

# A KIND MAN

Libretto by Jonathan Finney from the novel of the same name by Dame Susan Hill

Tommy Carr, bass

Doctor McElvey: bass-baritone

Eve, his wife: mezzo soprano

Henry Arnold , a young man, tenor

Miriam, her sister: soprano

Daphne Arnold, Henry's sick mother: soprano

Arthur, Miriam's ten year-old son, treble

## PART ONE

### Scene 1, The Carrs' cottage

Miriam/Arthur/Eve

*The kitchen/living room. The front door is centre stage at the rear, with a window SL. In the SR back corner is a door leading to the stairs to the two bedrooms. There is a fire- place SR with a chair and a couch, both old but comfortable. The kitchen table is just off centre [SL] with two chairs facing each other. There is a small, simple, pretty, but empty jug on the table*

*Arthur is sat at this table occasionally looking up from his book at the door leading to the staircase. His mother, Miriam, is sat on one the chair by the fireplace. She has been dozing.*

Miriam: Arthur. Time to go home. Tell your father I won't be long: if you can find him.

*While Miriam is speaking, Eve comes through the door from the staircase. She has been up all night, but she does not make a song and a dance about this. Arthur sees her while still at the table, putting his book into his satchel.*

M: [To Eve] When's he coming, the doctor?

Eve: Before dark he said. I woke so early: but Tommy is sleeping now. It is very good of you, staying like this, again.

*Arthur has gone over to Eve, who gives him a kiss on the top of his head as he leaves.*

M: I've not seen your Tommy out and about for days, for weeks. Even then he went about slowly: Forty-five, and he looked seventy.

*Eve sits at the chair vacated by Arthur. She does not move from this chair whilst Miriam remains.*

E: He's been eating less, less than usual. I see that, scraping his left-overs into the bin.

M: My boys have missed Tommy: Arthur most of all. Your man's better than their own father. He never stirs himself. But Tommy, he's good with them.

I know you judge me!

E: No.

M: Yes! You know you judge me!

Some days, I would give them away!

E: Who?

M: Those sons of mine, those sons of his.

E: That's terrible: you shouldn't, shouldn't say such things. You love them.

M: How does that change matters.

E: Miriam, you shouldn't.

M: It wears you down. What do you know? If I had another... I'd kill myself!

E: How can you speak like that?

M: You wait till you've had four like me.

E: Miriam. O wish she was still here...

M: I'm sorry.

E: A year gone, since little Jeannie...

M: I know. I'm sorry.

M: I remember Mother asking you one thing only about Tommy: was he a kind man?

E: Well I think I know by now.

M: Yes, men like yours don't grow on trees... I should know.

Some might think that Tommy has no spark... but... you'll never know the disappointment that's possible when you've got a man like mine.

*[Eve has leant forward and took hold of the jug in front of her, without moving it.]*

M: I look over it all and think that all of us has not more than a year or so where we are the best we will be. Healthy, hopeful, worth looking at. I saw it in me, I saw it in you: our eyes, on our skin. But no one knows it about themselves. Not until...

I look back now and know. That it's gone for good. Gone for good.

I'll go now... leave you in peace

*Miriam gives her sister a perfunctory kiss on the cheek and leaves.. Eve remains seated at the table.*

**Scene 2**, follows immediately

*Eve attempts to busy herself with chores; but she is distracted by her anxiety for her husband and she goes once or twice to the window, looking out for the doctor*

*There is a knock at the door. Eve goes to the door quickly, which she opens.*

**Eve:** Hello Doctor: thank you for coming.

**Doctor** *[as he enters]*: Good evening, Mrs Carr. I think perhaps you may need me to look at your husband.

*Eve indicates that they should sit at the kitchen table, which they do, opposite each other, Eve in her chair.*

**Eve:** It's no wonder that one of us took sick: grief does that.

One day, catching Tommy's face as he turned, I saw that something was wrong. That was all. After that, I would watch him, across this table, and could see small changes.

He became tired and short of breath. His skin wasn't good, and his eyes had dark circles.

Tommy doesn't complain at all; but I hear him sometimes, making a little moaning noise; he puts his hand to his belly.

He seems to have gone down in the last hour.

Can't I get you anything, Doctor?

**Doctor:** No, no... I just need to go up, to make sure Tommy's comfortable: I've had him on my mind.

*Eve nods and the doctor takes the staircase to the bedroom.*

*Eve remains at the table.*

**Eve:** Oh God. My days are tunnels: Tunnels that I trudge through. Each day leading to the next, no rest no purpose.

Us two Tommy: we had our road, together. Always together, we walked into and through our fears... with His hope in our eyes.

Me alone... Then us two... Then us three.

What next Tommy? All I can do is wait.

*The doctor comes down the staircase and returns to sit at the table.*

Eve: Well then? How is he?

Doctor: First let me ask: When did Tommy last go to work?

Eve: Two months since. He hated being sent home like that.

Doctor: So when did he last go out of the house?

Eve: Just over two weeks ago.

Doctor: The last time he came down?

Eve: Just over a week ago.

Doctor: When did he last finish a meal?

**Eve:** Two... no... three days ago: some bread, milk... brown sugar...

*She grips the edge of the table at which she is sitting.*

**Doctor:** When did he last drink anything?

**Eve:** No... he still drinks; a little sip, every now and then.

That's good, don't you think? That he's drinking?

**Doctor:** Does he ask for it?

**Eve:** He wouldn't remember. I just give him a little out of his mug.

**Doctor:** I can give you something to help him now.

**Eve:** There's only a spoonful left of his medicine. It seemed as if it helped him, just a little.

**Doctor:** He needs something stronger now; to ease him: Help him sleep. That is all.

Keep him covered, he'll feel the cold.

**Eve:** Is there nothing you can do? Can nobody?

**Doctor:** You can do most, you know that. Being with him: making sure he's comfortable.

That's all he wants; to have you near him.

**Eve:** It's hard...

**Doctor:** Yes.

**Eve:** ...and harder knowing.

**Doctor:** I'll come by tomorrow.

*Eve gets up to open the door for him and the Doctor leaves. She returns to the kitchen, holding herself up by the table, on the side where the doctor had sat.*

**Eve:** What should I do? Would I stay here? I can't leave here.

I'm thinking as if he were dead. If he were dead; really dead!

But he's not dead! He is not dead yet!

But where have I gone?

*Eve calms herself before going back up the stairs to Tommy.*

### **Scene 3, Jeannie Carr's grave**

*This is in a remote churchyard high above the valley. It is a sunlit early morning after the doctor's visit to Tommy Carr the previous evening.*

*Eve arrives agitated. She has come for respite and time to herself. She has a small sprig of flowers for Jeannie.*

**Eve:** Daddy himself carried you here. I thanked God for Tommy: his help, his strength. He'll be here soon, Jeannie.

We had joy of you from your first day; and our joy increased with every change and growth.

I met Tommy, and afterwards I felt as if everything as falling out easily. It was quite straightforward.

Tommy Carr, a kind man leaving flowers in my jug, as always, me knowing what he felt, not a word needing to be said.

Dad is what he is... not only to us. It's in his nature; he had been a kind boy.

When I married him I moved into a protected circle. He gave me peace of mind. Strengthening...calming me: leading me quietly out of childhood.

One day...I unpegged his shirt from the line and put it to my face. I loved! It was obvious, as the blueness of the sky.

Before you were born he moved us to where it's light and open, and we could breathe a bit. Our cheeks got pink in the fresh air. He thought it was good. Good for us: it was. There was something in the air of the place...an excitement, unfamiliar.

**Scene 4,** follows immediately

*Eve looks up from the grave of her daughter, looking down the path. She is clearly shocked and perplexed when her husband Tommy enters. He appears to be completely healthy, dressed for the outdoors in his jacket.*

Eve: Tommy!

Tommy: Something has happened. Something has happened since the doctor left: since last night.

Eve: I don't understand. I don't understand what's happening! How are you here! How could you walk here!

Tommy: Something has happened. My body feels light: I can lift my feet, without effort. I've got not pain, or even much sensation in me.

Eve: The medicine the doctor left?

Tommy: It hasn't to do with the medicine.

Eve I don't understand what's happened to you. How's your belly?

Tommy: It's not painful now, I feel peaceful now.

The heat of it... was like being in the Sun.

Eve: You were so hot last night, Tommy.

T: How long did it last?

E: Not long: like a sudden fever. How are you now?

T: I'd been hot; there was heat like one of the furnaces at work.

E: But why should that take away all of the pain so suddenly.

T: I feel...as if I'd fought the war again; all by myself.

E: What will happen now? Are you well after all? Or will you be ill again? Tomorrow or next week?

T: When I woke, I sensed something different and strange, not understanding what it was.

Home was quite empty. I lay still: no pain. When I moved: none of the pain I was used to. I put my hand up to the swelling in my neck: gone. I thought I'd checked the wrong side... but nothing, anywhere. Belly, likewise, no longer swollen where the pain had been so great.

Not swollen, but flat and smooth, like before. I took a breath, a deep one: held it, let it go in a burst. Still no pain. Understanding none of it I stood up and drew the curtains, then I opened the windows and took a lungful of air in the Sun, as I stood there, arms stretched out.

*[Tommy has stood up, arms stretched wide.]*

E: I had prepared myself, for you dying yesterday: not wanting, just ready. I'd been so unprepared for Jeannie, but this time...

T: I remember Jeannie, walking, taking our hands. But I remember now, not with sadness, but content. I don't understand any of this, but that seems not to matter. What happened to the three of us just happened. Something new has fallen into place. Something has righted itself.

E: Tommy...

*[Eve hooks Tommy's arm through hers and they walk away homewards].*

**PART 2**

**Scene 1, Dr McElvey's office**

*About a month later. He is alone and sitting very still at his desk [SL]. There is a chair opposite him for patients. The door to his waiting room is SR.*

Dr: I like Carr: I feel for him... his illness and the loss of his daughter.

But now he's famous, the town is seething with it. Seething with rumours and stories!

I've laid awake...in the middle of the night, all the windows open; but I'm still oppressed, wondering about Tommy Carr: and why?

*Carr comes in having knocked on the door. He is not at ease.*

Dr: Hello Tommy. I have been wanting to see you.

Tommy: What's this about?

*He sits opposite the doctor.*

Dr: You know why I asked you here... You know why... Who knows what happened to you Tommy? I believed you had cancer: clearly, you did not. And now all this talk of healing, talk of cures.

T: I can't help what people say. I have not said it.

Dr: But you have gone along with what people say. You have visited sick people.

T: I have done no wrong, made no claims. I know what I do know.

Dr: What is it you know, Tommy Carr?

T: That I'd been dying: I knew it. You know it.

Dr: I know one thing: you must take money from the weak, from the poor and the sick.

*Tommy remains outwardly calm throughout.*

T: I didn't ask for this: I'd rather no-one knew what I do.

Dr: You are a self-deceiver...You are a beguiler. Deny this.

T: I deny this.

*[Tommy leans in his chair forwards towards McElvey]*

T: You know, and yet *you* deny it. You were there in the upper room. I do not lie to you and you know that. That night I was to have died. You saw me, now you deny it. Why you do that, I can't know. I take no money; I make no claims.

Word got around, as word does, what happened to me. I was meant to be dead; I thought so too. But, once in the factory, I could get on, and the din, the din of the machines meant no questions.

*[Tommy gets up as his story progresses.]*

T: That day, an accident, a huge pile of metal pallets had come down and pinned a man by his chest. George Crabb. So, I rushed in with several others...His face was swollen, turning black; his eyes were bulging! We all heaved the pallets off. Some ran to you, doctor. But some of the women shouted..." he's dead" ...others thought his heart still beat. But the state of him, arm bent backwards, and one leg twisted over.

*[Tommy resumes his seat.]*

Then it happened. As I stood by the men...as I stood, I felt the heat flood through my body, down from my head and out, as if from my heart and, I don't know why, but I knelt and touched him: First with my right hand, then kept my left on his overall. The heat came out of me, as if I'd come out of a fire.

Later my wife asked me: “*Would the man have died?*” Who knows the answer?

Dr: When Crabb arrived at the hospital, he was alive, but horribly injured: there was no hope. Yet, as I watched him, his life returned to him, minute by minute.

His wife came, eyes full of fear: but she saw him sitting up; nowhere near death. Crabb recalled nothing except that he was dying: all he knew, he recalled, was your face, bent close to his, seemingly listening. Through the blackness that gripped him Crabb felt a surge of searing heat. Just for a few seconds.

*[The doctor is now oblivious of Carr, lost in his recollection.]*

The nurses wanted to keep him in. But: Crabb would have none of it. He would have none of it.

*[Carr slowly and quietly leaves without a word or gesture.]*

Crabb strode out, into the street. Out into the streets! Followed by his wife.

*[The doctor is motionless, perhaps shocked.]*

## Scene 2, The Carrs’ cottage

*Some weeks later. Tommy and Arthur are at the table. The vase has fresh flowers in it. They have just finished a game of dominoes and are tidying it up. Miriam and Eve are sitting in the chairs by the fire-place. The adults are in mid-conversation. Tommy has his jacket on and is evidently about to go out. He is not disturbed by Miriam’s attitude, nor hostile.*

T: I am eaten up with guilt when I refuse anyone.

E: People have no right to expect it.

M: Every day someone at your door, wanting you to go back with them. You always do! Tommy could be a rich man. Doctors are rich men.

T: Are they? They work hard for their money then.

*Tommy and the boy have finished tidying up: Arthur takes a book out of his satchel to read at the table while the grown-ups talk.*

M; And look how many die!

T: We all die: even doctors can’t hold it off. I’ve taken no money. I’ve not asked anyone to come to me.

*[Miriam addresses Eve.]*

M: Since he saved Crabb, he’s no job. He’s too “disruptive”!

T: I’ve gone when people have begged me: but not easily, not without great doubts.

*Tommy ruffles Arthur’s hair as he passes on his way out.*

T: I will go now. Mister Arnold’s mother will be waiting. *[He leaves].*

M: “Mister Arnold’s mother will be waiting”. What’s wrong with him?

E: He doesn’t see things that way.

*Arthur stops reading and watches the women.*

M: He’s a fool! He’s lost his mind! He’s done as well as any of them! Squandering what he’s got! He’s a fool!

E: I’m proud, proud of him.

M: [Leaving you to do all the work!]

E: Suddenly people needing him.

M: [Nice for him!]

E: Word travelled. After George Crabb, at the factory; then our neighbour Mary, and the apprentice boy, Willis, that was his name.

*Miriam speaks to her son.*

M: Off you go Arthur. Go and play outside,

*[Arthur goes to Eve and hugs her, and then leaves]*

E: That's a nice hug, thank you Arthur.

So, every day someone at our gate. Not all live, but die well, and dying... as if it was what they longed for.

I worry about your four boys: they help each other. But what do they, what do you, hope for?

M: I'm not to blame, how could I know how my choices would fall out? Luck falls out one way, or the other.

E: Miriam.

M: You could take him: he's the best of them. He's kind and loving.

E: Who?

M: Arthur.

E: Take him?

M: Have him here: it would fill the space.

E: You think Jeannie's just a space. A space to be filled?

M: No, but...

*Eve's gesture stops Miriam.*

E: You'd send one of yours away? Without a thought?

M. Eve!

E: Arthur, he's yours.

M: I can't deal with any of it now, not really. But I *could* look after the rest.

E: Miriam, Miriam: he's yours, you're his mother...

M: Arthur loves it up here.

E: ...and he has his little brothers. He would miss them: He'll miss you too.

M: You're so lucky.

E: He has his father

M: "He has his father".

E: You would give him away, just like that?

M: Not just like that. You're my sister. You're family.



E: You would give him away, your own son?

M: it's not like giving him away. Not just like that.

E: How can you think like this?

M: You'll never know the life I live.

E: He's yours. Yours.

*[The conversation dries up, unresolved and exhausted.]*

### Scene 3, Mr Arnold's house

*Later that day. Mr Arnold's entrance hall, then the living room. This is evidently a well-to-do home.*

*Tommy and Mr Arnold stand in the hall by the closed door to the living room. Tom's jacket is over his arm.*

Arnold: She... she is not paralysed, but able to move only with great difficulty, and is in extreme and constant pain: Doctors can do nothing for her ... there is no-one else. I have no-one else to turn to. Mother is little alone, but when she spoke of taking her own life.... You are the only person I could think of turning to. You have done wonderful things...

*Arnold relieves Tommy of his jacket which he hangs up in the hallway.*

Tommy: Mr Arnold... I don't know what I do. I'm here because I felt for you. I may be of no help: I make no promises.

*Arnold opens the door and both men go into the next room.*

*Daphne Arnold is in bed. She is evidently very sick and barely able to move. The living room has been transformed into her permanent sick room.*

A: Mother... this is Mister Carr. I told you about him.

Daphne: I thought... he was not... going to come.

A: But he has.

D: Why did you change your mind?

T: I thought I should. I couldn't rest.

D: *[Speaking to her son.]*... Henry...what happens now?

*Tommy pulls up a chair close to the bed and sits. Arnold remains standing.*

T: I can only give what I give everyone. It seems to help people.

I will hold my hands out to you:

*Arnold is showing signs of distress but stays calm.*

T: You take the heat from them, yourself. Nothing more.

D: Henry, I'm sorry.

*Daphne turns her head to Tommy.*

D: Do we pray?

T: No, no. Give me your hands, please.

*He smiles gently as he takes her hands. He looks calmly and steadily into Daphne's eyes. Arnold retreats into himself, looking down at the floor.*

*Daphne speaks to her son.*

D: it's gone; the pain has quite gone!

A: Mother, what has happened? Can you tell me?

T: You should rest: it is tiring, and you will sleep. This is done.

*Arnold is not yet able to look up. His mother takes his hand*

A: Thank you. Mister Carr, I cannot thank you enough.

D: Thank you, Mister Carr. We cannot thank you enough.

T: You need not.

*Arnold recovers himself.*

A: Can we offer you some refreshment?

T: A glass of cold water thank you.

*Arnold makes to leave; Daphne gives him a significant look, and he responds with a slight nod before going for the water.*

D: These are hard times: Can we give you some payment?

T: Thank you, but... I'm not for hire. I'll take the train fare, and nothing else.

*Daphne persists, but always kindly.*

D: But if this is a way of earning your bread? What is wrong with that?

*Arnold returns, with both a glass of water and Tommy's jacket. He sits on the end of his mother's bed.*

T: Whatever happens, it's not something I take money for. I understand...None of it. I'm not for hire. I know it would be wrong.

A: Why?

D: How do you know?

*Tommy makes no indication that he will answer but drinks the water down.*

*He gets up and retrieves his jacket.*

T: Thank you for the water, Mister Arnold. Mrs. Arnold, goodbye.

A: Goodbye, Mister Carr.

D: Goodbye, Mister Carr, and thank you, for all you have done.

A: Yes, thank you.

*Tommy leaves, indicating that he will find his own way out. Arnold sits down again on his mother's bed and takes her hands. They are still, looking at each other, astounded, speechless.*

**Scene 4, The Carrs' cottage**

*Two days later. Tommy has found money, £200, which Mr Arnold had secreted into his coat pocket. After a lot of internal debate he has decided to keep it and put most of it aside as savings. With a small part of the remainder he has bought his wife some small gifts.*

*Tommy is standing by the table, laying out his gifts to Eve, a blue scarf and two bars of rose-soap. His back is to the front door. The vase has bought fresh flowers in it.*

*Eve comes into the kitchen through the front door, from the vegetable garden.*

Eve: Tommy?

*Eve reaches around Tommy's waist to hug him. He leans back into the hug.*

Eve: Tommy, what have you gone and done?

Tommy: I bought you this, and these. I should have thought before, you don't have enough pretty things, pretty things to enjoy.

E: Tommy, that's kind of you, but we can't afford this: can we?

*Eve tries on the scarf and holds one of the soaps to her nose.*

T: Not before: but the night before last, after you had gone upstairs, I picked up my jacket [tidying up] ...

*Tommy smiles slightly as he says this, and Eve makes a mock-weary face.*

T: ...when I felt something within the pocket, something I hadn't noticed.

*Tommy pulls out the envelope from his trouser pocket and hands it to Eve, who opens it.*

T: I opened it up and found this money.

E: Mr Arnold? It's from him? Tommy?

*Eve counts the money in disbelief.*

T: I'd never held so much money before.

E: Tommy.

*Tommy expression becomes ambiguous as he sits in his usual chair by the table.*

T: Eve.

E: What is it? Tommy? *She sits opposite Tommy.*

T: But my heart didn't lift.

E: Why are you so sure you cannot keep it? Mr' Arnold's money was freely given, I know it.

T: Their money **was** freely given. I did not ask for payment or reward.

E: You did not ask for reward. We have money now for a year's rent. We love our cottage, Jeannie's home.

T: And it would break your heart to leave it.

*Tommy stands.*

T: I do what I've been given to do: nothing else.

E: It's what you think is best. It can't be for me to say.

*Eve comes around to Tommy.*

T: This is best.

*Eve and Tommy embrace for a long time.*

T: And it's wrong Eve, wrong of me to help others, and not to help you. You work too hard, it tells on you, I see it.

E: One of us must work. It's nothing.

T: Take my hand. Let me give you what I give everyone. I've helped other people. Eve...let me hold your hands. Hands I love. You know what happens then. Let me help you.

*They have sat again, and he takes her hands. They wait. Tommy is nonplussed; nothing more.*

*Tommy stands without emphasis.*

T: It's gone. Gone.

*Eve is still seated.*

E: What d'you say?

T: I'm waiting for the heat in my hands: gone.

*Eve has no sense of panic.*

E: Why d'you say that? Tommy? What is it?

T: It's the money.

*Tommy sits again.*

E: I think it's because of me.

*Eve stands and comes to Tommy: she is not overly concerned.*

E: I'm not a stranger to you. That is why you can't help me.

*Tommy quietly remains convinced of his own view, but is not worried for himself yet.*

T: It has gone.

E: Surely not.

T: It has gone.

E: Perhaps you've done too much today? Tried too hard?

T: No. I could have seen a hundred people; and it wouldn't have made any difference.

*Eve take Tommy by the hand across the table.*

E: Let's go to bed.

*Tommy looks up and gets up, taking Eve by the other hand.*

T: But maybe you're right. Come on, let's go up. I am tired...

E: Tommy...

*They embrace again. They go to bed together, but not before Tommy's hand goes unconsciously to his throat, unobserved by Eve.*

**PART 3**

**Scene 1, The Carrs' cottage**

*Three months later. Tommy's illness returned and he has died.*

*All is as before. The vase on the table has no flowers in it. Both sisters are sitting, Miriam on the couch, Eve in her usual seat, therefore facing the couch. Eve is wearing Tommy's jacket.*

E: When I looked in his face it would be full of a strange sadness. Before long he was as ill as before: tired, weak and pale.

M: I remember that one morning, when I saw Tommy putting his hand on his neck.

E: He felt a swelling there: soon the burning pain in his stomach returned.

M: You tried, but he wouldn't eat his food, would he? With the pain worsening.

E: The gift had been withdrawn, and with it his own health, his own strength.

M: But he was not to blame. But he didn't try to eat, and only sipped his water.

E: ... though the money had been freely given.

M: What do you mean?

E: He was not to blame.

M: He died early that day of the first frost: even the water trough had some thin ice in it. I think that doctor didn't mind. Tommy died of his illness like the doctor thought he would, only later rather than sooner. I didn't think you'd stay here, alone.

E: Where else would I go? This is home and always will be.

Since Tommy's death I do feel him here, around me always. He wanted me to stay here; but he also thought I must do what I wish. He still wanted to think of me being here, ... but only if I was happy. I said I'd be happy nowhere else.

M: I must be off now: I must make their tea. Well, come over if you like. But maybe you'd rather be on your own tonight.

E: I would rather but thank you and I will come to you later in the week I'd like that.

M: Well, I'll send Arthur over after his tea.

E: When Arthur comes up the path now I am reminded of Tommy. I see Tommy in him, though of course he wasn't family to Arthur. But he has a look of Tommy, Arthur does.

M: A kind man, though he's still a boy.

E: That's true; a kind man.

M: [Before he's spoilt he'll have his chance.]

M and E: Arthur likes it here...

M: And it will be company. Should I send him?

E: If he likes. If Arthur likes.

M: Arthur likes it here and he will be company for you.

*Miriam collects her things and goes.*

**Scene 2**

*Eve alone at the table:*

Silence again. I sat with you, silently, beside you. Hour after hour. Not in the bed upstairs, not like before. Just here, you on the old couch.

From there you would watch my every movement. We had a few warm Autumn days. You wanted the door open so you could have the sun on your face, so I left it open.

Now, everything I do, is instead of you. Perhaps, everything done, since you had survived, was there to help you; help you die.

*A knock on the door and Arthur enters, He has some flowers in one hand, picked up on the way from his home. They are the same as Tommy would pick. This is not a coincidence.*

E: Hello Arthur. You came alone then.

Arthur: I didn't wait for tea.

*Arthur puts the flowers in the empty vase on the table.*

E: Your mother, she said she might ask you; I think. Would you like a glass of milk Arthur?

A: Could I have a cup of tea?

E: There isn't cake though. I'll make cake later. Biscuits will have to do for now.

A: I see the hens are back to laying.

*Eve brings the biscuits to the table. She sits opposite Arthur as she would with Tommy, in her seat.*

E: They are; more than I can eat. You can take some back with you. But here's some biscuits for now: Tea's coming.

A: I thought... I thought I'd stay, not go home. I could stay here, just for a bit.

E: Really? Is everything alright at home, your mum?

*She brings them both mugs of tea.*

A: There's nothing wrong at home. I would be handy here.

E: Handy?

A I am. I can do a lot of things.

E: I've seen that. You've had to learn.

A: I'd be a help to you.

*Eve sits silently for a while, looking at Arthur while he concentrates on finishing the last biscuits.*

E: Go home Arthur. Return home to tell your mother, and to fetch what things you need.

A: *[Indicating his mug]* I've had enough.

A short stay, I would be happy here. I'll tell mum, that I'm coming here, for a short stay. Yes?

E: Yes, Arthur

A: That's good.

Wear this. It's colder out now.

*Eve takes off Tommy's jacket and puts it around Arthur's shoulders. He laughs out loud.*

A: I'll come back quickly.

*Arthur runs off. No hug required as he will be back soon. Eve watches him go then waters the flowers in the vase from a jug. She is humming to herself.*