

LOCKS

by
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Synopsis:

LOCKS is the story of a young woman trying to take authorship of her life. Hers is one of three story-strands that interweave, each protagonist vying for personal significance within that plait. L's sphere of experience is contained within the room she has grown-up in, her only companion an elderly woman, Marmalade, who has educated her through the allegories of fairytales. Unaware of an accessible outside world, all references to a world beyond her experience are relegated to the fairytale mythology of knights and slaving wolves.

The dynamic between the growing child and her aged guardian is, in the absence of disruption, idyllic. Marmalade's security lies in the companionship of the girl, and L's in her guardian's infallible honesty and kindness. The delicate balance of this relationship is disturbed when a young man, Yuck, accidentally finds himself inside L's room. This event unleashes a common drive in all three characters to control and stabilize the variables that threaten to endanger their understanding of their own purpose and identities.

The subjectivity of all three characters highlights both the instability of language in the creation of meaning, and of traditional means of identity-assumption and construction. Through its intentional plays on perception, established genres, linguistic and theatrical constraints LOCKS aims to highlight that it is the degree of *play* in any system that affords one the freedom to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct meaning. Only by recognizing the locks constraining the exploration or construction of individual identity and purpose can one transcend and conquer these limitations and actualize one's own happy ending.

Cast:

Marmalade: a cardigan-clad old woman

Yuck: a wild-looking young man.

L: a childlike young woman with long platinum-blond hair.

6 chorus-members -- 3 male (**CMMs**) & 3 female (**CMFs**)

Direction notes:

The function of the chorus is multidimensional as they represent objects, or physically manifest the thought and imagination of the protagonists, and creating continuity and atmosphere onstage. The audience's perception of the world onstage, therefore, is mediated to some extent by the character's perceptions of that world.

The chorus acts as both a unified voice/presence and with individualised personality -- their characterisations are duplicitous and transient.

The rhythm of Marmalade's speech will occasionally be interrupted by small aural indications of flatulence -- she never, however, identifies herself as the source. The timing of these interruptions should fall to the discretion of the actor and/or director.

Production notes:

Crucial to establishing links between the two conflicting "worlds" within the play is the display of a careful selection of existing articles and statistics on unwanted pregnancies, human-rights abuses relating to children, cycles of poverty, deforestation, urban-sprawl, unemployment and squatting, land-acts, the economic and social repercussions of World War II, the impact of contemporary society on the family unit, alienation and the plight of refugees. It is equally important that the featured articles reflect global phenomena, or a diversity of communities and contexts.

Permanent fixtures onstage are two black rectangular boards that stand perpendicular to the stage and function as indicators of a window-ledge, a

pavement and a wall in turn -- both stand on their longest, thinnest side, parallel to the audience; one downstage right, the other upstage centre. Above the stage should be an area that can be utilised in Scene 9 as a window-ledge upon which four actors can be squeezed -- two representing the window behind the ledge and the others interacting between the ledge and the space beyond the window.

Moonlit scenes are indicated through the use of blue gels; and the lighting accompanying candlelit scenes dims, brightens or reduces to a single spotlight according to the positioning and presence of candles onstage.

The cello-solo featured in scenes 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 is Bach's "Prelude" from "Suite No.1 in G Major" for unaccompanied cello -- if unavailable an appropriate substitute can be found. The locking and unlocking process should be lengthy and distinctly audible at all times.

Detail of how certain effects in the script are achieved on stage will, at times, be referenced with an endnote, if the explanation is particularly lengthy, and listed in the appendix in chronological order.

LOCKS can be performed uninterrupted or with an interval between scenes 5 and 6.

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Scene 1

A single spot fades up on MARMALADE sitting on a chair (CMMs 1 & 2). She seems agitated. 2 knitting needles and a tangled clump of wool (two ends are slightly singed) lie next to her chair. CMF1 stands behind MARMALADE suspending a candle above her.

MARMALADE: Whisky! Whisky...? *(Pause)*. Where's my Whisky? *(She purses her lips and makes cat-calling sounds)*. Whisky... just the thing to settle my nerves, Whisky! Ah...

CMF2 disdainfully carries a dead cat by the scruff of its neck over to the old woman and drops it in her lap, and exits again. MARMALADE only notices the

cat as it lands in her lap, and is instantly content. Intermittently, while speaking, she tenderly strokes the inert cat, or lightly rubs the burns on her wrists.

MARMALADE: Beans. Beans, beans, beans, beans and... beans. Beans on all sides -- and insides... crammed together in tin cans... waiting... waiting... for explosions... Gas... Waiting to suffocate! Locked underground away from the world, you never forget the niff, and the shrill whistle as another bomb is dropped. You begin to believe that there is nothing outside, that the world you knew has been completely destroyed, or was never there to begin with. "Lucky beans" we called ourselves, those of us still underground, safe from the human-harvest above. And if it lasted forever? Our new world a single room, a new family of strangers, away from the cruelty and fear, hidden from loss, the empty stomach, the sting that robs you of your insides... We are, after all, only lumps of protein, with the potential to regenerate life through other bodies, through new beginnings -- the wisdom of experience sustaining the innocence of youth. Sometimes it's worth the risk of being burned to live for a few more moments...

She pauses as she takes a pair of newborn baby's booties from her cardigan pocket. She starts rocking on her chair -- a movement orchestrated by CMMs 1 & 2 -- as she contemplates the knitted booties.

MARMALADE: Beans -- never seem to get them out of your system -- *where* you've been, *who* you've been... I'd wake, even after the war, inside my black and white world to the sound of sirens. It was the sirens that lured them away to sea; seduced by danger and flattered by attention they were sucked into the unknown. They're still out there, the sirens, screaming and flashing -- but now they drive people inside, reminding them of their fear. A world that is now locked inside me, buried in the dreamless sleep of medication. To be kept out of the reach of children. Warnings, side-effects, rations... A single candle holding back the darkness. I kept mine inside, away from the wind, from the howling -- the flame out of reach. When everything dissolved into the nothingness of darkness,

I could still see my reflection flickering back at me a few metres away. Another me outside myself, standing somewhere between me and an infinite horizon. No stars, back then, to wish upon, and under the blanketing smoke of war, we tossed and turned, hoping to wake up from a nightmare that seemed surreal. Smoke gets in your eyes, and we would never see the same way again...

MARMALADE turns suddenly, distracted by the sound of a siren emanating from offstage. CMF1 extinguishes her candle, and the spot moves off, leaving her in darkness, to scan the stage [the wall of the following scene]. As it passes over MARMALADE's original position again they have disappeared...

Scene 2

The spot continues to scan the stage as the sirens start to fade, replaced by a quickening heartbeat and loud panting from all directions. The spot disappears downstage as blue-lights [moonlight] come up on YUCK who lies flat on his back upstage centre, his head towards the audience and his arms pressed against the floor on either side, his feet stand flat against the board upstage centre. The audience's viewpoint has shifted off the horizontal plain, and we look down the length of the stage, as if we were looking down from the top of a building at someone standing at its base.

After cautiously surveying his surroundings, he turns onto his stomach and begins his ascent up the wall.¹ Three lengths up, the sound of a window being opened is heard above YUCK [behind the audience] -- inspiring sudden panic in him. The following speech is made out of sight, behind the audience.

CMM3: (In a loud, melodramatic performance-voice):

The Long-Drop: An Ode to Life on the Lavatory

I stand -- a man on the edge,
A man on the edge of a window-ledge!
That's right, this is it! The end is here!

Thank you for coming, I'd buy you a beer
But where I'm going they only serve spirits!
Fifteen stories up -- I know my limits --
Don't want to explode all over some moggy
Out hunting for rats -- they hate to get soggy!
I'm hoping some cop will break out the chalk
And immortalise my figure on the moonlit sidewalk!
Leaving my mark, in control of my fate!
Free from the porcelain-thrones I create,
Linking the stories of both young and old --
In precious time lost on seats far too cold.
Many have bowed before this white water-feature,
To irrigate, fertilise or contradict Nietzsche.
Now faced with a long-drop my heart soars with glee,
They say death cures you of the need to pee!

(His voice switches to an enthusiastic, colloquial register:) Poet Laveate! (He quotes a series of fictional reviews:)

"Plumbing the depths of the human condition, up to his elbows in the dark, damp psyche of Modern Man **this** Nobel-prized (*pronounced "noble, prized"*) poet is the Willy Shakes. of his generation" -- The Somedays Independant.

"Man at his most uncompromisingly compromised" -- Poeple Magazine

"Groundbreaking. Windbreaking. Breathtaking!" -- Flatulence Weekly

(The sound of rattling a jammed window is heard as CMM3 tries to force it open. The man's exertions are audible). Think of the exposure, the impact! My future **and** the future of culture as we know it could change forever if I could just... open... this... windooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...

("Window" is reduced to a prolonged wail as he loses his footing and plummets).

As CMM3 plummets straight through the audience, past YUCK, to his death against the board upstage centre, all sound and movement is represented in slow motion until such time as CMM3 stops moving.ⁱⁱ After collecting himself and narrowly managing to maintain his grip on the wall, Yuck pulls himself up onto the windowsill and stares over the dark streets below. As YUCK catches his breath, the voice of a narrator [CMM1] is heard speaking. His tone mimics the deep bass and affected sincerity of a film voice-over, and echoes through the darkness...

CMM1: High above the streets, two eyes scan the darkness below -- a barcode of light and shadow. The figure of a gargoyle is silhouetted against the moonlit sky. A grotesque beast birthed by Gothic architecture for the purpose of projecting water away from the walls of buildings and terrifying criminals. Part human, part animal, a beast relegated for all time to the position of an onlooker, an outsider, a deterrent. A beast waiting for midnight, for transformation. Waiting to take justice into his own hands. Waiting to close the chapter of his past. Waiting for one man... a watcher vigilant; a vigilante watching. Orphaned as a child when his parents died before his eyes, he has trained himself to hunt down predators that prey on the weak and innocent, and has come to the city to deliver revenge under the cloak of night. Tonight the city-streets are empty, and only the rustlings of a swirling wind breaks the pall of silence. Are these the winds of change...? As if reborn, the Gargoyle projects a glittering stream of water onto the street below...

*On cue, YUCK spits down onto the street below. We hear it hit the ground.
Fade to black.*

Scene 3

L lies on a bed [CMFs 1, 2 & 3] situated on a diagonal, stage right. 3 lit candles

stand in front of the bed. CMMs 1, 2 & 3 surround the bed in an arc, each with a lit candle. Their appearance, as they look down upon the girl asleep, seems to mirror that of priests around an altar. CMM1 in the centre, hands his candle to one of the others and solemnly leans over L with his arms stretched out as if to throttle her. His hands, instead, softly close over her shoulders as he gently shakes her awake. He pulls her up into a sitting position with her legs over the edge of the bed. L's body remains passive and half-asleep throughout the process whereby CMM1 and the CMFs dress and ready her for presentation to Marmalade.ⁱⁱⁱ

Eventually L is positioned to face the audience – her clothes on, hair and teeth brushed – and the remaining CMFs [1 & 3] move to the periphery of the room with lit candles. L appears half-asleep and about to fall over. The sound of the first lock being opened, however, snaps L awake, and the successive sounds of the door's complex locking system are echoed in her rhythmical attempts at blinking herself awake.

We hear a door finally open, behind the audience, and MARMALADE enters carrying a tray. On the tray is a bowl of baked-beans, a spoon and a glass of milk. MARMALADE stops centrestage, pauses as if remembering something, then places her tray on the table [CMM3] and sits down next to it [on CMMs 1 & 2].^{iv}

CMF1 stands behind MARMALADE and L, who has seated herself at the table [on CMFs 2 & 3], suspending three candles in each hand. L contemplates the bowl's contents for a moment, her spoon suspended in mid-air, before speaking.

L: Marm, what's this?

MARMALADE: Breakfast.

L: But, what *is* it?

MARMALADE: Your favourite.

L smiles broadly and begins shoveling the beans in her mouth like a starving

urchin. CMF1 sneezes in MARMALADE's direction and the three candles between them are blown out, causing the light to dim. MARMALADE wipes the back of her neck, and eyes the ceiling suspiciously.

MARMALADE: Leaks...

In the meantime, CMF1 has hurriedly relit the candles, desperate that MARMALADE should not notice. The room's lighting readjusts appropriately.

L: *(Her eyes widen)* What are leaks?

MARMALADE: Vegetables.

L: Can you ride in veg-tibbles?

MARMALADE: Only pumpkins.

L: Oh.

MARMALADE: *(Glancing at L's bowl)* It's not too cold is it?

L: Nope, it's baby-bearable!

Reassured, MARMALADE takes out a ball of wool and two knitting needles from one of the pockets of her cardigan and starts to fiddle with them on her lap. The silence between L and MARMALADE is comfortable. L finishes her breakfast and replaces her bowl and glass on the tray -- CMM3 crawls offstage with the tray on his back. Moments later, as MARMALADE is straightening out the creases in her dress, CMM3 drops her cat into her lap, before exiting again. L looks across at the tangle of wool MARMALADE is trying unsuccessfully to untangle.

L: Rewind?

MARMALADE: It's the only way we'll untangle this mess.

L gets off her chair and sits at MARMALADE's feet, who, in turn, hands the wool to L and puts out her hands for L to wind it round her wrists. Finding one end, L begins winding as she speaks.^v

L: What's a morrow?

MARMALADE: Two morrows are a future.

L: Are there knights in the future?

MARMALADE: Only days: todays and yesterdays.

L: Where're the knights?

MARMALADE: The nights were swallowed by the darkness outside.

L: Did **you** know any great knights?

MARMALADE: Some of the best, but that was a long long time ago.

L: Where'd they go?

MARMALADE: They disappeared when the war began... everyone who was young and could fight **had** to go.

L: Didn't they come back?

MARMALADE: Never completely, they'd lost something.

L: What?

MARMALADE: Innocence. The darkness had gotten under their skins and ate them up slowly from the inside.

L: (*Grimacing*) How'd you know?

MARMALADE: You could see it.

L: Looking? At the knight? How?!

MARMALADE: The lights that used to be there had disappeared... only darkness was left.

L: And then?

MARMALADE: That darkness ate away at them until there was nothing of them left, only shells and shadows.

L: How'd you not get eaten?

MARMALADE: We locked it out. Once inside, it gnaws at you until there's nothing of you left... only when you are empty, does it stop, leaving your shell and the shadow you drag behind you, so you can never forget what it has stolen from you – what can never be replaced.

L: (*Yawning*) Has't gone away now?

MARMALADE: No. It will always be out there, waiting.

By this stage L has finished winding the wool, and has taken it from MARMALADE, tied it round the middle and returned it to her. MARMALADE begins to knit. L rests her head against the old woman's leg as she gets increasingly drowsy.

L: Like *(she yawns)* a wolf in a Gran's clothing... *(She dozes-off.)*

MARMALADE: Like a poisoned-sleep aching to possess another princess...

As her eyes start closing and her breathing deepens, MARMALADE softly strokes her hair, ignoring her knitting and humming snatches of "Prelude" from Bach's "Suite No.1 in G Major" for unaccompanied cello. MARMALADE lifts a few strands of L's hair horizontally and lightly runs a finger along its length.

The lights and MARMALADE's volume fade concurrently to black.

Scene 4

CMFs 1 & 2 stand side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder, directly in front of the board upstage centre. Around the perimeter of the room CMMs 1, 2 & 3 and CMF3 stand with a lit candle on either side of their feet. L's back is to the audience, tensed for action. She spins around and suspiciously surveys her environment -- the chorus are motionless with deadpan expressions. CMM1 cracks his knuckles, and L registers to the sound with a slight tilt of the head, followed by the smallest of smiles. What follows is a series of fiercer and swifter attacks executed by different chorus members, all of which L deftly anticipates and overcomes – to her great enjoyment – with the assistance of an imaginary broadsword.^{vi}

Once all her attackers have been mortally wounded they crawl back to their candles, and L sheaths her sword -- while doing so she hears a noise emanating from behind her curtains [CMFs 1 & 2]. Curious, she moves toward it for closer inspection. Pulling them apart, YUCK is revealed sitting perched on the

windowsill beyond with his back to the audience, leaning against the window. He is fast asleep and snoring. Unable to recognise the form beyond, L leans forward and listens. She steps back and surveys the edges of the window. After trying the top and sides, she detects some give at the bottom and, in one movement opens the window, causing YUCK to tumble off the windowsill and through the window - - L manages to get out of the way just in time. As the window is opened, the chorus blow-out their candles in synchronicity (it is a small movement indicative of the wind's action rather than their own). L is rooted to the spot in a combination of terror and curiosity.

YUCK: (He blinks slowly and attempts to palpate the ground with one hand) I slept through it! (To himself) Maybe they screen reruns... I feel pretty warm... maybe if you're asleep it's not suicide?! (His wandering hand touches L's shoe -- they both freeze in fright) Oh dear.

YUCK scrambles to his feet and looks up nervously at L. YUCK's relief is all consuming, and he hugs L's legs in gratitude -- she is both trapped and traumatised. For the rest of the conversation he focuses almost exclusively on L.

YUCK: Um.. You're.. ah, Angel-a?

CMF3: *(Echoing each of YUCK's proposals, stressing the "el" portion of each word introspectively to herself).* Ang-**el**-a

YUCK: ...Angel-ina?

CMF3: Ang-**el**-ina

YUCK: ...Angel-ica?

CMF3: Ang-**el**-ica

L: Er... Elle *(pronounced "El")*?

YUCK: It's Spanish?

(Perplexed L glances over at CMF3 who shakes her head).

L: No.

YUCK: French?

(CMF3 shakes her head).

L: No.

YUCK: Greek?

CMF3: To you *(CMF3 shakes her head in despair and whispers in L's ear).*

L: No. It's short.

YUCK: *(He nods knowledgeably, then confusion gets the better of him)* Short... short?

L: For Rapunzel.

(CMF3's satisfaction dissolves with YUCK's words).

YUCK: And that's Turkish?

(L looks desperately for support from CMF3).

CMF3: It's irrelevant... are you?

L: Are you...?

YUCK: Turkish?

CMF3: He's not an 'Alibaba' or 'Prince Charming' -- *(a terrifying revelation dawns)*
He's probably --

YUCK: *(Giving a toothy grin and extending an arm in L's direction to shake her hand)* Jacobus.

CMF3: -- Not even house-trained.

L: *(She backs away)* Yuck!

CMF3 conducts a thorough inspection of YUCK -- paying particular attention to his hair, teeth and his mannerisms -- as he continues unawares.

YUCK: Or Jaco.

CMF3: Growling outside your window, fur **everywhere**, and fangs!

L: *(To herself)* All the better to --

YUCK: *(He looks about the room, then swings back towards L)* I could do with a bite to eat *(he smiles hopefully at L)*. *(Sniffing the air)* Has someone been eating beans?

L: *(Emphatically)* No!

YUCK: Oh. It just smells so... uh... familiar. Are you here alone?

L: Th... there's Marmalade... (*pronounced "Marmy-lady"*)

YUCK: I love marmalade!

L: You do?

YUCK: Who doesn't?!

CMF3: Nine out of ten wolves prefer old ladies to pork.

YUCK: Don't you?

L: Um, yes... but, I wouldn't **eat** Marmalade!

YUCK: What do you do with marmalade then?

L: Talk.

YUCK: You talk...

CMF3: All the time.

YUCK: ...To marmalade?! ... How about I fetch that marmalade and you can **talk** while I **eat!**

YUCK: moves towards the door beyond the audience. CMF3 is visibly relieved. L is wide-eyed with terror. Paralysed by panic, L watches him for a few moments before she's able to speak.

L: You can't...

YUCK: (*Heartbroken, he stops dead in his tracks, in line with the audience*) I can't?

CMF3: (*Desperately to L*) He can't?!

L: The door's locked.

YUCK: Locked?

CMF3: (*Desperately to L*) Locked?!

L: From the outside.

YUCK: Who is it locked by? (*He turns and starts moving back towards L*).

CMF3: (*Hyperventilating*)

Don'teatmedon'teatmedon'teatmedon'teatmedon'teatme.... (*CMF3 eventually faints*).

L: *(Nervously)* ...Marmalade?!

YUCK: *(Exasperated)* How do **you** get out?

CMM2 moves from the perimeter of the space and drags the fainted CMF3 offstage through the middle of the audience.

L: Get out? I... I don't.

YUCK: You don't leave?

L: Yes.

YUCK: Nothing leaves?

L: Um... the book!

YUCK: *(To himself)* The book "leaves"?!

YUCK breathes a sigh of relief as L walks over to CMM1 and, lifting his shirt, removes a book of fairytales and hands it to YUCK, who gives her a quizzical look.

L: Inside.

YUCK: *(Flipping through pages, but finding no hidden compartments)* Inside...?

L: *(Taking the book, she carefully pages to a picture of a forest).* It's all here!

YUCK: *(Shuffling next to her, looks over her shoulder)* It's a forest... *(He is decidedly nonplussed, but then recognises something in a picture)* Those trees...

L: *(Triumphantly)* Are leaving.

YUCK: *(Incredulous)* They're still there!?

L: Only the branches are leaving *(she turns the page).*

YUCK: *(Insistently)* They're not there **now!**

L: *(She turns back, and scrutinizes the picture)* They are!

YUCK: These pages are probably all that's left of **that** forest...

L: What?

YUCK: They stole it.

L: **What?**

YUCK: The cash-cow.

L: A cow **ate** the trees?

YUCK: Tong-In-Cheek Enterprises -- the "canning-giant" -- bought the land on which the forest stood in order to use it for its wood.

L: To feed the cow?

YUCK: The forest is a goldmine -- a "cash-cow" -- and they've been milking it for every cent it's worth. There's almost nothing left. They're only interested in money...and, well... beans!

L: What's a "canning" giant?

YUCK: A rich old geezer who makes his millions by cramming beans in cans. You'd be surprised at how many people out there (*he gestures to the window, but the relevance is lost on L*) enjoy eating beans -- even if they won't admit it to your face. And with fewer and fewer trees it's no wonder there's a hole in the ozone layer....

L: Do... do you **eat** beans?!?

YUCK: We were starving, and eating beans was the only way I survived. They took the forest, then the farm, and finally forced my father to leave and come here...

L: (*Nervously checking her surroundings*) Here?

YUCK: Maybe. He was supposed to earn enough to pay off our debt and then come back home, but it swallowed him.

L: It?

YUCK: This monster -- the one we're inside. I used to watch it at night on the hill, its thousands of eyes glittering, like an owl hunting. I thought it was beautiful, that one day I'd visit it and see what was inside...

L: What's inside?

YUCK: Other than us, you mean?

L: We're **inside**?

YUCK: You can tell by the smell.

L: Oh.

YUCK: With no money coming in we had to sell our furniture and clothes just to

eat. And they wouldn't give us money, only beans. We could take them or starve.

L: We?

YUCK: My mother and me -- but she didn't eat any beans... She **said** she was eating, but there wasn't enough for two people to survive that long on... Anyway, she spent most days sitting up in bed staring out the window like she was looking for something she'd lost.. and then, one day, she stopped blinking. Almost as if she'd climbed out of her body and finally gone to fetch what she'd lost, her body waiting quietly for her return.

L: She **didn't** eat beans?

YUCK: I tried to feed her, but she wouldn't eat, so I took whatever beans were left and began my journey to find the heart of the monster, or at least its stomach... I never wanted to ever see another bean for the rest of my life, but I couldn't stop then...

At this point the cello-solo begins softly in the background.

L: Why?

YUCK: On the can was the address of the factory my father went to work at... the beans led me to the giant's lair (L *yawns involuntarily*)... By now, he'll have got wind that I'm looking for him. The more questions you ask, the more likely it is that you'll get silenced permanently, if you know what I mean! (*He gestures a slit throat*).

L: I'm sorry?!?

YUCK: Not you... **me**. I **will** get to him, if he doesn't get to me first...

L: It's... It's you!

YUCK: Exactly.

L: You're him.

YUCK: Who?

L: The stalker.

YUCK: What?!

L: It's in here (*she motions to the book*).

YUCK: It is?

(L nods, yawning).

YUCK: All of it?

L: Everything you can dream of.

YUCK: Oh...

YUCK turns to question L further to find her asleep on her feet. He waves a hand in front of her face with no reaction. He looks around the room for assistance, there is none. L is slowly tipping sideways. Looking back at L, YUCK manages to catch her seconds before she falls. She remains fast asleep as he tries to help her stand -- all the while shifting the position of the book [holding it in his neck, between his knees, etc] in order to allow him to use both hands to shift L. His success is limited and transient, and he eventually collapses beneath her, still supporting her head and shoulders. He attempts to extricate himself from underneath her gently, but soon gives up. Having resigned himself to his fate, YUCK tries to get comfortable, yet struggles to decide where to rest his arms without seeming over-familiar with L. Eventually, giving up the option of getting comfortable, he remembers the book. After checking he is not being observed, he opens the book and, looping his arms past L's ears, holds it out in front of him [and her] and begins reading with growing interest.

Slow fade to black. Music remains.

Scene 5

The music is softened to the softest perceptible level throughout the scene. Lights up as we hear a book hit the floor. YUCK is slumped over L, both fast asleep. The book of fairytales lies on the floor in front of them. The chorus retain their positions from the end of the previous scene. YUCK jerks awake as he hears the first lock open (behind the audience). His panic is compounded, as he looks down at L who is still asleep. The locks are systematically being unlocked one by one, as YUCK attempts to manoeuvre L up and out of sight.

YUCK: (*Mumbling as he gets her over his shoulder and begins backing off towards the window*) You are not a **light sleeper**...

He freezes as the sound of the locks cease and, after a moment of silence, he breathes a sigh of relief. As he does so, a new sound is heard emanating from behind the audience -- the sound is a combination of slow footsteps and a carving knife being sharpened. Manoeuvring L off his shoulder, and onto her feet, YUCK decides to hide behind her as he holds her up. As she walks MARMALADE sings the following rhyme cheerfully to herself as she sharpens the knife in her hand:

MARMALADE:

Jack be nimble,
Jack be quick,
Jack jumped over the candlestick.
Jack be nibbled,
Jack be quiche,
Jack's the snack to fill this niche...

As she catches sight of L, she trails off and her hands drop to her sides.

MARMALADE: Ah...

Smiling, MARMALADE starts tottering upstage towards L. She does not notice that L is not awake, nor that she is propped up by YUCK. She stops a metre from them, puts the knife-sharpener in her cardigan-pocket and looks L up and down. Satisfied with what she sees, she moves closer still.

MARMALADE: It won't hurt a bit!

L remains still with her head bowed. YUCK tries to back further away with L, but realises he is stuck between her and the window.

MARMALADE: Not to worry, it won't take more than a moment.

Holding the carving-knife in her right hand, MARMALADE softly lifts the hair that has fallen forward over L's face and shoulders with her left hand, exposing her neck. Slowly she brings the carving knife towards L's neck. YUCK gulps and MARMALADE pauses in her movement. She moves her head, and peers past L's head, as YUCK ducks behind L, whose torso begins to tip backwards as a result. MARMALADE is oblivious to both movements having noticed the open window beyond. She takes a step closer, forgetting L for a moment, and peers out suspiciously. Having ducked down behind L, YUCK grabs MARMALADE's legs and tips her out the window. She disappears over the edge with a small squeak of surprise. L slides to the floor and continues sleeping. Relieved, YUCK turns from the window and freezes mid-motion, waiting for the sound of MARMALADE's landing. After an uncomfortable wait, in which YUCK gets progressively more agitated, he swivels and peers back out the window. As he does so, the first of the locks is heard being unlocked behind the audience. This sound is instantly registered in YUCK's body-language as he freezes, then glances downstage, towards the sound, in shock.

Quick fade to black.

The music's volume is increased in inverse proportion to the fading light.

Scene 6

Lights up as we hear a book hit the floor. Both the stage setting and the music volume is identical to the start of the previous scene. YUCK is slumped over L, both fast asleep. The book of fairytales lies on the floor in front of them. YUCK jerks awake as he hears the first lock open (behind the audience). Panicking, he glances down at L who is only half-awake and clearly inclined to continue

sleeping. After snuggling closer to YUCK, L eventually opens her eyes to squint at her surroundings. Seeing YUCK causes her to jump to her feet in wide-eyed shock. Then, hearing the sound of the locks, her eyes dart anxiously between YUCK and the door. After a moment of scanning the room for a place to hide him, she pushes YUCK towards the window. At first confused, and then certain that L means to push him out the window, YUCK attempts to resist, but is unsuccessful.

YUCK: Wait! We can talk...

L: Shhhhh!

YUCK: Or **you** can talk... or not...

L stops pushing as YUCK's back touches the window, and pulls the curtains [CMFs 1 & 2] closed in front of him. YUCK is now no longer visible to the audience. The sound of MARMALADE's footsteps are heard approaching L, as she frantically straightens her clothes and tries to remove all indications that anything unusual has transpired. As MARMALADE nears L at centrestage she smiles and opens her arms to embrace L, as she steps up to her.

MARMALADE: Ah...

MARMALADE and L embrace. MARMALADE then holds L at arms-length and scrutinises her.

MARMALADE: What big eyes you have! Are you alright?

L: All the better for seeing you!

MARMALADE moves towards the window behind her. L obstructs her progress by keeping herself between MARMALADE and the window. MARMALADE freezes, she has smelt something. She first sniffs the shoulder of L's garment, then the hair by her neck, and then over her shoulder.

MARMALADE: *(trying to push past L)* Heave Ho! *(Pausing in olfactory revelation)*
By gum, I smell the bod of an unwashed bean!

MARMALADE *strains over L's shoulder for a peek at the window, but L remains obstinately in her way.*

L: What?

MARMALADE: Er... I chewed the cud from an unwashed cow-spleen!

L: Oh.

MARMALADE *rummages in one of her pockets and takes out a very small apple and thrusts it under L's nose.*

MARMALADE: To help you sleep. Wouldn't want bad dreams to keep you awake.

L: Bad dreams?

MARMALADE: You were dreaming, weren't you?

L: Er.. what is it?

MARMALADE: The apple of Eve

L: But, I already have an **Adam's apple** *(as she speaks she takes her hand and lifts it to her throat).*

MARMALADE: Only Adam and Eve united form paradise. Bite it!

L *gingerly bites into the apple as MARMALADE watches her closely. L is pleasantly surprised and after a moment smiles enthusiastically.*

L: It's like nothing I ever tasted! *(MARMALADE smiles benevolently)* It's so juicy...

L *falls asleep mid-sentence and collapses to the floor fast asleep, the apple-core*

still in her hand. MARMALADE glances at L on the floor then moves to the curtains, and pulls them apart (CMFs 1 & 2 reform as the window). The window is open, and empty. YUCK has disappeared. Suspicious, she peers out the window. As she does so, the first of the locks is heard being unlocked behind the audience. This sound is instantly registered in MARMALADE's body-language as she freezes, then glances downstage, towards the sound, in shock.

Quick fade to black.

The music's volume is increased in inverse proportion to the fading light.

Scene 7

Lights up as we hear a book hit the floor. The stage set almost identically to the close of the previous scene, the only differences are that there is no sign of MARMALADE or the apple, L is awake and on her feet, the cello-music has disappeared, and the curtains are closed. As the scene opens L is hurriedly picking up the book that has fallen at her feet, and clutches it against her chest with both hands, eyeing out the chorus nervously from centrestage. CMM2 assumes the role of a physician and CMF3 that of a nurse. They move cautiously towards L until they stand beside her. She seems very anxious.

CMM2: You are?

L: Um... confused?!

CMM2: Name.

L: Oh. Elle (*she shows CMM2 the label of her jersey upon which "L" is clearly marked*).

CMM2: It doesn't fit you.

L: I'm growing into it!

CMM2: Unlikely. What seems to be the potplant?

L: A bean, I think.

CMM2: How long has it been there?

L: Since yesterday.

CMM2: Where is it now? (*L shrugs forlornly.*) Where does it hurt? (*L indicates her head and heart.*) (*To CMF3*) Bitten! It may already be too late (*CMF3 nods gravely.*) (*Addressing L:*) Why don't you lie down? (*Terrified, L shakes her head vigorously.*) It'll take a weight off your mind (*L shakes her head even more vehemently.*)

L: Don't want to.

CMM2: You don't? Hmm... perhaps it's something you ate... If you ate more fruit this probably wouldn't have happened! (*He turns away as CMF3 puts rubber gloves on his hands.*)

L reaches for her sword with one hand, but finds there is no sheath by her side. CMMs 1, 2 & 3 and CMF3 begin to move menacingly towards her. She pauses a moment longer, before making a desperate dash downstage, she is, however, caught by the chorus and dragged back to centrestage where an interrogation begins. CMM3 pries the book from L's grip and pins her arms behind her back and hands it to CMM2, while CMM1 assumes the role of a "heavy" (muscled instigator of any physical brutality). CMM2 turns the suspicious object over in his gloved hands. Meanwhile, CMM1 & 3 hold L while CMF3 inspects L's scalp from behind her.

CMM2: Ah, this explains everything!

CMF3: It's begun!

L: Begun?

CMF3: The transformation.

CMM2: Growing out from your roots... Tell us a little more about this "bean".

Hairy? (*L nods. CMF3 ticks off a checklist as they speak.*) Unwashed?

L: ' Suppose.

CMF3: (*To herself*) Beastly!

CMM2: Moves on all fours?

L: Sometimes...

CMM2: Constantly ravenously hungry?

L: Yes. All the time.

CMM2: *(CMM2 consults CMF3's checklist)* A wolf in bean's clothing.

CMF3: Stalking a bean in sheep's clothing.

L: He's not a **wolf!** *(CMM1 cracks his knuckles and moves closer to L.)*

CMM2: It's in the book!

L: Does that make it true?!

CMM2 gestures to CMM1 who delivers L a blow across her face. CMM1 begins a series of loosening exercises, readying himself for further pummeling.

L: *(Still reeling)* Who wrote it -- the book?

CMM2: Why does it matter?

L: Whose story **is** this? What happens in the end? *(CMM2 frantically gestures to CMM1 who is slow to comprehend.)* Are we here 'cause **it** is... or is it here 'cause **we** aaahhhhh... ?

CMM1 punches L in the stomach and the end of her sentence gets lost as she buckles over in pain. Simultaneously, CMM2 drops the book, CMM3 releases L, as both of them and CMM1 and CMF3 all buckle-over clutching their aching stomachs. A set of fingers grab the bottom of the window-frame, a few moments later another hand joins the first. The chorus crawl back to the perimeter of the room to nurse their injuries. A few moments later YUCK pulls himself through the window. In his hand is a length of strong rope. Hearing L's last words, he responds.

YUCK: Either way, it's over!

L: *(Still clutching her aching abdomen)* It is?

YUCK: It's on the front page. *(He takes a newspaper from his trousers and hands it to her.)*

L: *(Reading slowly)* "BILL TONG IS DEAD MEAT: Canning-giant Willillilliam Tong was found dead early this morning." Did... ?

YUCK: That's a beauty-sleep he won't wake up from! The report says they discovered hair on the pillows, muddy prints on the carpet, and an open window.

L: Mud?

YUCK: He lives in a state-of-the-art Gothic Castle with a moat -- I slipped and fell in.

L: You...

YUCK: I was finally going to pay him back.

L: You deaded him?!

YUCK: He was dead before I got there. But I seem to be stuck with the murder-weapon.

L: What... ?

YUCK: Too much love can kill you... He stopped breathing when his cat fell asleep over his nose and mouth, attracted by the warmth of his breath.

L: A cat got your Tong?

YUCK: In a manner of speaking.

L: So how can **you** have the mud.. mudd, er... ?

YUCK: When Bill started to chill-out, the cat left in search of the nearest warm body.

L: (*Glancing at the book on the floor*) It's **not** in here!

YUCK: It's outside.

L: No, the cat's not in **here** (*she indicates the book lying centrestage*)!

YUCK: Should it be?

L: Yes!... I thought... maybe....

YUCK: Missing answers are sometimes the only trail we can follow to begin to understand where we've come from, and where we're going.

L: Like a pebble-trail winding through a moonlighted forest.

YUCK: Or breadcrumbs that could, any minute, without warning, be eaten... Um, is there anything to eat here?

L: Er... no.

YUCK: Is that marmalade still around?

L: Not here.

YUCK: Oh. Maybe it got tired of talking.

L: Would you eat *me*?

YUCK: Eat you?

L: ... Marmalade and I probabibbly taste the same...

YUCK: Who'd I talk to then?!

L smiles, but it disappears as she hears the door beginning to be unlocked. They both look anxiously at the door, then back at one another.

YUCK: Room-service?

L: Na manner of speaking.

YUCK: Marmalade?

L: Yes! No! You mustn't... not here... if... if... you... we... *(floundering, she notices the rope in YUCK's hand for the first time)* what's that for?

YUCK: *(Glancing down at the rope)* Oh.

The door is opened and MARMALADE's footsteps are heard approaching slowly. L pushes YUCK to the window behind her. YUCK squeezes through the curtains (CMFs 1 & 2) and disappears beyond, as L's eyes dart frantically between the door and the window.

Lights cut just as YUCK exits, and before MARMALADE arrives on stage.

Scene 8

The scene is set identically to the opening of Scene 3 with L lying across CMFs 1, 2 & 3, and CMMs 1, 2 & 3 looking down on her as she sleeps. Their appearance as they watch her seems identical to the previous scene. CMM1 in the centre, hands his candle to one of the others and solemnly leans over L with his arms stretched out as if to throttle her. His hands, instead, pass over her shoulders and grip her hair. L is pulled by her hair into an upright, sitting position with her legs over the edge of her bed. Startled, she reacts as if waking from the trauma of a nightmare, as CMMs 1, 2 & 3 turn their backs to her in unison and

move back to the edges of the room.

L's body language and movements are tentative and urgent.^{vii} Once she realises that she will receive no assistance she gets up, and attempts to take herself through her grooming and readying routine. The process mirrors, in part, that of scene 3, but this time the effects of L's solo efforts are disastrous in every respect.

Midway through brushing her teeth, she freezes as she hears the first of the locks on the door click open. As panic sets in, she takes the toothbrush out of her mouth and looks at her two handfuls, then around the room frantically. She turns and stuffs the toothbrush in the mouth of CMF1, and the toothpaste down her cleavage, and then returns to the appropriate position to receive MARMALADE as the final click of the locks is heard.

A split second later she notices her jersey on the floor on the opposite side of the stage and dashes across to pick it up, frantically pulling it over her head. It gets stuck, and she struggles blindly with it until, as MARMALADE's footsteps approach, it slips over her head, but not over her arms. She quickly moves back into position, her arms still trapped in the garment.

MARMALADE enters carrying a tray, she is humming snatches of Bach's "Prelude" for unaccompanied cello. On the tray is a bowl of baked-beans, a spoon and a glass of milk. MARMALADE walks down stage and then stops, as if trying to remember something. The two chairs and the table form as they did in Scene 3. She places the tray on the table and settles herself in her chair. By this time, L has managed to get her arms through her garment and sits.

After a moment of nervously contemplating the bowl's contents, L waits for MARMALADE to take out her wool from her cardigan. As she does so L grabs the elastic of CMF1's trousers, pulling them towards her in order to create the space to pour her beans into. Having emptied her bowl in the trousers of CMF1, she quickly returns to her original position, placing the bowl back on the tray. Her composure is perfectly angelic, by the time MARMALADE looks back at her. L contemplates the emptied bowl for a moment, her spoon suspended in mid-air, before speaking.

L: Marm, what's this?

MARMALADE: Breakfast.

L: But, what **is** it?

MARMALADE: Your favourite.

L: *(Her eyes watch Marmalade closely)* Not beans... is it?

MARMALADE: Beans?

L: Beans.

MARMALADE: For breakfast?! *(L nods.)* Is that your **favourite**?

L: *(Beginning to confuse herself)* **No**, not **really**, I think...

MARMALADE: Do you **want** beans?

L: So they're **not** beans?

MARMALADE: Do they **look** like beans?

L swallows a spoonful of fresh air and replaces her bowl on the tray beside the untouched glass of milk -- the table crawls offstage with the tray on its back. CMF2, noticing the untouched milk, grabs the glass as it passes and drains its contents in a single gulp. 2 minutes later he collapses fast-asleep. L looks across at the tangle of wool MARMALADE is trying unsuccessfully to untangle.

MARMALADE: You'd better rewind.

L gets off her chair and moves to sits on the floor at MARMALADE's feet.^{viii}

MARMALADE hands the wool to L and puts out her hands for L to wind it round her wrists. Finding one end, L begins winding as she speaks.

L: Is this a yarn?

MARMALADE: Of a sort.

L: Why d'you keep spinning it?

MARMALADE: It gives me purpose and keeps me busy. It's an investment for the future.

L: To keep out the cold?

MARMALADE: Exactly.

L: But why don't you **finish** it, why keep starting over and over and over and over?

MARMALADE: I want it to be perfect.

L: Is it for you?

MARMALADE: This time.

L: Is there a reason?

MARMALADE: There are always reasons.

L: Why "Elle"?

MARMALADE: "El" is short for "Rapunzel".

L: I know **that**, am I Rapunzel?

MARMALADE: Sort of. You have the same long beautiful hair.

L: But, in the book Rapunzel was taken from her real mummy and locked in the topmostest room of a tall tower, where no one could find her ever!?!

MARMALADE: But, didn't she grow up with a mother?

L: Yes. Sort of.

MARMALADE: And didn't her parents **give** her to her **new** mother -- who loved the child with all her heart?

L: Suppose so.

MARMALADE: And was Rapunzel unhappy?

L: When she met...

MARMALADE: A knight who wanted to steal her away from her mother.

L: He wasn't going to hurt her!

MARMALADE: Of course. Knights never **mean** to hurt anyone, it just happens... over and over and over...

L: But **she** made Rapunzel go away into the desert where no one could find ever her...

MARMALADE: Or hurt her.

L: Why?

MARMALADE: Maybe she had had her heart stolen by a knight once before, and

knew the emptiness it left behind. Sometimes love requires you to do things no one else would ever understand. To save what's left of that love.

L: But the only happy ending is when the girl finds the knight again!

MARMALADE: You can't believe everything you read.

L: Oh... *(Long pause)* It's finished.

Instead of taking the wound wool from around MARMALADE's wrists, L pulls both ends, pulling MARMALADE's wrists together and tying the ends together to keep MARMALADE's hands tied.

MARMALADE: What are you doing?

L: Tying up loose ends *(she removes her jersey and gags MARMALADE with it).*

MARMALADE: But -- !

L: Maybe all that's left are just deserts. No more crumbs. No way back...

Noticing something in MARMALADE's pocket L reaches inside and lifts the carving-knife out between her left thumb and forefinger. She stares at it in horror. MARMALADE stares wide-eyed at the blade, L, noticing her reaction moves closer.

L: What big eyes you have! ... 'twon't hurt!

She grips the knife with her right hand and blows out the candles. The stage is plunged into darkness.

L: 'll only take a moment.

After a long silence, a grunt is heard, followed by footsteps and a window opening, and then closing.

Scene 9

YUCK sits with his legs dangling over a windowsill in the moonlight, high above the stage opposite the audience. He fiddles with a coil of rope tied in a noose. The other end of the rope is tied to the leg of CMF2 behind him. The sounds of a growing storm are heard all around, and YUCK's clothes blow in the wind. Behind him are drawn curtains (CMFs 1 & 2 with their backs to YUCK). Directly below him is a chalk outline of the 'poet' from Scene 2, which glows fluorescently on the darkened stage, and the echo of the narrator's voice is heard again:

CMM1: Lifeless, the Gargoyle sits hunched above a world that no longer remembers why he's there. An expired piece of architecture perched on the edge of layers upon layers of stories rising out the ground and pushing ever deeper into the brooding night-sky. Neither watched nor watching, he waits. Like all stone has done from the beginning of time... His eyes are as empty now as his stomach. As cold as his heart, where purpose can no longer burn. Grafted onto these stories, the outsider will be first to disintegrate from neglect. Crumbling into memory, then myth, then dust, until reduced to nothing. Perhaps there is still a way to get blood from a stone. To quit and be acquitted of the burden of remaining unsentenced. To draw purpose from the dark well of the future by letting go of the present. By falling back into past. Dropping like a stone. Out of contention. Out of sight and out of mind...

YUCK: Out of the question.

CMM1: ...The question?

YUCK: To be or not to be?

CMM1: That's the question?!

YUCK: Whose will when, if, we act and how... ?!

CMM1: A skimming stone will eventually sink... it takes a guiding hand to make something of nothing.

YUCK: *(To himself)* Every body wants to be held...

Simultaneously, the curtains are parted behind the window, and the window is opened behind YUCK. L looks out just as YUCK spits onto the street below. Her

hair has been cut messily to above shoulder length.

CMM1: Everybody wants to be held in the warm arms of yesterday and -- Hey!?!

Lights up on CMM1 who stands directly beneath the window-ledge, holding a dog-eared script of "Locks" in one hand and a microphone in the other. Looking around and above him suspiciously, he drops the script and wipes the back of his neck.

L: Yuck!

Highly peeved, CMM1 glances down at the fallen script, before concluding in monotone.

CMM1: ...The end.

CMM1 briskly turns the microphone off and storms morosely offstage. The lights return to their original settings. L has, by this time, climbed through the window -- closing it behind her -- onto the small ledge next to YUCK. He is rendered momentarily speechless in his embarrassment at being caught mid-spit, L doesn't notice, however, in her wonder at her new environment.

L: *(Looking up at the night-sky)* What's that? *(She points to an object above and behind the audience.)*

YUCK: Um... the **moon!**?!

L: Is it always so big and round?

YUCK: Each night holds a different moon.

L: There're **knights!**?!

YUCK : Only out here.

L: Really!?

YUCK: You don't get out much, do you?!

L: I'm trying... Why're you here?

YUCK: I've been wondering...

L: Wandering?

YUCK: ...The same thing.

L: Where's your wepin?

YUCK: It's kitty-litter now.

L: What?

YUCK: On the streets.

L: Why?

YUCK: It wasn't keen on beans... Nothing's left anyway.

L: The cans?

YUCK: Everything. There's nothing to go back to. *(Long pause.)* Even the voices have left, leaving only a deafening emptiness.

L: And us.

YUCK: Us?

L: **Our** voices!

YUCK: But we don't have answers!

L: We have questions!

YUCK: How does that bring enlightenment?

L: Maybe if a voice spoke into the darkness and said "Let there be..."?!

YUCK: *(To himself)* And there was... *(Turning to L)* You know that things can only go down from here?!

Together they look down at the street below (centrestage). Their eyes widen and they slowly turn to one another, mirroring each other's expressions of trepidation, simultaneously they both look at the noose still dangling from YUCK's hand. Cut to black as a spot lights MARMALADE at centrestage...

Scene 10

The stage is set identically to the stage at the close of Scene 1.

MARMALADE: ...And then one day, they vanished (*she puts the knitted booties back in her cardigan-pocket*)... to live happily ever after -- two people far from sadness and pain. Two people, and a cat. Always best to stick with what you know, you know?! It is so terribly hard to let go of things... like Whisky! (*She affectionately strokes the cat on her lap*). Sometimes it's all that keeps you sane... like a story at bedtime, something to keep back the shadows, to open up worlds where the impossible becomes possible. You can always keep paging back, until the day you never wake from that place where the darkness can't find you, where winds can't snuff your flame. Where only a witch is burned, and where the spinner of yarns is a godmother who transforms dreams into reality.

She picks up Whiskey and tosses him into the air. He is caught by CMF2 who, holding it disdainfully by its tail, carries it offstage.

Our own story is the only one we really understand, really believe, the only one we can trust. The only ending that leaves us living -- happily ever after... Why create a new story, when the ones we've already got are so... complete?! And real. They come from us -- the stories -- tried and tested. Canned for our convenience. No surprises. Like it's been, like it is. Like it should be. How we've been. The light flickering on our page. Remembered in the words of our world, rather than in the melancholic chords of memory. A volume in the annals of time, not just noise. Not just sound and fury, but, voices. A voice that won't be forgotten. Our meaning locked safely inside words in the mouth of tomorrow. The sentences we live out to earn us immortality.

As MARMALADE is speaking, CMM3 enters carrying CMF3, who is stiff and lifeless, and positions this human-cello in front of MARMALADE. CMF3 resembles a corpse with her hands clasped in her lap (forming the cello's "bridge"), and her chin tilted heavenwards. CMF2 re-enters and hands MARMALADE a cello-bow (made of hair of the same length and colour of L's), before exiting again. MARMALADE runs her fingers along the length of the hair

of the bow as she talks. It seems to calm her and she smiles peacefully as she speaks.

We're only human -- beans -- hoping to make it off the shelf, out the can, into the light again. Waiting in darkness for a light to free our walking shadows...

MARMALADE positions her hands on the bow and neck of CMF3 and begins playing Bach's "Prelude" from "Suite No.1 in G Major", by sliding the bow across the invisible strings suspended across the cello's bridge, and selecting chords with her fingers on CMF3's neck. MARMALADE is completely absorbed in the music as she plays. As her piece ends, CMF1 snuffs the candle behind her between two fingers and the stage is plunged into silence and darkness.

FIN

Appendix

Scene 2:

ⁱ *The spot continues to scan the stage as the sirens start to fade, replaced by a quickening heartbeat and loud panting from all directions. The spot disappears downstage as blue-lights [moonlight] come up on YUCK who lies flat on his back upstage centre, his head towards the audience and his arms pressed against the floor on either side, his feet stand flat against the board upstage centre. The audience's viewpoint has shifted off the horizontal plain, and we look down the length of the stage, as if we were looking down from the top of a building at someone standing at its base. He tilts his head backwards surveying the length of the wall behind and above him. He then pushes his neck out to look down the street to his left and right before settling back flat against the wall again. He turns onto his stomach, before replacing his hands on the wall's surface on either side of himself. For a moment both his hands search the wall for a decent grip with which to pull himself up. Once his hands have found grips, he places the first of his legs on the wall and finds a toehold.*

As he climbs up the wall his face is focused upwards towards the audience. The area YUCK climbs amounts to, approximately, four body-lengths, the last of which allows him to reach a ledge that he can pull himself up onto. Apart from the tension of finding holds on the wall, and pulling his body up with his fingers, YUCK also reacts to a number of environmental factors once off the ground. After climbing one body-length he loses a foothold and the noise attracts the spot, which suspiciously pans over him as he hangs on the wall. He freezes and presses himself flat against the wall as it passes him. Three lengths up, the sound of a window being opened is heard above YUCK [behind the audience] -- inspiring sudden panic in him.

ⁱⁱ As CMM3 plummets straight through the audience, past YUCK, to his death against the board upstage centre, all sound and movement is represented in slow motion until such time as CMM3 stops moving.ⁱⁱ As CMM3 begins his plummet, YUCK lets go of both his right handhold and foothold, and hangs with his left side against the wall suspended by only his left hand and foot (his other limbs dangle off the wall), as he watches CMM3 scramble and roll down the wall past him to the ground. After contemplating the body below for a moment, his right leg pushes off the wall and he regains his former foothold and handhold. By this stage, YUCK is a few moves away from reaching the windowsill above him. The final lunge for the windowsill is the most dangerous [he lunges upward and backward] and hangs on by only his fingertips. He pulls himself up onto the windowsill with his arms, and turns to sit upon it. YUCK's head should be approximately a metre from the feet of the audience in the front row, and his legs dangle over the windowsill in the night breeze. A fan positioned in the darkness to one side of YUCK blows across him as he sits. As YUCK catches his breath, the voice of a narrator [CMM1] is heard speaking. His tone mimics the deep bass and affected sincerity of a film voice-over, and echoes through the darkness...

Scene 3:

ⁱⁱⁱ CMMs 1, 2 & 3 move backwards to the edges of the room [all the while facing L], and CMFs 1, 2 & 3 roll up simultaneously into an upright position. The movement causes L to be standing with her back to the audience and against CMF2. CMFs 1 & 3 turn and lift L's arms above her head, while CMF2 moves round to face L, after

which she picks up a woolen jersey and slides it over L's head. The jersey is sized to suit an adult male, and is thus hopelessly too big for L. Dropping L's arms, CMF2 gathers the three candles and leads the group to the opposite corner upstage. Once in the corner, CMF2 turns and assumes the deadpan position of the other candle bearers. L's right arm is raised and a hair brush is placed in her right hand, the arm is then guided through the process of brushing her hair by CMF3 [L faces the back of the stage]. Once this action is completed, the hairbrush is removed from her hand, and she is spun round efficiently to face the audience. CMF1 places a toothbrush in L's right hand, while CMF3 places a line of toothpaste upon it. While CMF3 supports L's head and body, CMF1 vigorously takes L's hand through the process of brushing her teeth. CMF1 then removes the toothbrush from L's hand, and substitutes a glass of water. CMF1 raises the glass to L's lips, and CMF3 tilts L's head back and shakes it from side to side. L is then spun around a second time, and her head is bent over to spit out the water into the empty glass. She is turned to face the audience again, and the remaining CMFs [1 & 3] move to the periphery of the room with lit candles. L appears half-asleep and about to fall over. The sound of the first lock being opened, however, snaps L awake, and the successive sounds of the door's complex locking system are echoed in her rhythmical attempts at blinking herself awake.

^{iv} *We hear a door finally open, behind the audience, and MARMALADE enters carrying a tray. On the tray is a bowl of baked-beans, a spoon and a glass of milk. MARMALADE stops centrestage, pauses as if remembering something, and swivels. As she stops, CMM3 passes his candle to CMM1 and dives forward under the suspended tray to become a table, seconds before the tray is placed upon it. As MARMALADE puts down the tray, CMFs 2 & 3 [after passing their candles to CMF1] hurriedly form a chair behind the table. MARMALADE seems unaware of their arrival, but noticing the chair behind her she shifts it forward towards the table. By this time, CMM1 & 2 [having passed their candles to CMF1 as she moved round behind L and MARMALADE] have formed a chair behind MARMALADE, upon which she settles herself [this chair is identical to the one in Scene 1]. CMF1 stands behind MARMALADE and L, who has seated herself at the table, suspending three candles in each hand. L contemplates the bowl's contents for a moment, her spoon suspended in mid-air, before speaking.*

^v L gets off her chair and CMFs 2 & 3 move to either side of CMF1, and each take two candles, as L sits herself at MARMALADE's feet. CMFs 1, 2 & 3 form a semi-circle behind L and MARMALADE. MARMALADE hands the wool to L and puts out her hands for L to wind it round her wrists. Finding one end, L begins winding as she speaks.

Scene 4:

^{vi} CMFs 1 & 2 stand side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder, directly in front of the board upstage centre. Around the perimeter of the room CMMs 1, 2 & 3 and CMF3 stand with a lit candle on either side of their feet. L's back is to the audience, tensed for action. She spins around and suspiciously surveys her environment -- the chorus are motionless with deadpan expressions. CMM1 cracks his knuckles, and L registers to the sound with a slight tilt of the head, followed by the smallest of smiles. CMM1 launches at her from behind, but is quickly disabled by L. Following this assault, CMMs 2 & 3 and CMF3 follow suit. L relishes this conflict and is uncannily adept at anticipating the movements of her attackers. As the assaults get fiercer and faster, L pauses and draws an imaginary broadsword from an imaginary sheath by her side and lays into her attackers using her weapon. The effect is devastating and her movements are beautifully controlled and seductively smooth.

Once all her attackers have been mortally wounded they crawl back to their candles, and L sheaths her sword -- while doing so she hears a noise emanating from behind CMFs 1 & 2. Curious, she moves toward it for closer inspection. Pulling them apart like curtains, they spin and form a window-frame on the board behind them, YUCK sits perched on the windowsill beyond with his back to the audience, leaning against the window. He is fast asleep and snoring. Unable to recognise the form beyond, L leans forward and listens. She steps back and surveys the edges of the window. After trying the top and sides, she detects some give at the bottom and, in one movement opens the window, causing YUCK to tumble off the windowsill and through the window -- L manages to get out of the way just in time. As the window is opened, the chorus blow-out their candles in synchronicity (it is a small movement indicative of the wind's action rather than their own). L is rooted to the spot in a combination of terror and curiosity.

Scene 8:

^{vii} *The scene is set identically to the opening of Scene 3 with L lying across CMFs 1, 2 & 3, and CMMs 1, 2 & 3 looking down on her as she sleeps. Their appearance as they watch her seems identical to the previous scene. CMM1 in the centre, hands his candle to one of the others and solemnly leans over L with his arms stretched out as if to throttle her. His hands, instead, pass over her shoulders and grip her hair. L is pulled by her hair into an upright, sitting position with her legs over the edge of her bed. Startled, she reacts as if waking from the trauma of a nightmare, as CMMs 1, 2 & 3 turn their backs to her in unison and move back to the edges of the room.*

Her body language and movements are tentatively urgent.^{vii} She waits (her back to the audience) but the bed does not move. She looks behind her at the inert bed, and then tentatively stands up. CMFs 1, 2 & 3 then roll up simultaneously into a standing position, pick up their candles and move to the edges of the room (their backs to L).

After a moment of standing still, L carefully walks upstage to the opposite corner of the stage where, after a moment of searching at her feet, she finds a hair brush near her right foot. She picks it up, looks at it for a moment, and then attempts to brush her hair (her back is to the audience), but fails. After a moment, she carefully puts the brush back down on the floor where she found it. She then finds a toothbrush and toothpaste next to her left foot, and in picking it up with her right hand she turns to face the audience -- one hand holding the toothpaste, the other holding the toothbrush. After a moment of holding her two handfuls in front of her, she looks down at them. She motions to put down the toothpaste, but changes her mind midway and puts the toothbrush on the floor instead. She straightens up and carefully undoes its lid. She looks down at both hands again, puts the lid on the floor next to the toothbrush, and picks up the toothbrush. Gaining more confidence, she rubs the nozzle of the toothpaste over the toothbrush (no toothpaste leaves the tube), puts down the toothbrush next to the lid, and picks up the lid. After replacing the lid on the tube of toothpaste, L picks up the toothbrush in her right hand and puts it into her mouth. After a moment of stillness, her eyes reveal her puzzlement. Her hand begins to move the brush non-committally against her teeth -- the action is very foreign to her. She freezes as she hears the

first of the locks on the door being opened, the toothbrush still in her mouth. Panic sets in, she takes the toothbrush out of her mouth and looks at her two handfuls, then around the room frantically. She turns and stuffs the toothbrush in the mouth of CMF1, and the toothpaste down her cleavage, and then returns to the appropriate position to receive MARMALADE as the final click of the locks is heard.

A split second later she notices her jersey on the floor on the opposite side of the stage and dashes across to pick it up, frantically pulling it over her head. It gets stuck, and she struggles blindly with it until, as MARMALADE's footsteps approach, it slips over her head, but not over her arms. She quickly moves back into position, her arms still trapped in the garment.

^{viii} *L gets off her chair and CMFs 2 & 3 move back on either side of CMF1, each taking two candles. L sits on the floor at MARMALADE's feet. CMFs 1, 2 & 3 form a semi-circle behind L and MARMALADE. MARMALADE hands the wool to L and puts out her hands for L to wind it round her wrists. Finding one end, L begins winding as she speaks.*

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