

MOONBLOOD

a play

by

Mitchell Hooper

Second draft
July 1998

Mitchell Hooper
34, rue Victor Massé
75009 Paris

Tel.: 01.48.74.86.54

MOONBLOOD

1. A small bedsit. Night.

JOHN: What do you want?

MARY: What?

JOHN: To drink?

MARY: Oh. Same as Julian.

JOHN: And what does Julian want?

MARY: I don't know.

JOHN: Well, we'll just have to wait for him. Have a seat.

MARY: You don't come here often.

JOHN: No. How did you guess?

MARY: The dust.

JOHN: The idea was to have a little pied-à-terre in town, but the fact is we never want to stay in town. And the flat is frankly a little sordid.

MARY: I like it. I could never live in the suburbs.

JOHN: Oh, we prefer. The peace and quiet.

MARY: Yuk. Is he going to have trouble parking?

JOHN: Could do. The main drag's well nigh impossible, but he should find a spot in the sidestreets.

MARY: I'm often in this area. For the shops. Especially on Tuesdays.

JOHN: Tuesdays?

MOONBLOOD

MARY: I finish early on Tuesdays.

JOHN: You should drop in on me sometime.

MARY: I thought you were never here? ...You knew Julian at Cambridge?

JOHN: Yes. Yes, we were great friends at college. Well, I think you could say... But then we each went our separate ways. Me with computers, IBM, then Laura. Julian with...

MARY: Me.

JOHN: Yes. How long have you...?

MARY: Seven years.

JOHN: Really? Good God. Mind you with Laura it's been... And Emily is ten years old.

MARY: You have a daughter?

JOHN: Two. Emily and Alice. And you?

MARY: Me? Nothing.

JOHN: Ah. Alice is six and a half.

MARY: I'm thirty-five.

JOHN: I hope he remembers the door-code.

MARY: He wrote it down. Why see each other again now?

JOHN: We bumped into each other at Waterloo the other day. Sheer chance. Julian suggested the theatre.

MARY: You were bored stiff.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Oh, by the play, yes. But then I don't have Julian's taste for the arts. I'm just a humble commuter. On top of which I'm not very bright. What do you finish early on Tuesdays?

MARY: School.

JOHN: You teach?

MARY: Why, do I look like a pupil? You never go to the theatre?

JOHN: Well, you know, with the two girls... and then quite honestly this evening was pretty much par for the course. I'm always bored stiff.

MARY: So why tonight?

JOHN: For Julian. For nostalgia's sake.

MARY: Yuk.

JOHN: Yes. Probably a mistake.

MARY: You don't have to apologise. Don't take any notice of what I say. I'm not very polite.

JOHN: You're provocative.

MARY: No, just rude. I'm not a very nice person, that's all.

JOHN: I see. Whereas I am really quite nice.

MARY: It's not a crime.

JOHN: Just a weakness.

MARY: What about your wife?

JOHN: She's extremely nice.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: But why didn't she come?

JOHN: She stayed at home with the girls. Someone has to.

MARY: You could have found a baby-sitter.

JOHN: Yes.

MARY: Where's Julian got to?

JOHN: Pretty dress.

MARY: I'll have a whisky.

JOHN: Good idea. Me too. Water? Ice?

MARY: As it is.

JOHN: Yes. I have it with a dash of water. There we are.

Pause

MARY: You didn't mean what you said just now.

JOHN: What I said when?

MARY: You don't like my dress.

JOHN: Oh I do, honestly. I like your dress a lot.

MARY: It's me you don't like.

JOHN: That's not at all what I meant to say... Well, let's just say you're not really my type... although actually as far as looks go... Except, I don't know. I think it's your hair... It makes you look... tough.

MARY: I like playing tough.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Yes, I'd noticed.

Pause

JOHN: So, what did you think of the play?

MARY: I found it dry. There was no feeling in it. That made me angry. But I wasn't bored.

JOHN: I felt like crying out for them to stop.

MARY: I often feel like crying out. Even when I'm enjoying myself. I'm always scared in the theatre. Everyone's sitting there, concentrating on the stage, and I'm concentrating too, I'm tense, I'm listening but I'm so tense that I'm scared. I'm scared I'm going to cry out, that I'm going to stand up and bang my seat, that I'm going to make such a scene that the actors won't be able to act anymore, they'll all be looking at me.

JOHN: Yes, I see.

MARY: No, you don't. You think I'm off my head. But that's what theatre is: a roomful of people who could each intervene at any moment and irreversibly alter what's happening on stage, but who choose not to. At the cinema you can shout your head off, you can throw your popcorn and your Kia-ora at the screen - it doesn't make a blind bit of difference. Humphrey Bogart will still say his lines in exactly the same way with exactly the same expression on his face and he'll put Ingrid Bergman in the plane whatever you say. In the theatre even the degree of silence will affect the actor. You're part of the show. There's a contract between you and the actor - but a contract you can break at any moment. That's what I like about the theatre: the sense of danger.

JOHN: Yes. Personally I'm not all that keen on danger.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: No. You prefer to stay in your little suburban house watching the telly.

JOHN: That's right. With the family.

MARY: A nightmare. I detest families.

Pause

MARY: Would you like me to tell you a story?

JOHN: Is it funny?

MARY: Depends on your point of view. It's the story of a little girl. She's eight years old. She's unhappy. One night, while her mummy and daddy are asleep in the room next door, she wakes up. There's a full moon, it's a clear night. The light is very strong. They've forgotten to close her blinds. The little girl gets up and goes to the window. The moon is calling her. It's a perfect circle, milky white, disturbing. She wants to get nearer. She goes out of her bedroom, walks on tiptoe past her parents' door, goes downstairs into the street in her night-dress. She starts to walk. She walks in a straight line, never faltering. The town is asleep. The silence is broken only by the barking of a dog in the distance and the flutter of an owl's wings, nearby. She arrives at the beach. The only sound is the gentle breaking of the waves upon the sand. The moon is still there, round, silent. It's calling. The little girl steps into the sea. It's cold. She walks into the water, heading where the reflections are so white it looks like milk. She walks until she's out of her depth. She keeps on going. She doesn't try to swim. She wants to be part of the sea, of the moon. She wants to get back to what she was before she was born.

JOHN: But she'll drown.

MARY: Yes.

JOHN: That's ridiculous. Nobody commits suicide at eight years old.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: That's what her father said, afterwards. She didn't drown anyway. The sea rejected her. She never reached the moon. Some men found her on the beach and took her home to her parents. Her parents couldn't understand what had happened. People started to say that she was mad.

Pause

JOHN: You intrigue me.

Pause

MARY: No. I'm not a very interesting person. When people get to know me, they keep away.

JOHN: But I don't know you, do I?

Pause

MARY: I think that must be Julian.

MOONBLOOD

2. Midday.

JOHN: Milk? Sugar?

MARY: As it is.

JOHN: Lucky really.

MARY: What?

JOHN: Us, meeting like that. A month ago we didn't know each other from Adam and today we run into each other in Marks and Sparks. Luck.

MARY: Ah.

JOHN: Same with Julian. There I was head down elbows out in the scrummage for the city line and there's Julian right beside me. After fifteen years. Sheer chance. Same with you.

MARY: Except you didn't have to wait fifteen years. And I told you I'm often here on Tuesdays.

JOHN: That's true. I'd forgotten.

MARY: Do you always rely on chance or does it ever occur to you to take the initiative?

JOHN: It has been known. When I want something, I usually go the right way about getting it.

MARY: Looks better in daylight. Nice and light.

JOHN: Yes.

MARY: Feels good. I feel good here. There are places like that, where I feel at home.

MOONBLOOD

Pause

JOHN: You should come more often.

Pause

JOHN: Black, no sugar. How's Julian?

MARY: Alright.

JOHN: Good.

MARY: Good good good. What can you see from here?

JOHN: Rooftops.

MARY: Ah yes. I like rooftops. Reminds me of the first time I came up to town. I had a boyfriend with a little bedsit on the top floor of an old Victorian block of flats. We used to make love up there, I'd be reaching my climax and I'd turn my head and see the Post Office Tower. I've always associated the two.

JOHN: Where are you from? You're not from London, where do you come from, to start with?

MARY: East Anglia, the coast.

JOHN: The sea.

MARY: The cold. And you?

JOHN: Berkshire.

MARY: What do they have in Berkshire?

JOHN: Boredom.

MARY: You haven't been back here, since the last time.

MOONBLOOD

- JOHN: No, we hardly ever come here, now Laura's gone back to work. I ought to sell it.
- MARY: Oh no.
- JOHN: Why not? We never use it. It costs money, for the upkeep.
- MARY: Not very much. I'm sure it could still come in useful. It's plain, unpretentious, impersonal. It's so much nicer than that awful house in Richmond.
- JOHN: You've never seen the house in Richmond.
- MARY: Don't need to. I know. It's got wall to wall carpets, curtains on all the windows, photos of the kids and knick-knacks on the mantelpiece. It smells of lavender and it stinks of boredom. Whereas here there's nothing at all and it feels good.
- JOHN: Not really.
- MARY: You don't feel good?
- JOHN: I mean there are not really that many knick-knacks. It doesn't really smell of lavender.
- MARY: I've offended you.
- JOHN: No, you haven't.
- MARY: I'm talking rubbish and it's embarrassing you. I won't keep you any longer.
- JOHN: I'm not in any hurry.
- MARY: No?
- JOHN: No.
- MARY: Alright then.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: I had a feeling I might bump into you.

MARY: Did you? I was wondering if it wasn't deliberate.

JOHN: How do you mean?

MARY: The chance meeting. I was wondering if you hadn't had a hand in it, engineered it, somehow.

JOHN: Why would I do that?

MARY: Sometimes when I'm out shopping, I'm approached by strange men. They follow at a distance for a while, then they come up to me, homing in, intense, staring at me with eyes burning like a bird of prey. They stop me in the street and offer to take me to a flat, or a hotel, or a room. Like this one.

Pause

JOHN: Do you ever go with them?

MARY: Yes.

Pause

MARY: There's always a bed, and a window. Sometimes a chair. No knick-knacks, no photos. Neutral ground. No personality. No past. I like it like that. It feels good here.

JOHN: Yes. Good.

Pause

MARY: I think I'll leave all the same.

JOHN: Why? Are you afraid of me?

MARY: A little.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: I lied to you.

MARY: I know.

JOHN: For a month now I've spent every Tuesday lunchbreak hanging round these shops in the hope of meeting you.

MARY: Of course.

JOHN: I bought an answering machine.

MARY: Why?

JOHN: I don't know really, it was a bargain. I thought maybe I'd leave it here.

MARY: Is there a phone?

JOHN: No... But I thought I might have one put in.

Pause

JOHN: You've changed your hair.

MARY: Do you like it?

JOHN: Yes, it's... it's more... or rather it's less... - it's less intimidating.

MARY: You find me intimidating?

JOHN: Terribly.

MARY: I'm not really afraid of you. I'm afraid of me.

JOHN: Me too. But now you seem a little more... approachable.

Pause

MOONBLOOD

MARY: I could still leave.

JOHN: No. Not any more.

MARY: No?

JOHN: There's nothing we can do about it. It has to pursue its course.

MARY: That's not true.

JOHN: No, but it's a lie you'd like to believe in.

MARY: I could easily leave now.

JOHN: But you won't.

MARY: How do you know?

JOHN: Because I don't want you to.

MARY: And are you sure I'll do what you want?

JOHN: Absolutely. Take off your clothes.

Pause. She takes off her clothes.

MARY: Even now I could still leave. I could still save my good name.

JOHN: It looks seriously compromised from where I stand.

MARY: There's a moment, just before, when you could stop, when everything could still be different, but you tell yourself no, I'm not risking anything, I'm going to jump in anyway, just to test the temperature, just to see what it's like, and then you take the plunge, and nothing will ever be the same again.

Pause

JOHN: Well then, let's take the plunge.

MOONBLOOD

3. Late afternoon

JOHN: Mmmm.

MARY: There speaks a happy man.

JOHN: Did you think of the Post Office Tower?

MARY: And modest with it.

Pause

JOHN: Look, Mary, there's something I must...

MARY: Don't bother.

JOHN: That's twice this week, plus last week. I think I ought to...

MARY: That makes three times. It mustn't become a habit.

JOHN: Exactly.

MARY: You're beginning to get bored.

JOHN: No! That's not what I meant at all. I'm not talking about what I want, I'm talking about a moral... obligation.

MARY: It's a bit late now.

JOHN: With regard to you. I'm a married man...

MARY: I know.

JOHN: I've got two children.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: Emily and Anne.

JOHN: Alice.

MARY: Right, when you've finished calling the register you can wake me up for the punchline.

JOHN: All I mean to say is that I don't want to put any of that at risk. My family is very important to me.

MARY: That's not what you were saying just now.

JOHN: No, well there's a time and a place for everything.

MARY: I love the naïveté of male selfishness.

JOHN: I'm sorry but I don't see anything selfish about it.

MARY: The way you distort things to suit yourselves.

JOHN: I'd have said that was a typically feminine trait myself. I'm simply trying to be fair. I'm laying my cards on the table.

MARY: But I don't give a damn.

JOHN: Well I do. My family is sacred.

She laughs.

MARY: Do that again, it's funny. Affected indignation: you look like a politician on the telly. I'm not grilling you. I don't want anything from you. Least of all meaningless clichés like that.

JOHN: You don't know what it means to have a family.

MARY: I had a family. Once is enough.

Pause

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: I just want to make things clear. I can't commit myself to....

MARY: I knew all that. I knew all that from the beginning. I didn't ask anything of you. I knew it couldn't last.

Pause

JOHN: I don't know that I'd go quite that far.

MARY: What do you mean?

JOHN: I mean it's true I can't commit myself... completely - and you're not free either - but it's also true that I appreciate your company, that I find you very attractive, that we could perhaps go on seeing each other from time to time, within the bounds of discretion...

MARY: In a word, you're offering me an affair.

JOHN: Well... yes. In a word, yes.

MARY: A secret, adulterous affair.

JOHN: Yes.

Pause

MARY: Alright.

JOHN: No commitment on either side, we'll just let it run its course.

MARY: Obviously.

JOHN: What about Julian?

MARY: I'll deal with Julian.

JOHN: You won't tell him, will you?

MOONBLOOD

MARY: No. Don't worry.

JOHN: Only he is a friend of mine.

MARY: I shan't cast a cloud over your beautiful friendship.

JOHN: Do you often cheat on him?

MARY: Leave Julian out of this.

JOHN: Poor old Julian.

MARY: Do you love your wife?

JOHN: Oh... yes.

MARY: "Oh... yes" or "Oh yes!"

JOHN: "Oh... yes".

MARY: Ah.

JOHN: Do you love Julian?

MARY: Yes.

JOHN: Ah.

MARY: I need him.

JOHN: I like him too.

MARY: So what?

JOHN: So nothing.

MARY: I don't need you.

JOHN: No?

MOONBLOOD

MARY: Not at all. That's what's good about it. It mustn't become a need. Love is a luxury.

JOHN: But is it love?

MARY: What?

JOHN: Us.

MARY: You don't think so?

JOHN: I don't know, I'm asking you.

MARY: What I'm looking for is something purer than love. Love always runs to fat. It gets diluted by habit, memory, petty squabbles. I want a love that's lean. Concentrated. With no past, no demands, no rebukes, no questions. Something pure, something elemental, something sacred.

Pause

JOHN: Why do you hate your family?

Pause

MARY: I never said that.

JOHN: I thought you did.

Pause

JOHN: Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Pause

MARY: My father's dead now. I never told him...

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: How much you loved him.

MARY: What?

JOHN: You regret never having told him how you felt, but I'm sure he knew.

MARY: My feelings for my father were a mixture of hatred and contempt. And he would have rather I had never been born.

JOHN: Ah. So much for me.

MARY: I have a little brother.

JOHN: And you hate him as well.

MARY: No.

JOHN: Where is he now?

MARY: He's gone.

Pause

JOHN: What about your mother?

MARY: What about your family?

JOHN: Oh, very ordinary.

MARY: Meaning?

JOHN: Meaning I loved my parents, they loved me, I've got two sisters, we all get on pretty well, I had a wonderful childhood, growing up was a little more difficult but I managed it, more or less, then my mother died of cancer last year and my father is a bit lost without her but generally speaking we can't complain.

Pause

MOONBLOOD

MARY: What about your wife?

JOHN: She's an only child.

MARY: Does she love you?

JOHN: I think so.

MARY: You think so or you know so?

JOHN: I think I know.

MARY: She might have a lover.

JOHN: I doubt it, she hasn't got the time.

MARY: I haven't got the time either. You take the time, you make it.

JOHN: Can you take it tomorrow?

MARY: Tomorrow, no. Friday if you like.

JOHN: Alright. Half twelve.

MARY: If I can't make it, I'll leave a message on the machine.

JOHN: You'll make it.

MARY: I'll make it on one condition.

JOHN: What's that?

MARY: That we don't talk about my family. Nor yours. We don't talk about Julian and we don't talk about your wife. We don't talk about your house in Richmond, your mortgage, your job in the city or your holidays in the sun. When you come into this room, I want you to strip all that off. All the dust of your life. I want you to be here, completely, for me. Pure, lean, naked.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Like at the gym.

MARY: What?

JOHN: Leave your clothes in the locker, a quick shower and see you in the sauna.

MARY: Too clean. I see something more intimate, more secret. I want us to enter this room like a church. Or a coven. A secret ceremony, a pagan ritual, a sacrifice.

JOHN: I hope it's not dangerous.

They look at each other.

MOONBLOOD

4. Late afternoon

MARY: Afternoon, sir!

JOHN: Miss.

MARY: New skirt. Like it?

JOHN: Awful. Take it off.

MARY: Yes, sir.

JOHN: And that blouse too. What dreadful taste.

MARY: Right away, sir.

JOHN: We'll be working late again tonight.

MARY: Yes, we've been doing quite a lot of overtime lately.

JOHN: What I like about adultery is that you don't waste any time.

MARY: There's no time to waste.

JOHN: You always get straight to the point.

MARY: I think you've put your finger on it.

JOHN: You've got one thing in mind and you're both in perfect agreement. No misunderstandings, no negotiations, no arguments.

MARY: No fat.

JOHN: All meat.

MARY: And muscle.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Everything running smoothly. The machinery well oiled.

MARY: Oh yes.

JOHN: Like that?

MARY: Hmm.

JOHN: Ow!

MARY: Sorry, did that hurt?

JOHN: It's so simple, that's the beauty of it.

MARY: It may be beautiful, but it's not that simple. You don't know me. It won't be long before I start fouling things up.

JOHN: Then let's make the most of it while it lasts.

MARY: And like that, sir, are you making the most of it?

JOHN: Hmm... Why did you want to commit suicide?

MARY: What?

JOHN: When you were a little girl.

MARY: That was just a story.

JOHN: Was it because of your father?

Pause

MARY: It was just a story.

JOHN: You've got a dark side too.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: I've got an open wound, but it's not very pretty to look at. So make do with what's on offer.

JOHN: Where's the open wound?

MARY: Down there.

JOHN: Ah yes, I think I can see something. Does it hurt?

MARY: Not today.

JOHN: Mind if I visit?

MARY: No, but hurry up. We're closing.

JOHN: What a charming establishment.

MARY: Step inside, sir.

JOHN: Hmm, it's nice inside.

Pause

MARY: Look at me.

JOHN: I am looking at you.

MARY: In the eyes... No, don't look away, keep looking at me. Yes, like that. I want to see what's going on in your head.

JOHN: And what do you see?

MARY: Resistance. You don't really like the idea that I can read your mind. You've obviously got a lot to hide.

JOHN: And what else?

MARY: You want to see through me. You see it as a challenge. You find it exciting.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: So do you, apparently.

MARY: I'm beginning to see the real you. You see this as a rape.

JOHN: And you're letting me rape you?

MARY: You're exposing yourself at the same time. It's interesting.

JOHN: I'd say you're submitting to the strength of a superior will.

MARY: I'd say you're mistaken.

JOHN: You can't escape me now.

MARY: What do you want?

JOHN: I want you to give yourself up to me, completely, hold nothing back, no lies no secrets, give it all up to me.

MARY: I don't want to.

JOHN: I want you to.

MARY: No.

JOHN: Yes.

MARY: Oh.

JOHN: Ah.

MARY: Oh no.

JOHN: Ah yes. Yes. Yes. Yes!

MARY: Look at me!

JOHN: Hmm.

MOONBLOOD

Pause

JOHN: I saw you.

MARY: Oh no you didn't. You didn't see anything at all.

Pause

MARY: Hmmm.

JOHN: Oh yes.

MARY: It's funny.

JOHN: Yes.

Pause

JOHN: What's funny?

MARY: We've nothing in common, except this.

JOHN: Ah, yes.

MARY: These are the only moments of truth.

JOHN: Of happiness.

MARY: Of reality.

JOHN: The only moments.

MARY: That's all there is.

Pause

JOHN: Right, I must be going.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: No.

JOHN: We've got people to dinner. I can't be late.

MARY: Yes, you can.

JOHN: I have to go.

MARY: Alright then, go.

JOHN: Don't be like that. Did you have something to say?

MARY: I was going to tell you a story.

Pause

JOHN: What kind of story?

MARY: An old wives' tale...

JOHN: Not interested.

MARY: ... that my mother used to tell me.

Pause

JOHN: Tell it while I get dressed.

MARY: Once upon a time there was a young girl. She lived in a country not that far from here but a long while ago, before time was measured, before men invented science and history books. This young girl was a princess, her father was king. She was also a priestess, she was the favourite handmaiden of the great goddess of the moon and the hunt. Her country was at war. Her father was about to lead a great army uniting all the neighbouring kingdoms. The fleet was waiting for the wind to lift. They waited days, then weeks. They began to think the gods were against them. They would have to offer a sacrifice. They persuaded the king he must kill his own daughter. The

MOONBLOOD

king loved his daughter but, against his will, so as not to lose face, he agreed to the sacrifice. He took her off a long way away from his palace so as not to arouse the suspicions of the girl's mother, the queen. He waited until nightfall so that no other women could see the sacrifice. He waited for a night that was overcast and starless so that the moon goddess could not intervene to save her priestess. When the time came, he placed his daughter on the altar and raised his arm. His hand didn't falter. He plunged the knife into the girl's heart and the blood flowed to the ground. A rustling was heard in the trees, then the sound of waves breaking on the rocks. The sails on the ships in the harbour began to fill and flap and the men began to shout. They lifted anchor and went off to war, without a farewell to the women and without another glance at the girl's lifeless body.

Pause

JOHN: And your mother used to tell you that? That's not an old wives' tale, it's a tragedy. But he doesn't really kill her. The goddess comes down in a cloud to save the girl and puts a stag in her place.

MARY: That's a lie that men invented afterwards, to justify themselves. The king killed his daughter and abandoned her there, with her blood soaking the earth. The wind that filled the sails blew the clouds away. The stars appeared and in their midst the new moon, slim and silver, bent back and taut like the hunter's bow. The goddess looked down at the corpse of her priestess. She was enraged, but powerless against the conspiracy of the male gods. She sought out the child's mother and began to plot with her the murder of the king.

Pause

JOHN: Why do you tell me that?

MARY: No reason.

MOONBLOOD

Pause

JOHN: How did your father die?

MARY: That's cheating.

JOHN: You haven't finished the story.

MARY: You're late.

JOHN: They'll wait. I'll stay.

MARY: But I'm going.

JOHN: Then I'll go with you.

MARY: No. I'm going nowhere.

JOHN: Let's go there together.

MARY: We've done that. Now we go back into the world. Each on his own.

JOHN: Is that a reproach?

MARY: No. That's the way it is. You have to play by the rules.

JOHN: It's only a game to you?

MARY: Of course.

JOHN: It's more than that to me.

MARY: No it isn't.

Pause

JOHN: Walk me down to the tube.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: What if someone sees us?

JOHN: I'll take the risk.

MARY: I think I'll stay on here a bit. Have you had my key made?

JOHN: Oh shit.

MARY: No matter, I'll slam the door when I go.

JOHN: I think I might lock you in. Keep you at my disposal.

MARY: I can't stand closed spaces. I'd go mad.

JOHN: I might just do it any way. I'm not sure I want to share you.

MARY: I share you.

JOHN: The question is: who is master?

MARY: You want to treat me like a dog?

JOHN: Perhaps. A little bitch.

MARY: Aren't you scared I'll bite?

JOHN: Yes, but we've got to get you house-trained, haven't we?

MARY: I'm not your little bitch.

Pause

MARY: When I was little I used to go and stare at the sea when it was stormy. I'd watch the biggest wave come crashing towards me, white with rage, out of all control, and I'd say to myself it's a mad horse, at the head of a horde of wild horses, he's in a rage, he's going to trample over everything, no-one can stop him, everything will be crushed underfoot, everything will disappear under the water-horse, it's coming towards me, it's

MOONBLOOD

the flood, it's the wrath of God. And I would stand there staring, the wind whistling in my ears, the water whipping my face, my heart pounding, I'd feel I was going to explode, I was going to fly away, I was too big, my body couldn't contain me any more, I was a wild horse, I was the water, I was the wind, I was the storm. And I still am... So, you see, I'm not your little bitch.

Pause

JOHN: I always wanted to be master of the elements.

MARY: You'll have your work cut out.

JOHN: It might be worth it.

MARY: Do you expect a reward?

JOHN: Every good boy deserves favour.

MARY: Do you accept payment in kind?

JOHN: Sounds like a fair deal.

MARY: Not very fair on your wife and children.

JOHN: That's true.

Pause

MARY: So? Are you coming or going?

MOONBLOOD

5. Midday.

JOHN: Here.

MARY: What is it?

JOHN: A present.

MARY: It's a dress. You're mad. I could never wear it.

JOHN: Yes you can. Here.

MARY: Just for you then. How selfish.

JOHN: Try it on. ... Is it the right size?

MARY: Yes. How did you know?

JOHN: Masculine intuition.

MARY: ... I look like a whore. Is this how you see me?

JOHN: I thought you'd look good in it. Come here.

Pause

MARY: It's fifty quid.

Pause

JOHN: Er, can I write you a cheque?

MARY: No. Cash.

JOHN: I'm clean out of cash.

MARY: Should have thought of that before.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Yes, but I mean, look: I've got one pound forty.

MARY: Yes. Not enough, is it?

JOHN: What to do?

MARY: Go find a machine.

JOHN: And what can I have for one pound forty?

MARY: A kiss on the cheek.

JOHN: I liked it better when it was free.

MARY: Your idea.

JOHN: Take the dress off.

MARY: That's extra.

Pause

JOHN: This isn't any fun.

MARY: What did you expect?

Pause

JOHN: Tell me a story.

MARY: No.

JOHN: You still haven't told me the end of the last one.

MARY: She takes a lover, her bloke comes back, he takes a bath and she tops him.

JOHN: Is that all?

MOONBLOOD

MARY: After that the children get involved and it all gets very boring.

JOHN: I didn't mean to hurt you.

MARY: I'm not hurt.

Pause

JOHN: Take the dress off.

MARY: I'm fed up.

JOHN: What with?

MARY: My life. Me. I'm nothing.

JOHN: You're beautiful.

Pause

JOHN: What's it like with Julian, in bed?

Pause

JOHN: Have you had a lot of lovers?

MARY: How many's a lot?

JOHN: Two.

MARY: Are you jealous?

JOHN: No. Curious.

MARY: What's the point, if we're not in love with each other?

JOHN: I can be curious without being in love.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: That's an unhealthy curiosity.

JOHN: So how many?

MARY: A lot.

JOHN: Ah.

Pause

MARY: But not as serious as us.

JOHN: So it's serious, with me?

MARY: It was even less serious with the others. It was less... regular.

JOHN: You were just having a good time.

MARY: Hardly.

JOHN: Oh?

MARY: Stop asking questions.

Pause

MARY: Why do you never call me by my name?

JOHN: What is your name?

MARY: John...

JOHN: No, that's me. You're Mary.

MARY: So why do you never call me Mary?

JOHN: I do.

MARY: No, you don't.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: What do you want me to say? Hail Mary? Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?

MARY: Why not?

JOHN: Alright. Alright I'll go out and come back in and we'll start again. Happy?

MARY: John?

JOHN: Yes?

MARY: You are coming back?

JOHN: Of course.

MARY: You're not angry?

JOHN: No, I'm not angry.

He goes out, and comes back in.

JOHN: Hail, Mary.

MARY: Hello, John.

JOHN: Mary, Mary...

MARY: Come here, John.

JOHN: Let me look at you, Mary.

MARY: Here I am, John.

JOHN: Knickers off please, Mary.

MARY: No, John. You do it.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: As you will, Mary.

MARY: Thankyou, John.

JOHN: Mary?

MARY: John.

JOHN: Mary...

MARY: John?

JOHN: Mary.

MARY: John.

JOHN: Mary.

MARY: John?

JOHN: Mary!

MARY: Oh John!

JOHN: Mmm...

MARY: Oh John, I love you, John, JOHN, I LOVE YOU!

Pause

JOHN: Really?

Pause

JOHN: Monday at five then?

MARY: John?

JOHN: Yes?

MOONBLOOD

MARY: You're a real bastard.

Pause

JOHN: Perhaps that's what you love about me.

MARY: I don't love anything about you.

JOHN: Oh.

Pause

MARY: You alright?

JOHN: Fine.

MARY: You seem odd.

JOHN: No.

MARY: What are you thinking about?

JOHN: Nothing.

MARY: That's not true.

JOHN: I was thinking... that it was very good just now - really very good - but that now - although I feel very good around you - now there's something... missing.

Pause

MARY: Perhaps it's your wife.

JOHN: No, of course it's not.

MARY: I mean the affection, the security and all that. It's not like that with me, so now you feel a little guilty, a little lonely.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: But I care a great deal about you.

Pause

MARY: There's a passage in the novel I'm doing this year with the sixth form, a passage that's always intrigued me... It's in the middle of the night and the hero is walking near a pond. In the pond he sees the reflection of the moon, a full moon, round and majestic, perfect. To him it's a symbol of woman. So he takes some stones and throws them into the pond, at the reflection, to smash it to pieces. Can you identify with that?

JOHN: I think I can, yes.

MARY: Would you like to smash me to pieces?

JOHN: I'd like to pierce your mystery.

MARY: There's no mystery. You can see right through me.

JOHN: No. You can see through the water, but you can't catch the moon. Is it you or Julian that doesn't want children?

MARY: Is there anything to eat here?

JOHN: You're so fragile. I love to see you naked.

MARY: That's because you want to smash me to pieces. You're the mysterious one. I don't know who you are. You make out you're some sort of spineless, passionless softie. But underneath you're not soft at all. You're wilful, selfish and destructive. You're dangerous.

JOHN: If you say so.

MARY: I hate you.

JOHN: I adore you.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: No, you don't. You're an utter misogynist.

JOHN: Me? I adore women.

MARY: You don't adore them, you use them. You want them to revolve around you.

JOHN: So what?

MARY: So that's not adoration. You can only adore something bigger and stronger than yourself. You already see yourself as the sun, so you've got nothing left to adore, everything revolves around yourself.

JOHN: Nonsense.

MARY: And that's exactly what you're missing. You don't need a wife, or a family, or a mistress. You need a religion.

Pause

JOHN: I've always found religion so dull. All that black, those beards and veils...

MARY: What about the sun, the moon, the ritual, the sacrifice, the blood? Religion's exciting. Like the theatre. Like sex.

JOHN: For my part I've always found sex had a definite edge on theatre and religion.

MARY: But it's basically the same thing. Communion. Being part of something greater than oneself. Theatre, religion, sex, it's all one. It's the essence of life. It's love.

Pause

MARY: Shall I tell you about the origin of theatre?

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: No.

Pause

MARY: The origin of theatre is simple. In ancient Greece, long before Athens and all that, every year at the summer solstice the queen would pick a new king and they'd sacrifice the old one to the gods. It was a big religious ceremony, they killed off last year's model, offered his blood to the gods, who were supposed to like that sort of thing, and the queen would have it off with the new boy. But one day there came a king who was a bit smarter than most, and who thought he'd rather like to go into extra time. He managed to convince all concerned that it would all go off just as well if they sacrificed a goat instead of the king. And it worked: he taught his people to make believe. The ceremony evolved: they started telling stories, with actors and a chorus. At first it was always about the death of the king, but gradually it changed, and even that was forgotten... Now we've lost track of all that, we don't even know what we're talking about, but the essence of theatre was there: the realisation of our dreams, and of our nightmares. And we kill the king, or the father, we seize power, we fuck our mother, we make a pact with the devil, we break the rules, we overstep the limits, we let ourselves go, we bring the storm upon ourselves, we live life to the full, to the limit - but we don't get hurt, someone else is suffering for us, like Jesus.

Pause

JOHN: Yes. I always get bored in the theatre.

MARY: Do you get bored with me?

JOHN: No.

MARY: But this is theatre. We're acting out a play. The action has started, the plot is under way. There's a struggle. What you really want is my death, I can see it in your eyes. You want to put me on the altar and plunge a dagger into my heart. The

MOONBLOOD

moon attracts you, but you want to pierce it, to stab it, to make it bleed.

Pause

JOHN: You want it too.

MARY: I want to go beyond all that.

JOHN: All what?

MARY: You and me, sensuality, sex. I want to get away from the ego and the individual. For the moment we're on the edge, looking on, we're not in the flow.

JOHN: What are we looking at?

MARY: Water. There's a black river at our feet, that could carry us off with it, if only we had the courage to dive in, to let go, to release our grip on this rotten tree-trunk that's holding us back.

JOHN: Are we on the bank or are we already in the water?

MARY: You're not the slightest bit interested, it doesn't matter.

JOHN: I was just wondering if we were getting wet.

MARY: No, we're both dry. Bone dry.

Pause

MARY: One of these days I'm going to lock you in here. I'll take your key and your clothes and I'll leave. I'd come back when I felt like seeing you again. I might bring you something to eat. And I'd eat you.

JOHN: I could stand that.

MARY: I'd never let you out. You'd be my slave.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: You'd be my mistress.

MARY: You'd have to obey me.

JOHN: I'd obey.

MARY: You're lying.

JOHN: Yes, but it's a lie you'd like to believe in.

MARY: You don't adore me.

JOHN: I'll learn.

MARY: Have you got many mistresses?

JOHN: Just one. Very beautiful. Who makes love like a goddess. Who is the wife of my friend. Who could ask for more? She's discreet. Well educated. Surprising. She makes my heart beat when I see her coming. She makes me cry when I see her go.

MARY: I make you cry?

JOHN: I didn't say it was you.

MARY: Ah, just as well. And before?

JOHN: Before what?

MARY: Before me.

JOHN: Mistresses? Yes, there was one. Well, since I've been married. In fact she was a school mistress too, at Emily's primary school... First a primary school, now a comprehensive, I should sign up for a course at university... What's the matter? I was only joking, I wasn't being serious, you know that.

MARY: I'm going.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Why?

MARY: I don't have the right.

JOHN: What right? What are you talking about?

MARY: I don't have the right to hurt like that. So I'm going.

JOHN: Don't be ridiculous.

MARY: I can't help it. That's why I'm leaving.

JOHN: I'll walk you down then.

MARY: No. Stay where you are. Don't come near me. I'll call here, I'll
leave a message.

She goes.

JOHN: Mary! ...

MOONBLOOD

6. Night. John is in the bed.

Silence.

Mary enters, without seeing him, silent, strange.

JOHN: Mary?

She starts.

JOHN: It's me.

MARY: You scared me.

JOHN: What are you doing here?

Pause

JOHN: I couldn't sleep. I said I was going out to get some air, I got in the car and I came here. I must be out of my mind.

MARY: Me too.

JOHN: You said you were going out to get some air?

MARY: No, yes, I don't know. I couldn't sleep either. I must be out of my mind too.

Pause

JOHN: Come here.

MARY: No.

Pause

MARY: You know what it is, don't you? There's a full moon.

MOONBLOOD

Pause

MARY: You look like a ghost. I don't believe you exist.

JOHN: Come and check.

MARY: No.

JOHN: What's the matter?

MARY: Nothing.

JOHN: Then come here.

MARY: No.

Pause

MARY: I can't.

JOHN: Why not?

Pause

JOHN: You're trembling.

MARY: I'm freezing.

JOHN: Get into bed.

MARY: I can't sleep with you. I've got my period.

JOHN: Come and sit by me.

MARY: I wouldn't have come if I'd known you were here.

Pause

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Show me.

Pause

JOHN: I want to gaze at the face of the goddess.

Pause

JOHN: She's beautiful. I want to kiss her.

MARY: Be careful. The goddess you worship is both wilful and bloody. She demands sacrifice.

JOHN: Let me raise my lips to yours, let me kiss the spring at the source of life, drink your sacred wine, your moonblood, let it enter into me and...

MARY: No.

JOHN: Then let me enter you.

MARY: No, John!

JOHN: Yes! I'm master now, I'm going to walk on the moon, I'll be the first, it's a great moment in history, the whole world is watching, it's on the telly, I look out of my spaceship, I step forward, I take a few steps and, in the name of mankind, I stick my flag into the moon's crust...

MARY: No!

JOHN: And there you are! A little step for a man, a giant step for mankind!

MARY: It's not funny, John, you're hurting me.

JOHN: And blessed be the bum of the sweet lady Mary!

MARY: Stop it!

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: What do you say?

MARY: Leave me alone.

JOHN: Can't hear you! I want you to howl, my little bitch, I want you to howl at the moon!

MARY: You're the one who's howling.

JOHN: I'm the chief priest.

MARY: You're the one we'll sacrifice.

JOHN: Oh.

MARY: You'll pay for all the others.

JOHN: Ah.

MARY: You'll be our revenge.

JOHN: You kill me!

Pause

MARY: I'll kill you, alright. I'll crucify you.

JOHN: I'm dead.

MARY: John?

JOHN: I'm in heaven.

MARY: It's time to come back down to earth.

JOHN: Why would you want to crucify me?

Pause

MOONBLOOD

MARY: You hurt me.

Pause

MARY: Are you asleep?

Pause

MARY: That would be the end of it. We'd have gone so far together it would be all that was left. It would be a full moon. I would come to you. You'd be waiting naked on the bed, with a knife in your hand. I'd look at you, your white body on the white sheet in the white moonlight. I'd undress and we'd be all white, in the middle of the black night, you'd hand me the knife, I'd take it, then you'd take me, we'd be a single white beast, unconscious, a great splash of light, blinding, burning, so white it hurts, and I would feel the knife in my hand, black reflections glinting on the blade, I'd lift it up for you to see and you'd say yes, strike, I can't stand the light any more, strike me and let the darkness enter my heart. And I strike, I strike you in the heart, the blood gushes and flows over me, we are shaken by the same spasms, we have the same sigh in our throats, we can go no further, it's over, we've come to the end. We grow still, you look at me, you smile, you fall away, you leave me, you die.

Pause

JOHN: Sounds like I'd better be careful.

MARY: You don't understand, John. You've committed a sacrilege. And you're going to pay for it. You're a barbarian, John. I gave you a glimpse of my soul, and you trampled all over it. It's a fragile thing, my soul, it's a wounded animal. It needs to be caressed, not kicked. You laughed at me. Now I shall have to protect myself.

Pause

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Wha'd'you say?

MARY: Sleep.

JOHN: You going?

MARY: Don't forget to go home.

JOHN: Hmm.

MARY: You look like a child when you sleep.

JOHN: Night, mum.

Pause

MARY: Don't weaken, girl. Get out. Into the street. Into the cold. It's your place.

She leaves.

JOHN: I didn't mean to hurt you.

MOONBLOOD

7. Midday

They are far apart, still.

Pause

JOHN: If you're going to be like that, it wasn't worth coming.

MARY: I can leave if you like.

JOHN: Why didn't you come last time?

MARY: I'm here now.

JOHN: I waited for you. You could have called.

MARY: I could have.

Pause

JOHN: I had your key made.

Pause

JOHN: If Julian sees it, you can tell him it's for a classroom.

Pause

JOHN: You asked me for it.

MARY: Ages ago. I don't want it any more.

JOHN: You're impossible.

MARY: No doubt.

JOHN: I adore you.

MOONBLOOD

Pause

MARY: If you really adored me, you'd be prepared to make a sacrifice.

JOHN: What sort of sacrifice?

MARY: What do you value more than anything else in your life?

Pause

JOHN: I hope you're not going to get vicious.

MARY: I may do. Goddesses can be very demanding.

JOHN: I already give you a great deal.

MARY: Do you really think so?

Pause

JOHN: I want to spend the night with you.

MARY: That's not possible.

JOHN: I want to get to know you. You're always running and hiding. Who are you?

Pause

JOHN: What do you have against your father?

MARY: I don't want to talk about the past. The past doesn't exist.

JOHN: The past helps us to understand the present.

MARY: The past is the chain you want to tie around my neck. But I'm not your little bitch.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Of course not. You're my mistress.

MARY: I'm nothing. I feel nothing. I'm the void.

JOHN: That's not true.

Pause

JOHN: Don't you like it here?

Pause

MARY: I wanted to keep the world out, to make this a special place, where we could see each other without fear of being seen. But you brought your self-consciousness, and your irony. You're always afraid of what people will think of you. And now I'm afraid of what you think of me.

JOHN: You find me self-conscious?

MARY: I'm not talking about sex. There's no taboo there anymore, nobody's afraid to talk about it, they never talk about anything else. I'm talking about feelings. Feelings are forbidden.

Pause

MARY: I hold my feelings back too - but I have to. It wouldn't do you any harm to suffer a bit. But you're always watching yourself. So it's me that suffers in your place.

Pause

JOHN: Come and sit by me.

Pause

JOHN: Look at my hand. It touches you. You feel it. It's called a caress. Relax. School is over. You're with me now. And you love me.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: Did I say that?

JOHN: No-one's stopping you from saying it again.

MARY: You are. You're laughing at me.

JOHN: Absolutely not. No-one's watching us. It's between the two of us. This is our secret place. We can say whatever we like.

Pause

MARY: I love you.

JOHN: I don't love you.

MARY: No.

JOHN: I worship you.

MARY: No, you don't. You laugh at me.

JOHN: No. No irony. I've never been more serious. You're a goddess: I worship you. Nothing in my life is more intense than these few moments with you.

Pause

MARY: I was afraid you didn't feel the same as me.

JOHN: What do you feel?

MARY: I feel scared.

JOHN: What of?

MARY: Losing all control.

JOHN: That might be fun.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: No. You don't know what it's like. You don't know what it's like to lose your footing, to fall, to be forever falling without ever hitting the bottom.

JOHN: I think I might find out.

MARY: No. You don't want to go to the end. You want to come back. You want to dip your toe in to test the temperature, that's all. You're not crazy. You want to go just far enough so you can say you've been. You're not an explorer, you're a tourist.

JOHN: Are you an explorer?

MARY: I'm crazy.

Pause

JOHN: And I'm crazy for you.

MARY: No, you're not.

Pause

JOHN: What happened with your father? And your mother, why do you never mention your mother?

Pause

MARY: My mother was very young and very beautiful when she had me. She didn't want me. She couldn't stand to hear me crying, it drove her mad. She hit me, she threw me against the walls, she couldn't control herself.

JOHN: That's unforgivable.

MARY: No, I don't hold it against her. I don't really remember. I was afraid of her, I hated her for a time, then I came to understand her. I hold it against my father.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: What did he do?

MARY: Nothing. He watched. He never intervened. Then one day he left.

JOHN: Where did he go?

MARY: To another country, a long way away, somewhere hot. He came back years later, with another woman, from over there. He wanted to see my brother and me. His woman stayed in the town and he came and knocked on our door one summer evening, I remember, it was in June. My mother had heard he was coming, and sent us away to our aunt, we weren't there when he came, she was alone. Or perhaps there was a man with her, hidden somewhere in the house, lurking in the shadows, perhaps she had a lover, I don't know. My father came to the house and my mother greeted him like a prince, like a hero coming back from the war. She was still beautiful, she knew how to seduce a man. She put on a record and she danced for him. She aroused him. She made him forget his foreign girl. He wanted to sleep with her, straight away, but she told him he must wait, that it was better not to rush, that they must take their time. Desire rose up in him, irresistibly, and he let it flow, he put himself in the hands of this woman he had abandoned years before and who now was doing all in her power to win him back. She ran him a bath. As he was getting out, she ran up to him. He took one foot out of the water. At the moment he placed it on the ground, she threw his dressing gown over his head and arms and held him, blinding him and making it impossible for him to defend himself. The lover came out of his hiding place and stepped forward with a butcher's knife in his hand. He hacked at my father's neck through the dressing gown and cut his throat. My father collapsed and the bathwater ran red, billowing with blood. Then my mother and her lover bathed in it. They copulated until the seed of the lover mixed with the blood of his victim. Late at night they wrapped the body in an old blanket and drove it down to the beach. My father's corpse was carried off

MOONBLOOD

by the current, a long, long way away, to a distant country. It stayed on the surface for a long time for all the world to see, but little by little the water seeped into his pores and pulled him down to the depths of the ocean, where no sound ever disturbs the silence, where no ray of light ever penetrates the darkness. Back in the town nobody noticed he was missing, except his mistress, the foreigner. She couldn't speak our language and wandered around the town like a madwoman, screaming incomprehensible words without ever managing to make herself understood. She stayed like that for several weeks, then one day she disappeared, nobody knew where she went, we never saw her again. I came back to the house with my brother. My mother never said anything to us about what had happened. A month later we were introduced to our stepfather.

Pause

JOHN: Is it your father you hate or your stepfather?

Pause

JOHN: There is no stepfather.

Pause

JOHN: You obsess me. I want to get inside your head. I want to see the depths of your eyes. I want to penetrate your body, get under your skin, tear through your entrails to get to the heart of you. I want to know you from the inside.

MARY: You scare me.

JOHN: I can't live without you.

Pause

JOHN: I only exist when I'm here with you. All the rest is just a dream. Laura, the girls, work, all my life is just a dream, a film

MOONBLOOD

on a screen, images without flesh, it's unreal, I can't change the script, I'm not in control, I'm playing in this film, a shadow on the wall and that's all. It's only here that I really exist. It's only here I feel I'm alive.

MARY: Because this is theatre.

JOHN: This is more than that.

Pause

JOHN: Isn't it?

Pause

JOHN: You want me to leave Laura, don't you?

Pause

JOHN: Will you leave Julian?

Pause

MARY: I've got to go.

JOHN: No.

Pause

JOHN: When the sun sets on the sea, the water turns red, like blood. When the sea couples with the sun, we escape from time and space, into eternity.

MARY: But eternity doesn't last. The sun sinks and disappears. Darkness falls.

JOHN: We wait for the moon to appear.

MARY: I've got to go.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: But the moon is held back by a magnetic field of incredible force. She's being drawn irresistibly towards the centre of the universe, towards the sun. She's been pulled out of her orbit. She's travelling at the speed of light to surrender to the source of heat. The flames caress her skin. She gives herself up to the fire, like Joan of Arc.

Pause

JOHN: Come to me.

Pause

MARY: Julian's waiting.

JOHN: Don't go.

MARY: I've got to.

JOHN: You've got to choose.

Pause

JOHN: I'll go to the end with you. I'll dive in, I'll let go. You're the one that's holding us back now.

MARY: I know.

Pause

JOHN: You've changed my life. I've made my choice. I stand naked before you. I am ready to make sacrifices. But you have to make an effort too.

Pause

JOHN: You have to make a choice.

MOONBLOOD

Pause

MARY: Goodbye, John.

MOONBLOOD

8. Late afternoon.

MARY: Have you been here long?

Pause

MARY: Did you get my message?

Pause

MARY: There was a staff meeting on Friday, I couldn't get out of it.

JOHN: What about Tuesday?

MARY: Tuesday? We hadn't fixed anything for Tuesday. How are you?
You don't look very pleased to see me.

JOHN: Oh but I am.

Pause

MARY: We hadn't fixed anything for Tuesday.

JOHN: Are you seeing someone else or have you just had enough of me?

Pause

MARY: If you think I'm going to justify myself...

JOHN: I should like to know.

Pause

MARY: You want us to stop, is that it?

JOHN: I don't - I can't stop. I need you.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: Strange way of showing it.

JOHN: It's like a drug. I can't get by without you. You're in my blood.

MARY: Go on a cure.

JOHN: You're laughing at me.

MARY: Because you're funny.

JOHN: What do you want me to do? What more do you want from me?

MARY: I don't want anything from you.

JOHN: It's driving me mad waiting for you here!

MARY: Don't wait.

JOHN: I've sacrificed everything...

MARY: Everything?

JOHN: Everything. I can't do anything more. What do you want me to do?

Pause

MARY: I want you to leave me some breathing space. You stifle me. There's no room left for me here.

JOHN: But there's nothing outside of this room. Outside is just a vacuum. You can only exist here in this room.

MARY: No. We play here. We bring the stars in through the window, we pour the sea into the bed. And it's all here, locked in this little room. But it's only a game. Afterwards we walk out of here back into the real world. We each go our separate way. I

MOONBLOOD

never wanted this to seep out of that window. I never wanted it to walk out of that door.

Pause

MARY: You forget I have another life. And so do you.

JOHN: No. I live here. I have nothing else. I don't exist without you. I die each time you leave me.

MARY: Such a tiny death.

JOHN: I'm suffering.

MARY: So you should.

Pause

MARY: If I threw myself in the river, what would you do?

JOHN: I'd dive in after you.

MARY: To be swept away with me?

JOHN: Yes.

Pause

MARY: The water's cold, black. You're afraid.

JOHN: No. I swim towards you. I put my arms around you.

MARY: I look at you. You're cold, and pale: your face is all white. I scratch it with my nails. I draw blood. It runs down your cheeks, red on white. It flows into the water and disappears into the black. I cling to you, I stop you from swimming. I pull you down towards the bottom. Water fills our lungs. Little bubbles escape from our lips and rise to the surface, hundreds of them at first, then less and less. Up there, near the bridge,

MOONBLOOD

they appear in the wake of a heavy barge ploughing through the water. And there, on the water's surface, a broken image slowly re-forms: the moon appears, whole again, unshakeable, closing the circle high above our heads, having absorbed us without effort, like swallowing a fly... Would you like to drown with me?

JOHN: Oh yes.

Pause

MARY: Have you ever noticed how feelings create their opposite within themselves? How in light there is darkness? How at the centre of attraction there is repulsion, at the heart of love hate, in the depths of religion destruction and war?

JOHN: You are my religion.

MARY: And that's why you hate me so.

Pause

JOHN: You asked for sacrifices...

MARY: It was only a game.

JOHN: I played the game.

MARY: What have you sacrificed for me?

JOHN: My work, my home, my family.

MARY: What do you mean, your family?

Pause

JOHN: I've left Laura.

MARY: You're insane!

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: I've moved in here. I've been waiting for you for ten days, I haven't been back to the house, I haven't been to the office...

MARY: You have no right to do this...

JOHN: I had no alternative. I can't live without you. You've got to leave Julian.

MARY: But I'm not insane. You want to ruin your life, alright go ahead, but don't start messing with mine.

JOHN: You don't want to?

MARY: Of course I don't want to! There was never any question of that.

JOHN: Then leave.

MARY: Don't worry, I'm going.

JOHN: No!

Pause

MARY: Are you ill?

JOHN: My illness is you. I can't live without you anymore. It is physically impossible for me to bear the minutes you're away.

He hands her a key.

JOHN: Take it. Lock me in. Chain me up. I won't move. I shall always be here for you. You are my mistress. I am your slave. I will be your little dog.

Pause

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: You want me to get down on my knees? I'm on my knees. I'm on my knees to worship you, isn't that enough for you? I surrender to the superior strength of your beauty. I have no life of my own, I have no will, I think only of you 24 hours a day. Look at me. I'm yours. I live only for you. I offer you my life as a present. You can take it, or you can throw it away, you have the choice.

MARY: But I don't want your life, I've got my own.

Pause

MARY: I love being with you. I love telling you stories. I love arousing your curiosity, and frustrating it. I love making love to you. I love making you suffer. I love to see you smile, I love to see you cry. But there's one thing I love above all else: more than anything else in the world I think, I love to leave you.

She leaves.

MOONBLOOD

9. Night. Moonlight.

John is alone.

He takes the telephone, dials a number, listens, hangs up.

He starts again, but gives up. He walks up and down, feverishly.

He picks up the telephone, dials a number, listens.

JOHN: Stop that fucking answering machine, I know you're bloody well there!... Hello?... Julian? ... Er yes, that's right, did you recognise my voice? ... No no, just a joke, they get on my nerves, these machines, they're everywhere now... Well yes, it's been a while, so I was thinking... Exactly, so I was thinking it's about time we got together again... I could meet you up in town with your wife - what was her name again? ... That's right, of course - I liked her a lot by the way... Oh no, you know how it is, with the two girls, no it would just be the three of us, same as last time... Oh, so you're going away? ... Ah yes... Well, what about tonight then? ... Yes, I see... No, no, there's no rush, we'll do it when you get back... Yes, alright then, I'll do that... OK Julian... Have a good holiday - and say hello to Mary for me!

He hangs up.

He starts to get dressed.

MOONBLOOD

10. Night.

JOHN: What do you want?

MARY: What?

JOHN: To drink?

MARY: Oh, same as Julian.

JOHN: Well, we'll just have to wait for him. Have a seat.

MARY: Do you think he'll have trouble parking?

JOHN: No, the main drag's always a nightmare, but he should find a spot in the sidestreets. Has he got the door-code?

MARY: Surely your wife knows it?

JOHN: Oh yes, I was forgetting.

MARY: She seems very nice.

JOHN: Well, she is, yes.

Pause

MARY: How have you been, since the last time?

JOHN: Oh, fine thanks. How about you?

MARY: I'm alright.

JOHN: You're just back from your holiday?

MARY: Yes, Greece.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Laura went to Spain with the kids.

MARY: You didn't go?

JOHN: No. Actually I haven't been all that well. I needed to be on my own for a bit, get some rest.

MARY: But you're alright now?

JOHN: Oh yes. Right as rain.

Pause

JOHN: Did you enjoy the play?

MARY: Yes, a lot.

JOHN: Me too.

MARY: Really?

JOHN: Really. A very good choice. I was... moved.

Pause

JOHN: She was very good, the girl.

MARY: Yes. So was he, come to that.

JOHN: Yes, he was good too.

Pause

MARY: It brought things back to me.

JOHN: Did it?

MARY: Memories.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Yes, I knew what you meant.

MARY: Sorry.

JOHN: No, I didn't mean to...

MARY: What's Julian up to?

JOHN: He must have had trouble parking.

Pause

JOHN: Whisky?

MARY: Why not?

JOHN: Me too. Dry?

MARY: Pardon?

JOHN: The whisky: dry?

MARY: Please.

JOHN: I have a dash of water. There we are.

Pause

MARY: Good story, isn't it?

JOHN: Sorry?

MARY: The play: a good story.

JOHN: Ah. Yes...

Pause

JOHN: What would you say it was about?

MOONBLOOD

MARY: Well, love, don't you think? Eros and Thanatos, love and death, all that.

JOHN: Not terribly original.

MARY: There aren't that many stories to tell.

JOHN: I'd have thought they might have found some new ones, no?

MARY: Of course not. Human nature hasn't really changed, so the stories are basically the same.

JOHN: Ah yes, I suppose that must be it.

MARY: You're laughing at me.

Pause

JOHN: You're alright then?

MARY: Yes.

Pause

JOHN: I'm a lot better. I was saying to Julian, I'm a new man.

MARY: What happened to the old one?

JOHN: He died. I wasn't really living before, I wasn't getting anything out of life. Then I had a sort of revelation, an encounter, a sort of road to Damascus type thing, and I changed. I went into eclipse for a moment, and then I was born again.

MARY: You found God?

JOHN: Well, I wouldn't go quite as far as that, but it's something similar. I found love, I think. Or rather, I discovered that I was capable of love myself.

MOONBLOOD

MARY: That's good.

JOHN: Yes.

Pause

MARY: And so your wife is getting the benefit of this?

JOHN: Yes, mainly. My wife and my daughters...

MARY: That's very good.

Pause

JOHN: What about you?

MARY: I'm alright.

Pause

JOHN: You still intrigue me.

MARY: No. I foul things up. When people know me, they avoid me.

JOHN: But I don't know you, do I?

Pause

JOHN: Look... There's a new moon.

MARY: Ah yes, the moon is born again too. Every 28 days.

JOHN: She's beautiful.

Pause

MARY: I think I hear them coming.

MOONBLOOD

JOHN: Kiss me.

MARY: Why?

JOHN: For nostalgia's sake.

MARY: Yuk.

JOHN: No, I just meant to say... thankyou.

Pause

MARY: That must be them.

He goes to the door.

JOHN: Yes. It is.

They look at each other.

THE END