the waves.

Where will I find you father?

In the heart of Thomas Young-Felo?

Are you my lover?

Am I your incestuous child?

Time to go to bed and enter the real world of dreams.

THOMAS:

Kate did say that she would write me a letter, but I have not received one.

I decided to visit Celia and ask her about my daughter.

A revelation. An emotional catharsis.

I'd abandoned not only my daughter but the love of my parents.

It was time to make that up.

It was a simple story.

Ruth's mother had remarried and Ruth had been raised in a supportive household, helped out by money from Celia and Peter.

Ruth had graduated, married and had two small children.

I left Celia with a mind full of confused emotion.

On the way home I stopped off at the Botanic Gardens.

Spring will be here soon.

I don't know if I like it as much as I used to.

All that unbridled energy.

The seeds send shoots from the earth, germens of life burst forth and the winter ice melts.

Who knows what pain a thaw might bring?

On the grassy bank there grow the Soul Magnolias.

Leafless now, the branches are twisted into gnarled patterns which remind me of the bare and bitter branches of trees blasted by the wicked spells of witches that I read about in fairy stories as a child.

And perhaps my soul is like those black and broken branches, an interlacing web of mystery, a filigree of past actions and past omissions, of sins, woven by the chattering birds of our wrong-doings into a nest of defeat.

Once spring thoughts came into my mind and I begat a daughter who I abandoned over the waves.

In my mind she lay dead and drowned under the waves.

Have I found you at last child?

Are you my lovely Kate?

Are you my lover?

Am I your father?

(Pause - change of mood)

The wind rattles the branches.

We may be in for a storm.

My feelings for Kate are creating storms also.

They have disturbed grains of dust that have lain idle for centuries.

Time to go home to my musty room, and dream of things that may be.

(Now they are in a dream where they become closer than in the world of 'reality'.)

THOMAS: Where am I?

KATE: Where are we?

THOMAS: Together but apart.

KATE: I am with you though we are far apart.

THOMAS: Together in our dream.

KATE: I cannot see you Thomas.

THOMAS: But you know that I am here.

KATE: Yes. I touch your fingers.

THOMAS: We touch the skin.

KATE: Only the skin?

THOMAS: In the world of stone.

KATE: Touch my heart. That is where the truth lies.

THOMAS: The heart? The heart is a cavern of stone.

KATE: We touched only the superficial.

THOMAS: Only the skin.

KATE: The external shell.

THOMAS: The superficial surface of the shell.

KATE: The hard carapace.

THOMAS: Enclosing the heart. And so went our selfish ways.

KATE: Where is your heart?

THOMAS: It was still here

KATE: Where?

THOMAS: Lost in a whirlpool of ignorance

KATE: It was. We were confused by the illusion of our foolish considerations.

THOMAS: The worm of thought.

KATE: The maggot of folly.

THOMAS: Look down at the eye of the storm. There is peace at the centre.

KATE: And we shall find that place?

THOMAS: Yes, we shall find it.

KATE: Where will we find it?.

THOMAS: We will find it in our hearts.

KATE: Where are you? Where do you sit?.

THOMAS: Where am I? Where do I sit? On the mermaids knee?

KATE: With the mermaid? Under the waves? Will I find that place?

THOMAS: Where movement ceases.

KATE: In the eye of the storm.

THOMAS: Where all phenomena cease.

KATE: In the eye of the storm.

THOMAS: Can you see it?

KATE: I can see at last.

THOMAS: What?

KATE: There is nothing left to consider. We carry baggage that we do not require.

THOMAS: Cast it aside.

KATE: Throw it away.

THOMAS: Let it dissolve into the waves.

KATE: While we sing.

THOMAS: Sing the night song.

KATE: The song that dreamers sing.

THOMAS: In their bower of peace.

KATE: And in the morning?

THOMAS: Yes, what will happen?

KATE: We shall fall asleep again.

THOMAS: Yes, fall asleep.

KATE: Into the dream of the real world..

THOMAS: And we will remember?

KATE: All will be forgotten.

THOMAS: Yes. Forgotten.

KATE: But the worm will go?.

THOMAS: Yes. See I have a small gift. (*A rose in full bloom*) Plucked from a thicket of thorns..

KATE: And I too, this gramayre of the night song permits me to pick the bloom.

(They exchange roses. These roses should appear by means of a conjuring trick if that can be arranged.)

THOMAS: See the flower unfold.

The leaves break away and the petals burst forth.

KATE: It breathes in the glorious air.

It becomes part of the living world.

THOMAS: We speak sensible words, now sleep in our dreams.

KATE: Yes, sleep in our dreams.

(End of dream. Back to the world of illusion.)

KATE: I had strange dreams.

Fancies passed through my mind, like the wind passing through the sky, shades of a different realm.

The tempest has passed, only remnants of ragged clouds linger on the horizon. I shall leave my comfortable room now and take a walk along the beach.

There is a deep sea swell, the rollers arch like the supple neck of a swan and flow like the horses mane to caress the shore.

Before the storm I thought they were cruel and hungry waves, full of vicious fishes pecking out the eyes of dead sailors.

What were those drowned men?

Who were those sharp predators?

They were cruel thoughts that I created to punish my father.

My father was a sailor who sailed these same seas.
I never understood if he was a dear father or a damned father.
I demanded that he come to see me but he never did.
He never will come now, I had no right to ask.
I don't have to be a little girl to gain that lost affection.
Look at this thing, this worm of thought, that caused me such discontent.
You can have my tears ocean.
Swallow them up for I need them no more.

And now Mr Thomas Young-Felo.
He is not my father.
Did I ever think that?
Now can I love him with the true love of a true woman?
If he will have me.
Can he be my lover and my friend?

THOMAS: I slept.
I think I had a dream.
A strange fancy passed through my mind, like a cloud passing through the sky,
a shadow of a finer world.
There has been a storm these last few days but at last it is calm.
Today I have come again to the Botanic Gardens.

The world has changed.
Look at the Soul Magnolias, quite untouched by the rough weather.
The branches proliferate into twigs and a wonder of buds waiting to burst into
leaf and flower.
But when I saw them before I imagined they were burnt and broken branches.
I was enchanted by the spell caused by a thicket of thoughts in my mind, a
cloud of illusion.
The branches are not black and blasted, they are brown, and alive.

These things of the earth live and breathe while my heart is held constrained in
a walnut prison.
In the stone.
In the dark land.
Out of touch with the living world.
Afraid to touch its real bark.
Never to be made whole.
Frozen into ice.
And it was guilt for my own uncharitable deeds that held all this in place.

I do not have to repay Kate for my sins as a father.
She is not my daughter.
She is my lover.

She is my beloved Kate.
 She is my dream-child Kate with her generous red-wine feelings; Beaujolais, Chateaufeuf du Pape, Beaune; dark wines of the earth, falling like drops of blood onto my heart.

(Cross to Kate at the beach)

KATE: Time to go back to my little cottage and write him a letter. I'll tell him about this magic coast. Nothing of importance.

(Cross to Thomas in his study reading her letter.)

THOMAS: "My Dear Thomas,
 This is not a long or important letter, just a chat. I have been sitting here doing nothing for the past several days, whilst the storm has been raging, but now that there has been an abatement to the tempest I feel that I might set forth in a worthy barque to discover islands in the sea...."

She wants to travel on journeys over the sea.
 Is that her answer?
 That she shall go away, or does she intend to emigrate into the uncharted country of the heart?

No storm now,
 the air is still,
 there is a hush over the world,
 all creatures pause in silence,
 awaiting the arrival of the great magician.

I visited Kate after her return from the beach.

(Change of lighting. Realistic scene.)

THOMAS: How was the holiday?

KATE: Good.

THOMAS: That's good. *(Pause)* You said in your letter... you said you wanted to discover islands in the sea.

KATE: There are islands at the beach.

THOMAS: Oh, islands in the sea?

KATE: Where else would you find islands Mr Thomas Young-Felo?

THOMAS: Oh. Yes. I thought you meant something metaphorical.

KATE: I did.

THOMAS: So you are going on a journey of discovery?

KATE: In a metaphorical way.

THOMAS: You are not referring to your trip to India?

KATE: No. I've given up on that idea.

THOMAS: Indeed?

KATE: Yes. Indeed, Mister Thomas Young-Felo.

THOMAS: When I was young I wanted to discover new worlds. The naivety of youth. I thought things might become pure.

KATE: And it all became tarnished did it?

THOMAS: It's in the nature of things to become tarnished with time. Rust never sleeps.

KATE: So you are a tarnished man are you Mister Thomas Young-Felo?

THOMAS: Don't chide. Tarnished? Yes I think I was. I let the rust of neglect accumulate over the years. All I needed was a bottle of rust remover.

KATE: Indeed.

THOMAS: Strange how a crisis resolves things.

KATE: Crisis?

THOMAS: My relationship with you. It was in crisis. I let my life fall into a shadow of neglect. And I wanted to bring you into that. You couldn't live in a room full of cobwebs could you?

KATE: No I could not.

THOMAS: I had to shake them free. I did it for my love.

KATE: Do you love me Thomas?

THOMAS: Indeed.

KATE: I was also living in a room of cobwebs. A half world where no relationship was real. I thought I wanted a father.

THOMAS: You want me to be your father?

KATE: No. I want you to be my lover. My father is lost. Let him lie.

THOMAS: I love you Kate, if you'll accept this tatty... (old bookworm.)

KATE: Quiet. I love you Thomas.

(They kiss as lights fade. Thomas comes down into spot.)

THOMAS: We stayed together after that. And now, here is the epilogue.

(They are in the lounge. Kate is looking from the window. Thomas is sitting in a chair reading the "guardian".)

THOMAS: What's it like outside?

KATE: Hardly a breath.

THOMAS: A little chilly. The nights are drawing in.

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: Summer's over isn't it?

KATE: Yes, I like the autumn.

THOMAS: Calm and peaceful, but winter's coming.

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: How long have we been together?

KATE: A year and a half.

THOMAS: Yes over a year.

(Pause)

KATE: Thomas?

THOMAS: Yes?

KATE: Do you remember that day you asked me to marry you?

THOMAS: Marry you? I'm sure I never did. I much prefer a life of living in sin.

KATE: I'm sure you must remember. It was on the beach at Island Bay.

THOMAS: No, I remember I was thinking of asking you, but I didn't get around to doing it. Was it something you dreamt?

KATE: It may have been. *(Pause)* I used to feel so, excited when I was with you.

THOMAS: So did I, a flow of, affection. *(Pause)* And then the trials we went through.

KATE: Did we go through trials? That is something I don't remember.

THOMAS: Perhaps I dreamt about them.

KATE: It's a different feeling now.

THOMAS: What is?

KATE: That excitement I used to feel about you.

THOMAS: Is it, gone?

KATE: Yes. Everything has become familiar.

THOMAS: Has it?

KATE: Yes. Comfortable.

THOMAS: And I'm, quite familiar?

KATE: Yes.

THOMAS: What are you going to do then?

KATE: Do?

THOMAS: Yes.

KATE: Nothing.

THOMAS: Nothing?

KATE: Oh course not. We are lovers, we still have dreams, what more is there to say?

THOMAS: Nothing. I sometimes worry...

KATE: What?

THOMAS: That, a young fellow might come with wine and roses, and whisk you away.

KATE: Oh don't be silly. You are my friend.

THOMAS: Am I?

KATE: I like to be with you. No one else.

THOMAS: And once I thought you wanted to go away and find a new world.

KATE: I did, I found it.

THOMAS: Did you, where?

KATE: Here.

THOMAS: Here?

KATE: Here with you.

THOMAS: With me?

KATE: Yes. I've found my old man, and I've found my home, and this is where I shall stay.

THOMAS: Yes, this is where we shall stay.

(Thomas comes down and speaks these lines.)

We should enjoy life while we have it,
we're only here for an instant,
an insignificant summer's day
while the mayfly dances over the water.

The winds of fate blow hot and cold
and throw us these things;
the worm in the mind,
the clutch of luscious riches,
collisions with the sharp edges of the universe
or quiet comfort.

Have we lost the truth when we leave our dreams?
Do we have to accept this mediocre world of reality?
I have no answers to these questions
and leave you to endure the motley as before.

CURTAIN

THE END

Otaki 5th May 2009