

Ralph and Eva. Act 1 Scene 9

*MAY's kitchen some weeks later. RALPH is washing himself with soap and flannel in a tin bath. TOM is repairing one of MAY's boots. He has a cobbler's last held between his knees and is nailing a new leather sole on to the uppers, a biscuit tin of tools and bits of leather to hand.*

*RALPH starts to make waves.*

RALPH. Swim for it! Swim for the shore! They see the rockets from the stricken ship. The wild North Easter blows it to the fang shaped rocks. They're lost! Then Grace Darling leaps to the oars of her frail craft. Pull! Pull! By God it's parky in here. Brrrr!

TOM. This is past mending with nails. It should be stitched if I had the thread.

*He trims the edge of the sole with a sharp knife. RALPH winces.*

RALPH. Here! Keep a good grip on that won't you? Bloody hell! Eva! Got any more hot?

*EVA pops her head in from the scullery.*

EVA. There's a jug of warm if you're ready for rinsing-

RALPH. Hot. I said.

EVA. You've had all there is that I'm letting you have. May 'll go mad. Shall I come in?

TOM, filling the leather sole, flinches uneasily.

RALPH. I'm in my skin.

EVA. I know (Entering.) You don't mind do you Tom?

TOM. Er . . . no. Carry on. I'll finish.

RALPH. Nothing deflects thre craftsman from his task.

EVA. You do look a cherub!

RALPH. I feel a brass monkey. I'm starved.

EVA. No more hot. I'll soap your back. Lean over. Isn't he lovely? Don't you think Tom? Isn't he perfectly Proportioned?

RALPH. Shut up! You'll worry him.

TOM. His arms are too short.

RALPH. What?

TOM. For perfect proportion.

RALPH. Too short?

TOM. If you look at Leonardo da Vinci's drawings . . . the tip of the middle finger reaches further down the thigh bone.

RALPH. Bugger Leonardo!

*TOM goes out to the scullery for his cobbler's wax.*

EVA. Let me feel that hollow in your back. Hmmm. That's mine that is. She kisses him.

RALPH. The miner's dream of home!

*She tips the jug of water over him.*

Here . . . my arms aren't too short are they?

EVA. They can't be can they? They get everywhere.

The back gate slams. TOM reappears.

TOM. Hey-up. It's May.

EVA. Oh no!

RALPH. Towel!

EY A (calling): May! Don't come in. Ralph's in the bath.

MAY enters briskly with a shopping bag.

MAY. Ralph's what? Oh my Lord!

*Unable to retreat, she turns her back.*

RALPH. I'm sorry May, Our bath's got a leak in it.

EVA. And this one's got a parsnip.

MAY. Has he taken all the hot water?

EVA. I've rationed him.

RALPH. Isn't there a bigger flannel than this?

TOM. I'll hold the towel.

*He holds it like a screen in front of RALPH.*

MAY (to EVA): You're splashed. What on earth have you been doing?

RALPH. Only what my mother'd do for me.

MAY. Dry yourself in the scullery.

*RALPH gets out into the towel.*

RALPH. But it's freezing in there.

MAY. Well rub hard.