

The Magic Toyshop

1. Exterior. A London square. Night.

But a shabby square. Wet and misty, creating a halo around a street lamp - an old-fashioned, gas one, the period is circa 1954/5. The mist partially obscures the surroundings. Out of the mist emerges a man, gaunt, raw-boned, in a soiled trenchcoat open over a shabby, ill-fitting suit. His five o'clock shadow is just showing. His thoughts are worlds away from his surroundings. His age is indeterminate, anything from mid-twenties to mid-forties.

He is heading towards the row of shops on one side of the square: fog hides the square itself but the outlines of one or two trees are visible - the diffused light from the street lamp illuminates some leaves.

The shops comprise a greengrocer's - as FRANCIE approaches, a woman in a blue overall reaches out and pulls down a blind, hiding the piled fruit; and a butcher - closed, nothing in the window but greaseproof paper hanging from meathooks and enamelled metal trays, on which sits a black and white cat. There is also a toyshop.

The toyshop is old-fashioned, quaint, in fact, almost pastiche. It has a slightly bowed window and above, a very ornate sign in gold on green: Philip Flower, Toys and Novelties. The window itself, closed off from the interior of the shop by shutters, is lit only by the street lights, but we can make out inviting outlines of the toys with which it is crammed - rocking horses, elaborately dressed dolls, a huge Noah's ark.

As FRANCIE arrives at the door, a light goes on inside the shop. On the door hangs a sign: *Closed*: stuck into the frame - the top section of the door is panelled in glass - a visiting card, *Francie O'Connor, Jigs and Reels*, in Irish lettering.

We glimpse a red-haired woman running through the shop just before she flings open the door. She is tall and skinny, in shabby black dress and lisle stockings, with, around her neck, a barbaric-looking silver necklace as tight as a dog collar. Her very bright red hair is untidily pinned on her head. She is carrying a fiddle case.

Cut to:

2. Interior. Toyshop. Night.

MARGARET ushers FRANCIE into the shop, registering joy and relief.

A parrot, brilliantly coloured red and yellow, flies up from its perch squawking: *No sale, no sale*. Then subsides, with a faint clank. We see the chain that chains it to the perch.

Down one side of the shop runs a long, mahogany counter: behind it, shelves stacked with many inviting cardboard boxes; the lower shelves display a selection of bright and beautiful, mostly wooden, toys. Other toys - masks, hobby horses, jumping jacks etc. - hang from hooks or are propped against the shelves. The shop has a musty, old-fashioned air; lit by a single bulb hanging from the middle of the ceiling, the upper shelves are shadowy, dusty, cobwebby, their contents enticing, mysterious, possibly sinister.

There is a wooden chair on the customer's side of the counter, no chair on the service side. A huge, ornate metal cash register, registering pounds, shillings and pence (this is pre-decimalisation) dominates the counter.

Behind the counter, a blackboard, '7s 6d' is written on it.

At the end of the counter, in the side wall, is a doorway, that opens on to the stairs down to the basement workshop. The sound of furniture being moved issues from this doorway.

MARGARET gives FRANCIE a quick hug and kiss. She mouths: 'quick! quick' and thrusts the fiddle case in his hands, then dives down the stairway to the workroom. The door to the passage is open. In comes a white bull terrier with pink eyes, it registers FRANCIE's presence with a wag of the tail. FRANCIE takes off his trenchcoat and hangs it over the back of the chair. FINN rushes through the same door. FINN is a slight, red-haired boy, sixteen or seventeen, in paint-stained overalls. He is pleased to see FRANCIE, but agitated.

FINN

Get a move on, man!

He vanishes.

Cut to:

3. Interior. Workroom. Night.

The workroom is a whitewashed cellar running the entire length of the building. Very little is visible

of the front end of the workroom. But there are bunches of what appear to be severed limbs hanging from hooks in the ceiling, also figures hanging from hooks.

There is a scuff of sawdust and woodshavings on the floor.

The main focus of the workroom, tonight, however, is a very very large toy theatre which is situated at the back garden end.

This is a square box, curtained all round in red plush, with an elaborately carved and gilded proscenium arch and red plush curtains in front. From behind the curtains come knockings and bangings. The curtains bulge and part, to reveal a single, glaring eye peering out.

In front of the theatre, a wooden upright chair, in which sits MARGARET, craning round anxiously. She looks relieved when FRANCIE comes in. FRANCIE takes his position in front of the little theatre. Removes fiddle from case. Tucks fiddle under chin. Tunes up. The curtains part further to reveal PHILIP FLOWER's face; it is still shadowed, but the eyes and teeth gleam.

PHILIP

Now you've deigned to arrive, Mr. Fiddler, we can begin.

FRANCIE plays. The curtains glide open, revealing a marionette, about three quarters life size, dressed as Coppelia in the ballet, occupying the center of the stage.

MARGARET applauds. FRANCIE starts to play again.

As FRANCIE plays on, the puppet gets up en pointe. The puppet takes a moment or two to absolutely synchronise itself with the music; then begins to dance stiffly, but rather well, culminating in an unstoppable pirouette - she spins like a top.

Cut to:

4. MELANIE's bedroom. Day.

MELANIE, fifteen, is pirouetting ferociously to music she hears in her mind. She has tied her long, dark hair back and is wearing a sort of improvised ballet dress, an outgrown liberty bodice over a petticoat, somewhat like a Degas.

It is a pretty, rather luxurious young girl's bedroom, featuring a dressing table with silver-backed hair

brushes. On the single bed, with candlewick counterpane, a teddy bear with a protuberant paunch looks on. By his side, a glossy art book, open at the reproduction of a Degas ballet dancer. The curtains are pulled to, the sun shines through them, making a vague, dreamy light. The dressing table mirror reflects the room, the bed, the teddy bear.

MELANIE glances at herself in the mirror, unbalances and topples forward. The bear watches. A draught from the window blows the pages of the book over.

MRS RUNDLE

(Voice over.)

Melanie!

MELANIE

(Automatically.)

Coming!

MELANIE reaches out, unfastens her hair from its elastic band and, watching herself in the mirror, lets it stream around her face. She pulls the bedspread off the bed, dislodging the bear, and drapes herself. She turns slightly from the mirror, so that she's only three quarter reflected. There is a pre-Raphaelite quality to this image. She watches herself perform that Janey Morris pouting frown. A faintly anxious expression crosses her face as her hands slide up and cup her own breasts.

MELANIE

Physically, I've reached my peak.
From now on, I can only deteriorate.

MRS RUNDLE

(Voice over.)

Melanie! Dinner's ready!

MELANIE, looking rather vague and unpremeditated about it, slides into a simulation of the pose of Botticelli's Venus - she pulls forward one lock of black hair, lowers her right hand to crotch level. She irritably shrugs off the bedspread, to reveal the liberty bodice and petticoat business underneath. She giggles a little and starts unfastening the liberty bodice. Furious banging on the door.

MRS RUNDLE

(Outside.)

Melanie! Your dinner's getting cold!
Whatever are you up to!

MELANIE, furiously embarrassed, snatches up shirt and shorts from the floor, clutches them to her.

MELANIE

Sorry, I'm coming - sorry!

Cut to:

5. Interior. MELANIE's kitchen. Day.

The country-style kitchen/dining room of a discreetly luxurious house. Sitting at table are MELANIE's brother, JONATHON, nine, flannel shorts, short-sleeved shirt, sleeveless pullover, a characteristic small boy of the period, wearing thick glasses, and her sister, VICTORIA, a fat, cheerful three-year-old. MELANIE, rumpled and childish in aertex shirt and shorts, has just slipped into her place.

JONATHON eats steadily, eyes on plate. VICTORIA makes a mess. MELANIE looks at her food with distaste. MRS RUNDLE, the housekeeper, stately, aproned, very conscious of her aspirates. She takes a postcard out of her apron pocket.

MRS RUNDLE

I thought your dad was supposed to be a writer, but he hasn't written much here.

VICTORIA

Let me see!

MELANIE tweaks the card from MRS RUNDLE's fingers.

MRS RUNDLE

Melanie! Manners!

MELANIE reads the postcard out loud.

MELANIE

'Have ploughed the stormy seas - '

JONATHON

Storms?

As MELANIE reads on, his glasses begin to reflect, not the kitchen but a stormy sea.

Close-up JONATHON's glasses; reflected within them, a three-masted barque riding huge waves. Sounds of storm and seagulls etc. In the background, MELANIE continues to read.

MELANIE

(Voice over.)

Very rough weather, good to be back on terra firma.'

Storm and noises fade. JONATHON's glasses clear. He cocks his head to get a good look at the picture on

the postcard. It shows an ocean liner of the period. He sighs, bends his head. Begins to eat again.

MELANIE

'The New York lecture went quite well, now on to Chicago. Daddy. P.S. Be good chicks and lots of love, Mummy.' Do you want the card, Jonathon?

JONATHON shakes his head.

JONATHON

Wrong sort of boat. Almost as bad as an aeroplane.

MELANIE moves her cottage pie about on her plate.

MELANIE

They're going to fly everywhere. Mean things. They should have taken us.

JONATHON

We're too young.

MELANIE

I'm not too young. Juliet was my age.

JONATHON

Juliet who?

MELANIE

In the play. She was married, by my age. And Mummy. Mummy wasn't much older than me when she got married. Well, not *that* much older.

Cut to:

6. Interior. MELANIE's house. Parents' bedroom.

Close-up a bride, in monochrome: it is a bride in a black-and-white photograph, an extravagantly dressed bride in a white-lace crinoline wedding dress and a veil surmounted by an orange blossom wreath. At first, it would seem the bride is MELANIE but the hairstyle - early Forties and the faded condition of the photograph tell us this is MELANIE's mother.

The camera pans back to show the rest of the photograph - a groom, in tails and topper: and a huge, stern, somehow incongruous man in a suit and a bowler hat.

The photograph, in a silver frame, stands on a dressing table that otherwise holds a silver box and

a jar or two of cosmetics, in front of a casement window. The curtains are not drawn and moonlight floods through, bleaching the colours out of the plushly glamorous bedroom, with its fitted carpet and period touches of Regency stripe wallpaper and Redouté rose prints. A big, white moon hangs directly outside the window.

The bed is stripped: the pillowcases lack pillows. The room is not in use.

MELANIE is reflected in the photograph as she opens the bedroom door.

Somewhere a grandfather clock finishes striking midnight.

MELANIE, looking nervous and audacious at the same time, slips into the bedroom.

Cut to MELANIE holding the wedding photograph in her hands, inspecting it closely.

She is wearing plain, practical striped pyjamas, a little too tight across the chest. Her hair hangs over her shoulders.

Looking at the photograph, she absent-mindedly scoops up her hair and holds it on top of her head, in a loose knot. It looks something like the bride's hairdo.

She sets the photograph tenderly down on the dressing table, briefly glancing at her reflection with its piled-up hair in the dressing-table mirror. Then, even more nervous and audacious, she tiptoes to the wardrobe. Tiptoes, although there is nobody to hear her, because she is in a place that is out-of-bounds.

She opens the wardrobe door. A huge, sheeted shape looms within the depths of the wardrobe, among the empty metal hangers.

Nervous, audacious, aware she is handling one of her mother's treasures without permission, MELANIE reaches inside the wardrobe. The metal hangers jingle. She takes the dress off its hook.

The hooped skirts erupt from the sheet and engulf her in lace.

Cut to:

7. Interior. Parents' bedroom. Night.

The room is deserted, although the wardrobe door is swinging open and the sheet in which the dress was

wrapped and a drifting spoor of tissue paper, lie on the floor, shifting in the draught. Also MELANIE's discarded pyjamas lie on the floor, too, where she has dropped them.

The wedding photograph is once again propped up on the dressing table. As we watch, a breeze shivers the lace frills on the bride's gown. She raises a hand to clutch her veil.

Just for a split second, this is not a photograph but a fragment of monochrome actuality.

Cut to:

8. Exterior. Front of house. Night.

MELANIE lives in a stockbroker Tudor kind of house, set in a big garden. The front door opens. MELANIE, in the wedding dress, the veil on her head secured by a wreath of orange blossom, stands on the doorstep, an ecstatic smile on her face. The dress is too long; she has difficulty manoeuvring the elaborate skirts. We see her feet are bare as she steps on to the gravel path, wincing slightly.

Cut to:

9. Exterior. Garden. Night.

Huge garden, huge moon overhead, rosebushes with huge roses and huge thorns. And a lily pond.

She catches sight of her reflection in the moonlit water and stops, rapt. Very lyrical and romantic shot of MELANIE, looking bridal, reflected among the moonlit water lilies.

As she gazes at herself, the peace is shattered by the ripping roar of an aeroplane overhead. A wind blows across the pool, shattering her reflection. The same wind whips the trees this way and that and blows the petals off the roses in drifts. It lifts up the veil and blows it and the orange blossom wreath up and away. MELANIE makes an ineffectual grab after them.

Bang! Big, reverberating bang.

Cut to:

10. Exterior. Front of house. Night.

A gust of wind; the front door slams shut. (This is what has made the bang.) MELANIE swoops up and wrestles with the shut front door, but cannot open it.

MELANIE

(Under her breath.)

Drat and bother and drat, drat,
drat and bother and drat...

She lifts up the knocker, she looks down at the wedding dress ruefully and sets the doorknocker down gently on the door. She gathers up her unwieldy skirts and makes off.

MELANIE looks up towards the open casement of her bedroom window through the gnarled boughs of the old apple tree. High on an out-of-reach bough have lodged the orange-blossom wreath and the wedding veil, hanging drifting down.

MELANIE is tense and nervous. The garden is beginning to frighten her. Silence, except for MELANIE's agitated breathing. Nightingale starts to sing. She swings herself out on to a lower bough of the tree. A big moth briefly batters her face, disorienting her. There is a ripping sound; the bodice tears under the arms. MELANIE makes a face of woe, but raises herself up on the bough, clutching at a higher one. A lace flounce catches on a twig and tears. She looks down again; but another flounce has caught somewhere else. Sharp intake of breath. MELANIE swings herself further up, in a cascade of ripping lace. Small, unripe apples, leaves and twigs bounce off her on to the ground. The nightingale continues its serenade. She scrambles up the tree, apple tree debris tumbling round her. The tree itself seems to be against her. A branch catches at her arm.

MELANIE

Aagh!

She inspects her arm. It is badly scratched and bleeding. A drop or two of blood plops on to the white satin bodice of the dress.

MELANIE

Oh, no!

She looks up towards the open window, then back down the way she has come. It seems miles to the ground.

She reaches up towards the window ledge. A whole section of the dress rips with a rending sound.

Cut to:

11. Interior. MELANIE's bedroom. Night.

The open casement, the flapping curtains, the branches against a now darkening sky.

MELANIE launches herself from the tree and flings herself forward into the room. Her hair is full of leaves and twigs. Her face is streaked with dirt and tears, scratched and torn; her hands and arms are scratched and the dress is in tatters and streaked with blood and dirt. The only sound is her laboured breathing.

Cut to:

12. MELANIE's front hall. Day.

MRS RUNDLE in black cloth coat, smooths black gloves over her fingers one by one. On the hallstand, a wicker shopping basket contains a leather purse. VICTORIA, neatly dressed, waits. JONATHON scuttles out of the open front door, with a model ship in his arms, looking out into the garden. MRS RUNDLE calls after him:

MRS RUNDLE

Don't fall in the pond is all I ask,
Jonathon, dear.

(To VICTORIA.)

We'll give Madam one last chance.

(A call to raise the dead.)

Melanie! Victoria and I are going to
the village! If you want breakfast,
you get it for yourself! And clear
up after you!

MELANIE, in shorts and blouse, sulks behind the banisters, close behind MRS RUNDLE and VICTORIA. She is carrying a basin of water with a flannel draped over the side.

The following shots succeed one another very rapidly.

Cut to:

13. Exterior. Lane. Day.

MRS RUNDLE and VICTORIA walk down the lane. VICTORIA stops to pick a flower from the hedge. Peaceful summer countryside; sunshine. The peace is interrupted by a motorcyclist, early Fifties vintage, with goggles, in black on a black bike. He is visibly reminiscent of one of Maria Cesare's motorcycle escorts from Cocteau's Orphée. He rips down the country lane. MRS RUNDLE and VICTORIA are forced to jump aside on to the verge. MRS RUNDLE grumbles and mutters.

Cut to:

14. Interior. Parents' bedroom. Day.

MELANIE, rubbing at the bloodstains on the dress with

a moistened flannel, is startled by the sound of a motorbike and knocks over the basin of water, which spills over both dress and bed, making a big, wet puddle that starts to drip on to the floor.

Cut to:

15. Interior. Hall. Day.

A loud knocking on the door. MELANIE opens it.

Framed in the doorway is the motorcyclist, holding a yellow telegram envelope out towards MELANIE.

Cut to:

16. Exterior. Drive. Day.

JONATHON launches his boat on the pond. He blows lightly and a breeze takes hold of the boat's sails. It skims across the pond. He sits back on his heels, looking pleased.

There is a swan swimming languidly on the distant reaches of the pond.

Abruptly, for no good reason, the boat keels over. JONATHON rises from his knees, agitated.

Cut to:

17. Interior. Kitchen. Day.

VICTORIA, kneeling on a chair, is unpacking the basket of groceries on to the kitchen table. MRS RUNDLE, still in coat, hat and gloves, casts an eye around the kitchen, looking for evidence that MELANIE has got up. She finds none. She is irritated, but not with VICTORIA.

MRS RUNDLE

You be a good girl, Victoria, and don't stir out of that kitchen.

Cut to:

18. Interior. Landing. Day.

MRS RUNDLE, panting, irritable, has arrived at the top of the stairs. MELANIE's door is wide open; the curtain blows in the draught from the open window but the room is empty.

MRS RUNDLE looks around, puzzled. She sees a feather blow out from under the door of the master bedroom. Followed by another feather. She puts her ear to the door. No sound inside.

MRS RUNDLE

Are you in there? Melanie?

She opens the door.

Cut to:

19. Interior. MELANIE's parents' room. Day.

A gale of white feathers whirls round and round, a maelstrom and, sitting cross-legged on the bed, in the middle of the trashed room, the bolster, empty of its feathers, the wedding dress, jars from the dressing table etc. scattered round her, sits MELANIE, consumed with grief; clutching the yellow telegram envelope in one hand.

As MRS RUNDLE watches, the feathers subside. MRS RUNDLE plucks the unopened telegram from MELANIE's fingers. MELANIE makes no attempt to stop her.

MRS RUNDLE opens the telegram. She reads it. She shakes her head sadly. She folds the telegram, puts it in her pocket. She awkwardly clammers on to the bed and clumsily puts her arms round MELANIE.

MRS RUNDLE

You poor things. All on your own.

Close-up wedding photograph. Nobody remains, now, but the figure of the man in his bowler hat.

Cut to:

20. Exterior. Garden. Day.

Two months later. Autumn. Mist in the bushes, mist in the branches of the apple tree, from which leaves and ripe fruit are falling. High in the branches can still be seen the orange-blossom wreath and the wraith-like remains of the veil.

On the lawn is a tableau; all the glamorous furniture and pictures (Redouté rose prints, old maps, hunting prints) sofas, beds, lamp standards, the kitchen furniture, the parents' four poster bed, MELANIE's dressing table, everything. All draped in dustsheets. Pots, pans, cups, saucers, everything.

Before this, as if posed for a photograph, the orphans. MELANIE, in school raincoat, kneesocks, sensible shoes, with her hair in very, very tight plaits, looking much younger than fifteen. JONATHON in school cap and blazer. VICTORIA in what is known as a 'Princess Anne' coat. All with black armbands stitched round their upper arms. JONATHON carries a boat.

Beside them, a pile of strapped-up suitcases.

MRS RUNDLE stands a little to one side, in front of her strapped trunk. She is in coat and hat too.

She coughs to hide her emotion. The tableau comes to life.

MRS RUNDLE

Families should stick together. Your uncle and his missus are going to look after you.

MRS RUNDLE and the children move closer to one another.

MELANIE

We didn't even know Uncle Philip got married. Mummy never said. He didn't like Daddy. He never visited.

VICTORIA runs to MRS RUNDLE and butts her head against MRS RUNDLE's knees, weeping furiously. MRS RUNDLE picks her up. Hugs her. Feels in her pocket for a bar of chocolate. Gives it to VICTORIA. VICTORIA begins to open it. MRS RUNDLE puts her in MELANIE's arms.

MRS RUNDLE

You look after your sister, Victoria.

JONATHON

If they'd stayed on the boat, none of this would have happened.

Cut to:

21. Exterior. Railway station. Day.

Puffs of smoke; hissing of steam engine - we are still in the age of steam. A train has just pulled in, a crowd mills along the platform, disembarking and meeting. Pigeons strut and flutter.

FRANCIE and FINN are briefly visible through the drifting smoke, leaning against a pillar. FRANCIE wears his trenchcoat, FINN wears a threadbare donkey jacket over paint-stained corduroy trousers. They both look rough, not English, not middle class, hence possibly dangerous or criminal or Irish (which they are).

FINN is smoking a cigarette. He moves with great grace and elegance.

JONATHON still clutching his boat, gets out of a third-class carriage far down the train. He is followed by MELANIE, very flustered as she helps VICTORIA down

the steps.

MELANIE looks around the platform helplessly; VICTORIA slips away from her, chasing a pigeon.

FINN spots MELANIE and puts out his cigarette. FINN and FRANCIE start towards her just as VICTORIA, intent on chasing her pigeon, topples over and sets up a howl.

FINN

There, now ...

He stops, kneels, takes out a packet of chewing gum, offers a stick to the crying child. MELANIE, unsure of what is going on, starts after VICTORIA. She comes up short against the monolithic figure of FRANCIE and stares upwards.

FRANCIE

You'll be Miss Melanie.

MELANIE

I thought our uncle was coming to meet us.

FRANCIE

I'll get your bags.

FINN

(With courtly grace.)

He was called away suddenly on business and sent us in his place, even going so far as to give us the necessary taxi fare, an unaccustomed attack of generosity on his part.

He heaves cases. The party moves off down the platform. The children are nervous and confused. FINN keeps up a babble of chatter.

FINN

You'll need to know who we are, we're the brothers of his wife, which makes us in an unsanctified kind of way, your uncles. Me name is Finn, me brother is called Francie -

MELANIE

But you're Irish!

FINN

(Gently.)

There's no law, as I know of, to prevent it.

FRANCIE

As yet.

The brothers chuckle, to MELANIE's bewilderment. The crowd swallows them up, the three children looking very child-like in the company of the two men, although we register that FINN is about the same height as MELANIE.

Cut to:

22. Exterior. Square. Night.

Taxi draws up outside toyshop. While FRANCIE unloads the cases, FINN pays the taxi driver. JONATHON gets out of the cab, followed by MELANIE, more slowly, assisting the yawning VICTORIA. FINN, having paid, goes to help MELANIE with the baby. She flinches away.

JONATHON's glasses flash with light as they reflect the light from the toyshop, which is dazzlingly lit up, this time. And there is a big toy boat in the window. JONATHON's face lights up. VICTORIA springs to life.

VICTORIA

Toys!

The taxi drives away. The doorbell jangles. The door opens. MARGARET stands in the doorway, arms extended in welcome, hair tumbling out of its bun, smiling - she looks very lovely. JONATHON stares. VICTORIA takes first few steps towards her, then stops, puzzled. MARGARET's face falls a little. She looks anxiously, over the children's heads at FINN and FRANCIE.

VICTORIA

Are you our Auntie?

(MARGARET nods.)

What's your name?

MARGARET opens her mouth; closes it again. She looks helpless. FRANCIE moves round and takes her by the arm.

FRANCIE

Didn't they tell you your Auntie
Margaret was dumb?

Cut to:

23. Interior. Kitchen. Night.

MARGARET is nervous and embarrassed, the children anxious. The bleak room looks as festive as it can. A white cloth on the table is laid with an enormous tea - laid for only six places. There is a carving chair

at the head of the table, with no place in front of it. MARGARET kneels in front of VICTORIA, unfastening her coat. VICTORIA puts her hand on MARGARET's mouth. They look at one another for a moment. VICTORIA smiles. MARGARET goes on unfastening VICTORIA's coat. JONATHON looks for a place to put his boat; stands on tiptoe to prop it carefully on the mantelpiece. The white bull terrier noses open the door. VICTORIA extends her hand to it joyfully. FRANCIE seats himself in one of the chairs by the fire. FINN sees the boat.

FINN

That's a stylish craft.

JONATHON

I made it from a kit.

FINN

Did you now?

MELANIE stares vaguely, holding her coat. She feels lost. FINN takes her coat away. She is wearing a plain, grey pleated skirt and a V-necked pullover - almost school uniform.

FINN

We'll get your things upstairs,
settle you in.

MELANIE pulls herself together with an effort.

MELANIE

Uncle Philip isn't back yet.

FRANCIE

One thing at a time.

Cut to:

24. Interior. JONATHON's room. Night.

An attic, with sloping ceilings; it looks like an upturned boat. Plain floorboards, a plain little bed, a table, a chair. One lamp bulb dangling from center of room. Plain, bleak.

The dormer window, at which the curtains are not drawn, gives a view of the lights, it would seem, of all London. JONATHON runs to look at the view. FINN sets his suitcase down beside the bed, gestures to the window.

FINN

In daytime you can see St Paul's.

JONATHON's point-of-view shot, the city, all brilliantly lit, lying in a scoop of dark.

JONATHON

It's like a crow's nest.

He turns round with a radiant face. From where MELANIE and FINN are standing, the floorboards look like those of the deck of a ship. JONATHON spreads his feet, so that he looks as if he is standing on the deck of a ship. The deck runs from side to side.

Cut to:

25. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Night.

Wallpaper with red roses and green leaves. A big brass bed, with a chamber pot under it. A chair. FINN opens a cupboard, revealing a few coat hangers.

FINN

You'll put your clothes here.

MELANIE

There's no mirror.

FINN

There's not.

She gulps.

MELANIE

Excuse me.

She heaves at her suitcase. FINN leaps forward.

MELANIE

(Vehemently.)

I can manage.

FINN

(Heavy irony.)

Excuse me.

He backs away, leans against the chest of drawers, watching with a touch of irony as she heaves her suitcase on to the bed, opens it, takes out Edward Bear, puts him on her pillow. She smiles, tremulous, defensive, at FINN.

MELANIE

He's a pyjama case, really.

FINN

Do you know you've lovely hair,
even if you torment it in those
braids.

MELANIE

(Stiff.)
I like plaits.

FINN
You're spoiling your pretty looks.
Come here.

She tries to take a step backwards but can't because of the bed. So she takes a step forward. He puts his hands on her shoulders. He smiles reassuringly. Very gently, he takes hold of one of her plaits and starts to unplait it.

With an effort, MELANIE becomes admirably self-possessed.

MELANIE
Don't you ever wash your neck?

FINN chuckles and starts on the other plait.

FINN
Give me your comb.

Cut to:

26. Interior. Kitchen. Night.

View of kitchen through the open kitchen door - the remains of that enormous tea, and JONATHON, yawning enormously. MELANIE, her hair sprayed out around her face, is clumsily holding a big, heavy tea cup in both hands, in a way that suggests she isn't used to such coarse crockery; she looks tired out.

Cut to:

27. Interior. Staircase. Night.

MARGARET, very tenderly, is carrying sleeping VICTORIA upstairs to bed.

Cut to:

28. Interior. Girls' room. Night.

VICTORIA sleeps sweetly on the side of the bed next to the wall, but MELANIE, on her side of the bed, sits up in the dark, crying very, very quietly - we only know because we see the tears on her cheeks glistening. She is holding Edward Bear.

She sits up, reaches under the pillow for her handkerchief. Faintly, in the distance, she hears fiddle music.

She blows her nose on the handkerchief. The music

starts again. Fiddle and flute.

Cut to:

29. Interior. Kitchen landing. Night.

The music is now very loud; it comes from the kitchen. MELANIE stoops to peer through the keyhole.

MELANIE's point-of-view shot: FRANCIE and MARGARET are playing, FRANCIE the fiddle, MARGARET the flute. They are playing a jig. FINN sits in the armchair; he gets up and starts very casually to dance.

The dog sits down on the rug. MELANIE kneels down, in order to look more comfortably.

Cut to:

30. Interior. Kitchen. Night.

The fiddle and flute piece ends.

MARGARET sits in the armchair, idly holding the flute. FINN sits at her feet. She strokes his hair, smiling at FRANCIE. FRANCIE rosins his bow and begins to play a slow air.

Cut to:

31. Interior. Kitchen landing. Night.

A shadow of a large man in a bowler hat falls over MELANIE as she lies asleep, on the floor. Music is still being played in the kitchen. The bowler-hatted man looks thoughtfully down at the sleeping girl; it is her uncle, PHILIP FLOWER, recognisable at once from the wedding photograph.

Close-up UNCLE PHILIP's impassive face.

He bends over her and opens the kitchen door. The music dies away.

PHILIP

She ought to be in bed.

Cut to:

32. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Day.

Roses; red roses, fat and rich and blowing on the tree and wet with dew - red roses and green leaves and bristling thorns, rustling in the breeze, drenched with sunshine. MELANIE is waking up in a bower of roses.

Close-up MELANIE's face, as she wakes up, opens her eyes. She sits up; the roses retreat, flattening out and becoming two-dimensional. She rubs her eyes. The roses are back on the wallpaper, again.

Cut to:

33. Interior. Bathroom. Day.

Close-up a pair of false teeth, in a glass of water, on a smeared glass shelf.

MELANIE, in her pyjamas, stares fascinated at this apparition. There is a mysterious dripping noise.

The bathroom is a masterpiece of beastliness; a deep, old-fashioned basin, with a crack in it. A cake of household soap, with fingerprints on it. A grubby roller towel.

The lavatory chain has broken and been replaced with string, to which the original handle - ceramic, inscribed with the legend: *Pull* - has been reattached. No toilet paper, but, hanging from a loop of string, a number of sheets of the *Daily Mail* ripped into squares.

The bath stands on four clawed feet. Above the bath, a large geyser, the exposed metal of which has turned green, dripping greenish water, the source of the dripping noise. Beside the geyser, a box of matches. MELANIE picks up the matches; puts it down.

She puts the plug in the washbasin; the basin fills; a long red hair waves out on the water. She puts her hand in the water. She shivers. It is cold.

Cut to:

34. Interior. Kitchen. Day.

The kitchen door opens: FINN comes in, carrying a couple of bottles of milk. He wears his habitual paint-stained trousers, plus an unbuttoned pyjama jacket. He is accompanied by the bull terrier who, barking furiously, leaps up at MELANIE, who has been furtively exploring the kitchen. She jumps. The bull terrier barks and leaps up at her and licks her. She retreats behind the table, which is ready laid for breakfast.

Her hair is in tight plaits again.

FINN

You're the early bird! After the late night you had.

He clatters the milk bottles down on the table.

FINN

Curled up on the landing like love
locked out!

MELANIE

(Shy.)
I did like the music.

FINN

I carried you up to your bed.

MELANIE, embarrassed, averts her eyes from his naked breast; her eyes meet those of the painted dog hanging above the mantelpiece. She edges round the table to get a better look at it. The dog winks at her. She jumps again.

Now FINN can see she is wearing trousers - black corduroy trousers and a brown polo neck sweater, just what she'd wear for an autumn day at home. She looks gently, youthfully pretty. But FINN is horrified to see the trousers.

FINN

Oh no, no, no! You must go and
change your clothes. Now, this
minute.

MELANIE turns round, startled, inquiring, scarcely believing her ears.

FINN

He can't abide a woman in trousers.
He says a woman in trousers is a
sin against nature.

MELANIE

A sin against *what*?

FINN

Slip up and change into a skirt,
else he'll create something
terrible. Don't you want to make a
good impression on your first day?

MELANIE pauses with her hand on the doorknob. She is frosty and affronted, but anxious too. She does want to make a good impression.

MELANIE

Is there anything else I should
know about him?

FINN

Speak when you're spoken to. He

likes his women quiet.

MELANIE glances at the blackboard.

MELANIE

(Crisp.)

Yes.

FINN crouches, setting a bowl of chopped meat down for the dog. MELANIE reappears in the doorway, looking mutinous but wearing the same pleated skirt she was wearing the previous night. She used to wear it for school. She no longer looks like a teenager but like a schoolgirl. FINN takes in her appearance.

FINN

I see you've plaited your hair again.

She ignores this.

MELANIE

I saw his teeth in the bathroom.

FINN

He can take out his smile and keep it on a shelf, but, his bite is worse than his bark, isn't that so, old fellow?

The bull terrier barks briefly.

MELANIE

Mummy was scared of him, I think. He went to her wedding but he was *furious*, you can see it in the photograph.

FINN

She got away.

The hands of the cuckoo clock now stand at half past six. The cuckoo clock whirs and emits a stuffed cuckoo. A real cuckoo, stuffed. It goes 'cuckoo' once, then it disappears behind its front door. MELANIE is startled and entranced.

FINN

He made that. In his off hours.

MELANIE

It's as though he'd trapped a real cuckoo inside.

FINN

Didn't you know he made things?

Melanie shakes her head.

FINN

He's forced to sell the toys, to
feed us all. But he keeps the other
stuff to entertain himself.

He looks at her assessingly, comes to a sudden
decision, catches hold of her hand and pulls her
towards the door. She is startled.

FINN

Come and see.

MELANIE tugs her hand away but goes with him all the
same.

Cut to:

35. Interior. Toyshop. Day.

The parrot sits drowsily on his perch as FINN and
MELANIE dash through the toyshop.

PARROT

Gooday! Gooday!

FINN

Gooday to you, you old bugger.

They disappear down to the workshop. A big doll on
the counter turns its head sharply, as if to look
after them, or perhaps its head has just fallen
forward by chance. A clockwork mouse, its mechanism
probably activated by a sudden change in the
atmosphere, comes to life and scoots along the
counter, squeaking; it falls off and lies on its
back, its wheels whirring.

Cut to:

36. Interior. Workshop. Day.

FINN throws a light switch. MELANIE blinks in the
sudden light. The basement workshop is a long, white-
washed room running the entire length of the house.
At the far end, a window, caked with grime and
cobwebs, gives on to a coal hole; a little daylight
could filter in at an angle from an iron grating in
the pavement above it.

Underfoot, on the hard concrete floor, woodshavings.

A carpenter's bench runs along one wall, covered with
a huge variety of pieces of wooden toys and also of
limbs and so on in the process of being carpentered.
A selection of wood-turning tools, planes etc. A

decapitated head, hairless, eyeless, featureless, is immediately noticeable. Next to it, a jar of eyes.

There is a painting bench, splattered with paint, holding tins of paint, brushes in jam jars, etc. Above it, a shelf of freshly painted toys waiting to dry. FINN picks up a painted bird and hands it to MELANIE.

FINN

I'm the sorcerer's apprentice in
this establishment.

MELANIE takes hold of the bird, caresses it.

FINN

I paint the feathers and the fur
and the skin but Himself breathes
the life in.

From the walls hang jumping jacks, dancing bears and bunches of carved painted limbs - arms and legs, also puppets, either fully completed or partially assembled, some almost as tall as MELANIE -- they hang from both walls and from hooks in the ceiling. Some are armless, some legless, some headless, some fully painted with wigs, some only partially painted without wigs. It is a strange sight. Also from the walls hang many brightly coloured masks of wild animals and birds.

There are also several kinds of curious machines with wheels and pulleys, and other, archaic-looking machines - planes, saws, etc.

There is also a lot of wood, with a hatchet stuck in it. The atmosphere is that of a toy-maker's shop, in a somewhat sinister fairy story.

FINN takes her arm and draws her down the room, away from the window, towards a flat, large, box-like construction, hitherto concealed in the murk; it reaches nearly to the ceiling. He flicks a switch in the wall and the lights in the back part of the workroom come on, revealing the theatre. FINN lets go of MELANIE's arm and advances towards it.

Unbeknown to her, he has donned a mask - the mask of a bird with a fierce beak, a bird of prey. She jumps once again to see it.

The bird-man stands before the theatre and bows.

FINN

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and
girls, welcome to Flower's
Marionette Microcosm.

He pulls a cord and the curtains open. No scenery except curtains at the back; on the floor of the stage is collapsed, in a tangle of strings, the ballerina doll from the pre-title scene; but the doll is naked, all bare wood and visible joints and dishevelled black wig. MELANIE is upset by this spectacle but tries hard to conceal it. FINN notices, however.

The bird-man cocks its head to one side; it pulls the cord and closes the theatre curtains again.

FINN

Don't fret. It's only his dream.
Dreams aren't catching, not like
measles.

MELANIE

I didn't know about the puppets.
It's a lot to take in, all at once.

He turns off the light in that part of the workroom. They retreat back to the bunches of dismembered limbs.

Suddenly, FINN streaks off down the workshop in a series of wonderful cartwheels. MELANIE, amazed, looks up; he lands on the painting bench, takes off the mask with a flourish. She tries to smile but cannot. Her face crumples.

MELANIE

I want to go home.

FINN

(Heavy irony.)
Home is where the heart is.

MELANIE

I can't go home because there's no
home left.

A great booming overhead; the gong. MELANIE jumps. FINN is halfway to the stair already.

FINN

Shift yourself, girlie!

Cut to:

37. Interior. Kitchen landing. Day.

A man blocks the head of the stairway, with the light behind him, so only a great block of shadow is visible. He is holding a round watch. The stair lights come on. UNCLE PHILIP is visible, a big, big man, impassive of face, in white shirtsleeves, a waistcoat.

PHILIP

Improperly dressed, young Finn.

He makes as if to aim a blow with the back of his hand at FINN. FINN seizes his jacket from the coat rack, hastily buttons it. PHILIP looks over FINN's shoulder at MELANIE.

MELANIE

I'm Melanie.

PHILIP

You're late for breakfast.

MELANIE's point-of-view shot through the door, in the kitchen, everybody else - MARGARET, FRANCIÉ, even VICTORIA -- sit stiffly around the table, waiting, looking like waxworks, in a terrible morning silence.

Cut to:

38. Interior. Kitchen. Day.

Breakfast is just coming to an end; knives and forks are being set together on plates greased and curded with bacon and fried eggs. UNCLE PHILIP, a vast, moustached, impressive figure at the head of the table, has a huge white linen napkin tucked into his collar; he seizes this napkin, tears it off, throws it in his plate.

PHILIP

This morning's plan of action, is as follows: the big girl to stay with her auntie in the shop, to learn the price of things and where they're kept, the child to stay with them and occupy herself whilst getting into as little trouble as possible and -

JONATHON scrapes his chair.

JONATHON

(Greatly daring.)

May I go and work on my boat, please?

PHILIP casts his eye upon the boat on the mantelpiece.

PHILIP

That's plastic. You made it from a kit. Not your own creation. Try harder.

JONATHON sits back, shamed.

PHILIP

He'll come with me. See how a real
craftsman works. Downstairs in five
minutes.

PHILIP exits. The door slams. FINN lights a cigarette,
Sweet Afton.

JONATHON

He didn't ask our names.

FINN

He knows your names.

VICTORIA dissolves in tears. MARGARET cuddles her.

MELANIE

She's not accustomed to being
ignored.

FINN

She'll have to learn.

MELANIE

(Faintly.)
What about school?

The elder brother and sister exchange troubled looks.

FRANCIE

(Gently.)
Too late in the term to start.

Cut to:

39. Interior. Shop. Day.

Montage of selected toys - clockwork toys; painted
horses on wheels, elaborately dressed dolls; dolls'
houses.

MARGARET turns the key that sets in motion a cage of
clockwork singing birds.

More toys - a jumping jack, a tambourine. MARGARET
produces a wooden model of two men hammering at an
anvil. She activates it for VICTORIA. VICTORIA
activates it for herself, laughing.

MELANIE climbs on a chair, to dust the high shelves
with a feather duster. A jumping jack hanging from a
nail is activated by her activities, or activates
itself; at any rate, the grinning wooden figure
contrives to hitch her skirt up over her knees.
Although there is nobody to spy on her, MELANIE is
discomfited.

Cut to:

40. Interior. Workroom. Day.

PHILIP lifts down the jar of eyes from the shelf and selects a brown one. Holding it in his right hand, he inserts it in the wooden head he holds in his left hand. FINN, at the painting bench, is painting spots on a wooden bird.

JONATHON has been sweeping up; he props the broom against the wall.

PHILIP
Come here, young feller.

JONATHON edges towards him. PHILIP puts down the head and picks up a chisel.

PHILIP
Ever seen one of these?

JONATHON
No, sir.

PHILIP
Sir is it? Mark that, young Finn.
Here -

PHILIP gives JONATHON the chisel. He gestures to the carpenter's bench.

PHILIP
Here's a bit of wood. Try it!

JONATHON nervously attacks a piece of wood with a chisel.

PHILIP
There. See? Wood's got life in it.
Not like plastic.

JONATHON gingerly makes his first incision. FINN watches with a touch of irony. The chisel slips and cuts JONATHON a little. He doesn't cry out but says 'oh' soundlessly. PHILIP looks smug.

PHILIP
Butterfingers. Wood's got life in
it. Look.

He takes hold of the wood and gently touches it with his chisel. It sprouts a twig from the incision; the twig sprouts a leaf.

Cut to:

41. Interior. Toyshop. Day.

The doorbell rings as customer leaves. Next to the blackboard lies the hammering men toy; a hammer has been damaged. MELANIE rings up seven pounds and ten shillings on the till. She looks down at the counter, which is a mass of toys removed from their boxes and tissue paper.

She starts packing up; she begins with the gigantic and beautiful Noah's ark, with all the animals displayed round about it -- lions, tigers, zebras, kangaroos, etc., two of each. The ark itself is beautifully and brightly painted, too. She picks up the animals, stows them away inside the ark, smiling and laughing at their charm. Her hands look very big.

She peeks at the price tag on the mast and is startled to see it reads: 'Seventy five guineas'.

MELANIE

Gosh!

PHILIP emerges from the doorway.

PHILIP

It's a fair price for the work. A man must charge a fair price. That's economics.

He walks round the front of the counter.

PHILIP

And you be careful with them things. They're your bread and butter now.

He picks up the damaged toy tenderly.

PHILIP

Did you do this?

MELANIE

Victoria -

PHILIP

What? Did you let that child play with one of my toys? I don't like children playing with my toys.

(He addresses
the broken toy.)

Have to fix you up with another hammer, won't we. Give her a saucepan to play with, that'll do.

Cut to:

42. Interior. Bathroom. Night.

VICTORIA stands expectantly beside the bath as MARGARET, equipped with a taper, carefully lights the geyser. Bang! VICTORIA squeals, applauds. MELANIE watches. MARGARET turns on the spigot, hot water trickles out. She turns to MELANIE, as if to say: it's easy!

MELANIE starts to unbutton VICTORIA's dress.

VICTORIA
Auntie undress me!

MARGARET looks at MELANIE with inquiry in her eyes. MELANIE laughing, gets out of the way.

Cut to:

43. Exterior. Front of Toyshop. Day.

Close-up a card hanging on the shop door. It reads: *'Half day closing, Wednesday'*.

FRANCIE and MARGARET stand at the first-floor window looking out, smiling down at the street below, as FINN and MELANIE, MELANIE in her school raincoat but with her hair flowing down her back, walk off together along the pavement - a considerable amount of pavement between them, but all the same, together. The bull terrier follows them for a little way.

FRANCIE and MARGARET turn away from the window, towards one another, still smiling.

Cut to:

44. Exterior. Park. Day.

As woodsy, neglected and romantic a park as may be. Uncared-for bushes and shrubs; tall grass, bracken, gorse.

FINN takes MELANIE's hand, helps her over a fallen tree-stump blooming with yellow fungi.

MELANIE
I didn't think London would be like
this.

She jumps. A stone Pan, with pipes in hand, is leering at her through the brambles. She drops FINN's hand as if stung.

The wood is full of statues - dryads, nymphs, Egyptian figures, Victorian philanthropists - any and every kind of statue, overgrown with moss, ivy and lichen,

standing among the brambles.

FINN

A hundred years ago, the Queen of
England threw a big party and
everyone who was still there at
cockcrow turned to stone.

They pass beneath the boughs of a scrubby tree
(hawthorn, covered with red berries) and find
themselves on a relatively open hillside, where the
mist is gathering. It is already growing dark. Out of
the mist and shadows emerges a rococo plinth, daubed
with vandals' initials and pierced hearts, etc. The
plinth is surrounded by stinging nettles, and bushes
and it is empty of its statue.

FINN

Now she's the Queen of the Waste
Land.

Fallen from the plinth, among the nettles, is a lavish
statue of Queen Victoria, broken in two at the waist,
overgrown with lichen, muddy. FINN kneels beside the
top half, takes out a grubby handkerchief, wipes away
some of the mud from Queen Victoria's face. A little
stream of water runs out of her eye.

MELANIE

She's a fallen woman, poor thing.

They look extraordinarily lyrical and romantic in the
misty park, surrounded by bare trees, the red-haired
boy and the dark-haired girl. MELANIE looks at FINN in
contemptuous challenge.

MELANIE

What are you waiting for?

FINN kisses her. FINN puts his tongue in her mouth.
MELANIE leaps backward. She slaps his face. Hard.

FINN

(Genuinely puzzled.)
What was *that* in aid of?

MELANIE

Get away from me...

She thrusts her hands in her pockets, stamps off
across the park.

FINN

You don't know the way home!

MELANIE tosses her head, strides onwards without a
backward look.

FINN follows the rapidly departing MELANIE across the field, more slowly, crestfallen. He kicks a tuft of nettles.

FINN

Damn ... damn ...

Cut to:

45. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Night.

MELANIE flings her coat on the bed. She hasn't bothered to turn on the light. She throws herself down on the bed, thrusts her face into the pillow. Her shoulders start to heave.

She is laughing. She digs Edward Bear out from the covers.

MELANIE

Do you think he did it right,
Edward Bear? Do you think he knows
... how to do it?

Having cheered herself up, she now sits up.

At the heart of one of the roses on the wallpaper, something gleams.

Holding the bear, MELANIE leans forward. She sees a hole in the wall. She applies her eye to it.

MELANIE's point-of-view shot: the two, neat beds. The square of carpet. A chair, with an open fiddle case on it.

A painting, hanging on the wall.

She squirms, to get a better view.

Close-up the painting. It is of MELANIE, it is a nude, done with an emblematic stiff chasteness; she is hung about with black hair and has a black ribbon tied round her upper arm. She holds a red apple on the outstretched palm of her hand.

FINN comes into MELANIE's field of vision, walking on his hands.

She gets up soundlessly, pushes the chair against the wall and hangs her cardigan over the back, thus concealing the hole.

She is half-furious, half-amused, muttering admonitions under her breath.

Cut to:

46. Interior. Kitchen. Day.

The bull terrier nudges the kitchen door ajar.

PHILIP and MARGARET are alone. MARGARET's hair is pinned up. MARGARET wears the same drab black dress she wore in the opening sequence. She bows her neck submissively before PHILIP and he ceremoniously places round her neck the silver collar she wore in the opening sequence. Her head jerks up; the collar is so tight and so constricting she has to hold her head high while she is wearing it. It is a barbaric-looking object, studded with precious stones. It looks very old.

Cut to:

47. Interior. Workshop. Night.

A poster advertises '*Performance Tonight*'.

MARGARET descends the ladder last. She wears her black dress and the collar. The children stand in a subdued group, all very neat, clean and smart. Three extra chairs have been provided in front of the theatre, whence emerge bangs and thumps. MARGARET shepherds them to their places. FRANCIE stands in front of the theatre, fiddle under chin.

FINN emerges from between the curtains tense and preoccupied. He turns off the main lights. Now the workshop is lit only by the footlights of the theatre. FINN ducks back between the curtains.

FRANCIE tunes up: then waits, fiddle under chin. Bow extended. PHILIP opens the curtains and steps out. He wears a dinner jacket.

PHILIP

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, welcome.

MARGARET applauds; she gestures to JONATHON and MELANIE to applaud. They do so.

PHILIP

Tonight we celebrate the grand opening of the winter season of Flower's Marionette Microcosm. We present an original drama entitled '*An Artist's Passion*'.

He disappears backwards through the curtains. FRANCIE begins to play something very romantic.

Cut to:

48. Interior. Theatre. Night. 'Living Statue.'

FRANCIE is playing beautifully.

When the curtains open, it is as though a window has opened on to another place - an enchanted place.

On the stage, it is a night of radiant moonlight. The backcloth is painted with the flowers of a magical garden, the most glorious and unlikely flowers; FINN has had a field day - blue roses the size of cabbages, purple tiger lilies.

Centre stage is a cupola, in white, fancy, lace-like ironwork, twined with glorious roses, on which hover a couple of gauzy butterflies. The cupola contains a plinth on which stands the figure of a young woman in a romantic white dress, white stockings, white ballet slippers - a garden nymph out of a ballet; and she is covered in wet white, to simulate marble or plaster. She is a puppet pretending to be a garden statue.

The only thing wrong with her is, she has no face; it is a blank. Applause over.

Interior. Auditorium. Night

MARGARET applauds furiously. She nudges MELANIE and JONATHON to applaud, too. MELANIE is confused and upset by this faceless girl in the garden but, at MARGARET's urging, she applauds, without enthusiasm.

VICTORIA

Why hasn't the lady got any eyes?

MARGARET hurriedly pops a piece of chocolate into VICTORIA's mouth.

Interior. Theatre. Night.

A young man enters, wearing a white smock and floppy bow tie; he scares the butterflies, they flutter away. He is an artist and carries a big palette in one hand, a paint brush in the other.

PHILIP

(Out of vision.)

The creator adds the last vital tints to his masterpiece.

The ARTIST is tall enough to be able to pass his hand lightly over the nymph's empty face; when he draws his hand away, she has eyes, nose, a rosebud mouth - all complete. A real face - but everything is still white and stiff; like a death mask.

The ARTIST dips his brush in the red on his palette and applies the tip of his brush to her lips. Then he stands back. He releases hold of the palette and brush, which whisk off up into the pies. (FINN is operating the artist, whose movements are somewhat clumsier than the nymph's.)

The face of the nymph and her exposed limbs flood with colour and her eyelashes flutter; but then are still again. She makes no movement. Hand on heart, the ARTIST mimes adoration.

PHILIP

(Out of view.)

How can the Artist transmit life to
that which is his own Creation and
expresses the very depth of his
being?

The ARTIST takes the statue in his arms, lifts it bodily from the plinth and kisses it on the lips.

Her eyelids flutter. Her bosom heaves. Her lips part. She awakes. She runs her fingers through her plaster or marble hair - it turns back into black ringlets that she shakes out delightedly. She stretches out her arms, flexes her fingers; she stretches her legs, points her toes.

The ARTIST sets her down lightly on the ground, to a renewed wave of applause from the auditorium; they begin to dance, an ecstatic pas de deux among the moonlit flowers.

The gauzy butterflies return.

Close-up MELANIE watching, childishly sucking her thumb; she is obscurely distressed by this girl in white, in the moonlit garden.

The pas de deux concludes in a tremendous arabesque for the nymph; there is a tumult of applause. As the applause dies away, the ARTIST turns to his creation and sinks to his knees. He raises his hands; he beseeches her. She hovers en pointe, unsure of his intentions; she retreats, prettily confused. He turns.

FRANCIE strikes a moving chord. The ARTIST plucks, out of the air, a golden ring - a big, thick, chunky wedding ring.

Interior. Auditorium. Night.

MARGARET coughs; she hastily covers her mouth with her hand, revealing her wedding ring.

PHILIP

(Out of vision.)

The Artist offers his creation his heart, his hand, his very being.

Interior. Theatre. Night.

The ARTIST offers the nymph the ring.

She laughs musically. She shakes her head flirtatiously. He rises. He stamps his foot and beseeches again. She shakes her head emphatically, pulls a rose off the pergola and throws it at him. It strikes him in the face. She laughs soundlessly, then runs off and crouches behind the plinth. The ARTIST follows; she darts off, to crouch in a corner of the stage, still laughing.

PHILIP

(Out of vision.)

Each man kills the thing he loves.

The ARTIST reaches beneath his smock and draws out a knife. The blade of the knife catches the light and flashes. FRANCIE plays a menacing phrase.

Interior. Auditorium. Night.

The flashing blade reflects on JONATHON's glasses, that flash with that light, too.

VICTORIA whimpers and buries her head in MARGARET's lap. MARGARET strokes her hair.

MELANIE is sitting up very straight, her hands clenched in her lap; her eyes glisten with tension.

Interior. Theatre. Night.

Knife raised, the ARTIST runs towards the nymph. The nymph mimics fear almost too well: there is a sense of real danger. FRANCIE repeats the menacing phrase.

The nymph runs around the stage; the ARTIST traps her with his arms. She throws herself at his feet, pleading for mercy. He raises the knife. He brings it down.

Interior. Auditorium. Night.

Close-up MELANIE, involuntarily closing her eyes.

Interior. Theatre. Night.

FINN

(Out of vision.)

Whoops!

The knife, which is perfectly real, perfectly sharp, has, by bizarre accident and FINN's clumsiness - cut through one of the strings that uphold the nymph.

What happens next happens in slow motion as the girl turns back into a doll.

First, one arm drops to the floor with a dull, wooden thud - the hand splats out and disarticulates.

She jerks about on her strings; PHILIP is trying to get her away, but her dress is tangled up in the pergola.

The ARTIST jerks around on his strings; FINN is trying to disentangle the artist - and, in doing so, he slices through another string, so that the other arm drops. Then - Bang! The torso; and, as the puppets wrestle, her head falls, too. And shatters. It turns out the head is made of porcelain.

There are fragments of shattered porcelain all over the stage floor; a pair of blue marbles, the eyes - pearly false teeth - a delicate little ear - masses and masses of silky black hair.

The ARTIST's arms drop to his sides. He sags forward on his strings, completely inhuman looking, a doll once more.

From aloft, clear and irrepressible, comes the sound of FINN's laughter. The tension eases immediately; the audience rustles with relief.

Interior. Auditorium. Night.

MELANIE has opened her eyes, unclenched her fists, smiles.

VICTORIA removes her head from MARGARET's lap.

Then MELANIE's smile is replaced by a look of pure horror.

FINN's laughter modulates into a scream. He falls down from the flies, seems to fall endlessly, his long red hair drifting after him as if he were falling through water, somersaulting as he falls.

He lands with a crash, on top of the dismembered puppet and lies there, looking completely dislocated. The only sound is his terrible sobbing attempt to breathe.

FRANCIE and MARGARET both knew that something like

this was inevitable one day, but are as if transfixed.

Except that tears flood soundlessly down MELANIE's cheeks. The children are very distressed. VICTORIA wails. JONATHON, jerked into reality, claps his hand to his mouth. MELANIE half-rises.

MARGARET tries and tries but cannot bend her head down to comfort VICTORIA because of the collar. Tears splash on to VICTORIA's face. MELANIE turns towards them as FRANCIE puts his arm round them both. PHILIP comes on stage, in dinner jacket and bow tie. He is straightening the bow tie. He looks down at prone FINN.

PHILIP

Won't use him to work the puppets
again.

FINN remains motionless. PHILIP looks out at the audience; suddenly he points to MELANIE.

PHILIP

I'll use you instead of a puppet,
Miss.

MELANIE is startled but doesn't appreciate fully the implications of this. FRANCIE and MARGARET are horrified and distressed. FINN is the most horrified of all. He moans loudly. He struggles to sit half-upright, blood trickles from the corner of his mouth. He collapses again.

PHILIP

(almost to himself)
After all, why shouldn't the girl
do something for her keep. God
knows she eats enough. She's not
too big, she won't be out of scale.
(Out loud; firmly.)
That's settled.

Cut to:

49. Interior. Girls' room. Night.

VICTORIA is having a bad dream; MELANIE is cuddling her in her arms in bed. She wears her cardigan round her shoulders. As VICTORIA quietens down, MELANIE sees a glimmer of candlelight through the hole in the wall.

MELANIE settles VICTORIA down and tiptoes to the wall. MELANIE's point-of-view shot: FINN, very pale, lies on the bed, looking like 'The Death of Chatterton'.

FRANCIE in shirtsleeves has just lit a candle and is

cupping the flame with his hand to protect it as it flickers into life. After a moment, FRANCIE dribbles melted wax from the candle on to the floorboards and fixes the candle into it next to FINN's bed.

FINN's bed is banked by many, many lighted candles. He hasn't moved. FRANCIE, now fully, rather elaborately dressed in his best suit, stands at the foot of the bed, tuning his fiddle.

We see MELANIE watching through the spy-hole.

Cut to:

50. Interior. Brothers' bedroom. Night.

FRANCIE begins to play.

At first, FINN does not move. Then he shudders convulsively jerking and twisting. The candle flames shiver, creating grotesque shadows. FRANCIE goes on playing. FINN quietens down, stops struggling, rolls over, knuckling his eyes.

The fiddle music comes to an end.

Cut to:

51. Interior. Kitchen. Day.

The entire family are assembled around the table, having tea. PHILIP, especially, is making a hearty meal from the spread - shrimps, a bowl of mustard and cress, bread and butter ... and drinking enthusiastically from his tea cup.

MARGARET wears her black dress and the big, heavy, jewelled collar and can only eat with the utmost difficulty. She looks wonderful, beautiful and strange as some pagan deity, but one shrimp alone lies on her plate and she pulls off its whiskers one by one. She tries a swallow of tea, and chokes. FINN darts up, pats her on the back.

PHILIP watches her, relishing her discomfort.

MARGARET finishes peeling her shrimp, then slips it to VICTORIA.

PHILIP

Ain't you having a bite more to eat,
Margaret?

She looks at him with wounded eyes. There is a terrible silence. FINN is deathly pale.

PHILIP

Pour us more tea, Margaret.

MARGARET quivering with nerves, slops tea into the saucer of the cup she passes to PHILIP.

PHILIP

Live with the Irish; live like pigs.

MARGARET makes a wild, conciliatory gesture that knocks over a cup. It spills tea all over the tablecloth. PHILIP clicks his tongue against his teeth.

PHILIP

Tut, tut.

FINN

Excuse me.

He gets up, limps out, in very bad shape, still. MELANIE watches him leave. Her face is full of anguish.

Cut to:

52. Interior. Toyshop. Day.

A very elegant woman, who looks like Barbara Goalen, the great Fifties model, in a winter white-tweed suit and hat, a startling apparition in the cobwebby shop, is having the Noah's Ark packed in a box.

She is leaning on a furled umbrella; she looks bored. MELANIE, packing the Noah's Ark, steals the elegant woman a sidelong look; her mother looked like that. The elegant lady does not like to be looked at by MELANIE, who is lank-haired and grubby, in her worn, grubby skirt and sweater, her knee socks, her lace-ups.

MELANIE ties the string and strikes the cash register with a clang. It shows seventy-five guineas.

MELANIE

There!

The lady takes the huge parcel in her arms; she balances on her high heels, opening the door while grubby MELANIE watches ironically. So does the parrot. JONATHON is lurking in the basement doorway, waiting for the lady to be gone, full of suppressed excitement.

LADY

(Ironically.)

Thanks!

The doorbell clangs behind her; JONATHON rushes into

the shop. He hands MELANIE a beautiful toy boat, not a three-master but a very fashionable sailing boat. He is bursting with pride. MELANIE admires the boat.

PHILIP looms up behind them.

PHILIP

Put it in the window. It ought to fetch at least ten guineas.

JONATHON

I'm earning my keep, sir!

PHILIP

Not yet, you're not.

He brushes JONATHON aside and descends into basement. JONATHON lingers, hurt. He picks the boat up, doubtfully. MELANIE scribbles Fifteen Guineas on a price ticket and ties it on to the mast.

JONATHON reads the ticket, looks up, smiles at MELANIE.

Cut to:

53. Interior. Kitchen. Night.

MELANIE is unfolding lengths of white chiffon from a paper bag on the table. Other paper bags lie on the table.

MARGARET dips into a paper bag, produces an armful of flowers - real flowers, roses and carnations - and throws them over MELANIE. MELANIE spins round and round, unfolding the chiffon, flowers whirling, and emerges in a chiffon tunic, crowned with flowers, her black hair flowing everywhere, laughing. Looking wonderful, and like a Victorian painting of a nymph. In soft focus.

We see JONATHON standing in the doorway.

JONATHON

Uncle Philip wants Melanie downstairs straightaway.

MELANIE comes back into hard focus. The crown of flowers is obviously artificial. MELANIE is sulky.

MELANIE

Can I keep my shoes on? I'll need my coat to go downstairs, it's freezing away from the fire -

Cut to:

54. Interior. Workshop. Night.

The entire workshop is brightly lit. The curtains of the theatre are open; FINN is onstage, in overalls, surrounded by paints, painting a backcloth showing a brightly coloured sunset over the sea.

On the carpenter's bench, a big, ominously sheeted shape. PHILIP squats on the floor with a mound of white feathers on a spread sheet before him. He is sorting the feathers into smaller piles. There are feathers and down caught in his moustache.

MELANIE, flowers in her hair, huddled in her school raincoat, bare feet in sensible shoes stands sullenly in front of him.

JONATHON goes and stands beside PHILIP. PHILIP ignores him.

PHILIP

Take off that wrap.

She does so. The only sound is the slap, slap of FINN's paint brush as he fills in an area of the sky.

PHILIP

You're well built; how old are you?

MELANIE

Sixteen. Well, nearly sixteen.

PHILIP

I wanted my Leda to be a little girl.
Leda and the swan. See?

He gestures towards the sheeted shape on the carpenter's table.

PHILIP

Big swan, little Leda. But you're a
big girl. Do you have periods?

MELANIE is aghast. FINN continues painting, but mutters:

FINN

What's that to do with swans?

JONATHON moves away from PHILIP, scared, anticipating blows.

PHILIP

(Equably.)
Keep your mouth shut, Finn. I'll
talk to her how I please.

FINN suspends painting.

FINN

I can say what I like.

PHILIP looks at him thoughtfully, stroking his moustache.

PHILIP

Oh no you can't. Get on with the painting.

MELANIE

It's all right, Finn.

PHILIP looks smugly at FINN. FINN looks mutinous, then defeated. FINN picks up his brush and carries on painting.

PHILIP

(To MELANIE.)

I suppose you'll do. Turn round.

(MELANIE turns round.)

Smile.

(MELANIE smiles.)

Not like that. Show your teeth.

(MELANIE smiles and

shows her teeth.)

You've got a bit of a look of your mother. None of your father, thank God. Should have seen his face when I turned up at the wedding. Thought I'd come to drag her away with me. But I knew she was gone for good. You've got a fair bit of your mother in you, though.

Momentarily, he seems almost sentimental and MELANIE is bewildered, a little scared, but he soon snaps out of it and orders briskly.

PHILIP

Walk up and down.

MELANIE clumps up and down in her tunic and her lace-up shoes.

PHILIP

Not very graceful, are you. Finn O'Connor!

(FINN looks around.)

Teach her how to shift herself.

(FINN stops painting, staring at PHILIP.)

You used to fancy yourself at the light fantastic.

(FINN stares.)

Get on with it.

MELANIE looks from PHILIP to FINN, puzzled: she starts to move towards the theatre.

PHILIP

Not down here. You'll spoil the set.
Upstairs.

He goes back to sorting the feathers. FINN lays his paint brush across the tin of paint.

Cut to:

55. Interior. Brothers' bedroom. Night.

They are shy and nervous with one another.

FINN opens a drawer in the chest of drawers, takes out a shell - a beautiful, rosy pink, tropical shell.

MELANIE

Where did you get that?

She looks in the drawer. It is crammed with precious shells, lumps of coral, pieces of glittering minerals.

FINN

We brought them with us from over
the sea.

He sets the shell down on an empty strip of linoleum.

FINN

That's your beach. This is the
story. Leda walks by the shore,
gathering shells.

(He indicates
the shell.)

Night comes on. She hears the
beating of great wings and sees the
approach of the swan. She runs away
but it bears down and casts her to
the ground. Curtain.

MELANIE

Is that all?

FINN

(With irony.)

Ah, you should see the swan! His
masterpiece. Now, walk along the
beach and stoop to pick up the
shell.

MELANIE takes her shoes off. As she does so, a wave breaks on the linoleum, swishing around the legs of

the furniture.

Cut to:

56. Interior. Beach. Dusk.

The furniture remains, huge and outlandish, on a desolate expanse of wet sand. MELANIE, watched by FINN, walks along, bends down, retrieves the shell. She is nervous and walks clumsily.

Neither she nor FINN give any indication they are not still in the bedroom.

FINN

That won't do. Make it flow.

He walks along the imaginary beach, but he is no longer graceful; he hobbles. He stops short.

FINN

Try again.

She walks a little more gracefully.

FINN

That's a bit better. Now do it again. I'll be the swan.

She walks gracefully along the imaginary beach. He stands on tiptoe, raising and lowering his arms. He is purposefully grotesque.

FINN

Swish, swish, that's the beating of my wings. When you hear that, you put a spurt on.

He limps along, beating his arms in the air. She looks behind her, runs a few steps. She can't help giggling.

FINN

He'll turn you out if you don't do what he wants, Melanie!

(Sobered, she runs.)

You run, you stumble and I bear you to the ground with my enormous pinions.

She runs, she stumbles, she falls on the sand, she opens her arms to receive FINN as he does a neatly choreographed dancer's fall on top of her. She welcomes him.

FINN lies with his face pressed into MELANIE's shoulder, so that we cannot see his expression. His

hand lies on the sand. She picks it up, examines it
- calloused, paint stained.

She caresses and kisses the hand, very tenderly.

Cut to:

57. Interior. Brothers' room. Night, as before.

FINN has vanished.

MELANIE slowly sits up, angry, hurt and puzzled. She looks round the room. She looks under the bed. Smoke drifts out of the keyhole of the cupboard. She opens the cupboard door. A suit hangs on a hanger; some white shirts on a shelf on top of the cupboard, his head and body concealed by the clothing. His hand comes out and taps ash on to the floor from his cigarette. MELANIE inspects the soles of his feet.

MELANIE

Finn, there's a splinter in your
left foot.

(Silence.)

If you don't let me take the
splinter out, it will fester.

FINN

(Muffled by clothing.)

Go away.

MELANIE

(A wail.)

What did I do wrong?

FINN parts the shirts and looks out. He is angry and
mutinous.

FINN

I won't do it because he wants me
to do it, even if I want to do it.

MELANIE

Do what?

(Pause.)

Oh, I see.

FINN

You're only a young thing.

MELANIE

(Stung.)

You're not so old yourself!

FINN

Living with him put years on me.

He pulls the shirts together again, hiding himself. The agitation of the coat hangers disturbs the paintings on the top shelf; they slither to the ground.

A formal portrait.

It shows PHILIP, naked but for his bowler, sitting in the same pose as the white bull terrier in the picture in the kitchen, wearing MARGARET's silver collar round his neck.

A leash is attached to this collar. MARGARET stands, holding the leash, looking spectacular - brilliant green cloak around her shoulders, on her head, a spiky crown. MELANIE directs a remark at the smoking wardrobe.

MELANIE

Wishful thinking.

FINN makes no response. She stows the picture away on top of the wardrobe. She picks up another; it is the nude of herself that she only glimpsed through the spy-hole. It remains unfinished.

MELANIE

You never finished it.

FINN parts the shirts again, not angry now, but melancholy.

FINN

That was wishful thinking, too.

MELANIE touches her own painted breast.

MELANIE

All the same, I'd like to keep it
... in my room ... if you don't mind
... There aren't any mirrors in the
house.

FINN looks at her directly and, after a moment, he smiles.

There is a sudden flurry of rain on the bedroom window.

Distracted from one another, both glance at the window, the incipient tenderness between them evaporates.

Cut to:

58. Exterior. Square. Day.

It is raining. Rain lashes against the shop window. In the shop window, fireworks are piled in decorative piles: also many more masks than usual are hanging.

In the square garden, a huge bonfire is under process of construction; chairs, tables etc. stick out from the pile of rubbish.

Two shouting kids trundle past the window with a limp, floppy guy dragging behind them in an orange box fitted up with pram wheels. They hold newspapers over their heads to keep the rain off.

PHILIP, rain dripping off the brim of his bowler, crosses the road to reach the shop. The kids accost him.

FIRST CHILD

Penny for the guy, guv -

PHILIP brushes past brusquely, jangling the shop-door bell.

SECOND CHILD

Mean bastard.

Cut to:

59. Interior. Kitchen. Night.

The blackboard reads *'Special performance. Tonight. MELANIE's debut.'*

Towels are warming over the fireguard. MARGARET removes them.

Cut to:

60. Interior. Bathroom. Night.

MELANIE sits in the bath. She scrubs her elbows vigorously with a nail brush; then she raises her left leg and scrubs the hard skin behind her heel. Then the right leg. Then she plunges right under the water and comes up streaming and gasping. She has brought her portrait with her and propped it against the geyser. She scrutinizes the nude image earnestly - there isn't a hint of her earlier, dreamy self-obsession; now she really wants to know what she looks like. The geyser has done its work well. The window has misted up with condensation.

MARGARET brings in the towels. She holds a towel open for MELANIE to step into, as if she were a little girl. MELANIE raises herself in the bath; the portrait tips up and tumbles into the water. MELANIE snatches it up; the colours are running, her features are

already blurring. She looks up at MARGARET with a frightened face. MARGARET quickly scrawls with her finger in the condensation on the window: '- Silly -'
She envelops MELANIE in a towel and rubs her briskly, drying her at the same time, tickling her to make her laugh.

Cut to:

61. Interior. Theatre. Night.

We are inside the curtains, onstage.

The stage is heaped with real sand, shells, starfish etc. The backcloth is painted with a lugubrious sunset.

PHILIP and MELANIE are onstage. She is dressed and ready, with flowers in her long, loose hair. PHILIP nods. He climbs the ladder to the catwalk.

MELANIE kicks at the sand with a bare foot. She looks upwards; she sees FINN, foreshortened, squatting on the catwalk above the stage. He does not smile at her. Next to him, resting on the catwalk, is a huge bundle, wrapped in a sheet.

PHILIP
(Voice over.)

Music!

Outside the curtains, FRANCIE begins to play selections from *Swan Lake*.

The stage lights go off leaving a brownish gloom. Then MELANIE is transfixed by a brilliant spotlight; she blinks and jumps.

PHILIP
(Hissing.)

Get started!

The curtains open but MELANIE can see nothing beyond the stage because of the lights. PHILIP, overhead and unseen coughs. MELANIE spreads out her skirt, bends, picks up a shell, puts it in her skirts.

PHILIP
(Reciting over.)
'Leda gathers shells by the shore
in approaching dusk. Little does
she know that Almighty Jove has
picked her out to be his mate.'

Applause.

Aloft, PHILIP beats on the metal gong which has been

transferred above. Startled, MELANIE drops her shell.

PHILIP

'The sound of thunder announces the presence of the majestic visitant.'

Enter the swan, lowered down from above. MELANIE giggles in spite of herself then clamps her hand over her mouth.

MARGARET smiles, to encourage MELANIE. MARGARET's point-of-view shot: from the audience, it looks as though a beautiful, very stylized swan is descending in a piece of clever stage magic. But, from MELANIE's point-of-view shot, there is no illusion.

The swan is an egg-shaped sphere, painted white, coated with glued-on feathers. The neck lolls comically. The wings are like those of model aeroplanes, again coated with glued-on feathers. Its black, rubber legs are tucked up underneath it.

MELANIE remembers to mime astonishment.

The swan's feet come down and it lands on them with a thud. Its head points towards MELANIE. MELANIE is frozen in her mime of horror; she is fascinated by the ingenuity and vaguely suggestive ugliness of the swan. The swan's wings heat steadily up and down, disturbing MELANIE's hair. A rose blows away.

PHILIP

(Voice over.)

'Leda attempts to flee her heavenly suitor but his beauty and majesty bear her to the ground.'

The swan's beating wings blow the sand around. MELANIE remembers to run a few steps; she looks back - splat, splat! on its rubber feet; the swan is following her.

Up above, PHILIP, smiling narrowly, is directing the swan's movements.

PHILIP

'The innocent girl's thighs tremble. Her loins melt. She falls.'

MELANIE's point-of-view shot: a white, monstrous shape is advancing upon her in the flourey glare of the spotlight. The light is in her eyes and she cannot see it properly. The swan's head rears up and towards her.

MELANIE tries to run and falls. The screen is filled with the image of the great, beating wings.

PHILIP
(Voice over.)
'Almighty Jove in the form of a swan
wreaks his will.'

MELANIE screams. Roaring of the beating wings. No other sound - the music has stopped, no sound from the audience.

Cut to:

62. Interior. Theatre. Night.

From aloft, PHILIP is looking down with satisfaction at the girl lying on her back, dress dishevelled, eyes closed. The swan dangles beside her harmlessly, on its strings. The stage curtains are closed, again.

FINN has covered his eyes.

The applause from the outside begins. MELANIE slowly sits up and looks around.

FINN looks down from the catwalk as PHILIP, the swan and a shaken MELANIE take a bow. PHILIP puts his arm proudly round the swan. The little audience applauds mechanically.

JONATHON whispers to MARGARET:

JONATHON
I didn't like that play.

MARGARET passes him a toffee. Her eyes do not leave MELANIE, who still looks stunned.

Close-up MELANIE, looking stunned.

Cut to:

63. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Night.

A nightlight is burning. VICTORIA is asleep; MELANIE lies still but wakeful, open-eyed unable to sleep. A withered geranium falls off the plant in the window.

There is a scratching at the door. Renewed scratching. MELANIE sits up.

MELANIE
(Sharp.)
Who's there?

FINN
(Voice over. Whisper.)
Let me in.

MELANIE is visibly relieved.

MELANIE

(Whisper.)

The door's not locked.

FINN, haggard, sidles in.

FINN

Can I come into bed with you for a little while, I feel terrible.

MELANIE

Well ... yes. All right. But -

FINN

Ah, come on now!

He kicks off his shoes. MELANIE moves VICTORIA over to the wall, to make room for FINN.

FINN

Would you mind holding me in your arms for a little while?

MELANIE

Finn -

FINN

I'm cold.

She puts her arms round him, clumsily. His teeth are chattering.

MELANIE

You are cold. Where have you been?

FINN

I finished it off.

MELANIE

You did what?

Cut to:

64. Interior. Theatre. Night.

FINN

(Voice over.)

I chopped it into little pieces.

The swan hangs by its strings in the middle of the stage. The scene is lit by a huge, ominous-looking yellow moon; night has arrived on the beach, with moon and stars on the backcloth. The swan looks huge, ugly, ridiculous and malign, with its neck rolling a

little from side to side.

FINN, with one blow from a hatchet, strikes off the head at the base of the neck. It falls to the floorboards which are still covered with sand, where it writhes like a snake.

FINN stamps on the swan's neck and head, trampling it until it stops writhing.

Now the wings open and beat frenziedly, the swan's body agitates itself dreadfully on its strings.

FINN lops off a wing. It drift to the ground. The other wing beats and beats on the air; he grabs hold of it, lops that one off too.

The little rubber feet are still going up and down. More and more slowly.

FINN raises the hatchet, splits the swan open down the back with a rending sound of chopped wood. The little feet stop moving.

With one blow of the hatchet, he slices the mutilated swan away from its strings. It falls to the ground with a thud.

FINN, surveying the wreckage, begins to laugh.

Cut to:

65. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Night, as before.

MELANIE

He'll murder you when he finds out.

FINN

He'll be looking for another apprentice.

MELANIE

I hope he doesn't pick on Jonathon.

FINN

Can you move over a wee bit?

MELANIE gently nudges VICTORIA towards the side of the bed.

MELANIE

The swan was so ridiculous. All the same, it did scare me.

FINN

(Derisively.)

Almighty Jove in the shape of a

swan.

The bed begins to shake. MELANIE rears up.

MELANIE

Stop it!

FINN

I've got a present for you...

MELANIE

(Warning.)

Finn ...

FINN

In my pocket.

He hands her a painted egg, with a pair of naked lovers painted on it in the naive style. MELANIE cups it in her hands, wondering.

FINN

It's a swan's egg.

He yawns, his eyes close, open again. He smiles at MELANIE. Hesitant at first, she smiles back. They hug. FINN'S eyes close again, he sleeps. MELANIE stows away the egg safe under the bed.

Close-up MELANIE's face, on the verge of sleep.

Cut to:

66. Interior. JONATHON's bedroom. Night.

Close-up JONATHON's glasses, lying on his chair beside the bed. These reflect MELANIE's face.

MELANIE in her pyjamas, is standing by JONATHON's bed, looking down at him.

JONATHON stirs and murmurs. JONATHON opens his eyes. JONATHON's point-of-view shot: the room is blurred and myopic. He reaches out for his glasses, puts them on; the image clears.

MELANIE

I think you should go, now,
Jonathon.

Jonathon sits up in bed.

JONATHON

What do you mean? Run away to sea?

A seagull flies in through the bedroom door. JONATHON looks up.

Cut to:

67. Interior. Workshop. Night.

The workshop is full of the crash of breakers. The theatre is a square box glowing with light. MELANIE and JONATHON run towards the theatre. JONATHON is fully dressed, MELANIE in pyjamas. The curtains fly open; the light of brilliant day floods into the room from FINN's painted seashore, which transforms itself into a real beach under JONATHON and MELANIE's eyes.

LEDA's shell, and a pile of splintered wood and feathers lie on the stage, but they look like silly stage props, now.

It is brilliant early morning on the beach, now.

Cut to:

68. Exterior. Beach. Day.

JONATHON and MELANIE run along the beach until they come to a small rowing boat with a pair of oars ready in the rowlocks beached on the sand.

Cut to:

Exterior. Sea. Day.

JONATHON in the rowing boat, sculls out to sea; his blazer bothers him; he slips it off.

JONATHON's glasses mist over with spray. T'sking with irritation, he snatches them off and throws them into the sea.

JONATHON's point-of-view shot: MELANIE, clear and distinct, stands waving on the beach.

Cut to:

69. Interior. Staircase. Morning.

MELANIE, very anxious, races upstairs to JONATHON's bedroom.

Cut to:

70. Interior. JONATHON's bedroom. Morning.

Window open, curtain flapping; the wind blows through the room. The bed is rumpled and empty. A pair of cracked spectacles trailing a little seaweed lies on the floor.

MELANIE rushes in and looks round. She sees the spectacles and picks them up. She looks first puzzled, then oddly reassured.

Cut to:

71. Interior. Bathroom. Morning.

MELANIE enters, turns on the tap, splashes her face with cold water. As she looks up, she sees PHILIP's tooth glass empty, except for cloudy water.

Cut to:

72. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Day.

FINN is sitting up in bed, smoking meditatively, while VICTORIA attempts not without difficulty, to put on her own sweater. MELANIE comes in, bearing aloft PHILIP's tooth glass. She offers it to him with a flourish.

MELANIE

Philip's gone and taken his teeth
with him.

She empties the contents of the tooth glass into the geranium pot.

FINN

Reprieve.

MELANIE

I know for a fact he didn't take
Jonathon. Jonathon went off by
himself.

FINN looks sharply at MELANIE, as if she's stumbled on something important she doesn't understand; MELANIE doesn't notice. VICTORIA has begun to exhibit distress in her struggle with the sweater and MELANIE turns to help her.

Cut to:

73. Interior. Kitchen. Day.

Sizzle! MARGARET breaks an egg into a frying pan full of bacon, sausages, black pudding, mushrooms, tomatoes, fried bread.

FINN, dazzling clean, MELANIE in trousers, her hair loose, and VICTORIA, are taking their places round the table where FRANCIE already sits.

FINN

Dammit, I'm going to sit in his

chair.

(Sudden silence.
Concern, even fear.)

Don't fret, it can't swallow me up.

All the same, he sits down with extreme caution. Then, with more confidence, he sets his hands on the arms of the chair, looking patriarchal. MARGARET passes plates heaped with breakfast. All eat hungrily.

FINN

I am seized with a great and glorious notion.

(Pause. Inquiring looks.)

Let's make today a holiday. Himself being absent. And the swan destroyed.

All stop eating, knives and forks in mid-air in some cases. All but MELANIE, who remains composed.

MELANIE

(Calmly.)

He chopped it up.

She goes on with her breakfast.

FINN

I shifted it out there. On the bonfire. Tonight it will burn.

He puts unusual emphasis on the word 'burn'.

FRANCIE

(With admiration.)

You mad bugger.

FRANCIE, slow reaction, now throws down his knife and fork and claps FINN on the back.

FRANCIE

He chopped it up!

He chuckles. Then he begins to laugh. VICTORIA, seeing him, is quickly overcome with laughter. FINN laughs. MELANIE, it takes her a little longer time to see the funny side but soon she too laughs.

MARGARET slowly smiles. Then chuckles. Then we hear a musical sound, cymbalon or celesta. It is her laughter. At the sound of her laughter, the men's voices die away. VICTORIA stops laughing too; she looks solemn and puzzled.

MARGARET

Go and fetch my silver necklace, Victoria.

VICTORIA, laughing, runs in with the necklace on her head at a rakish angle. MARGARET lifts the necklace from the little girl's head and drops a kiss there. The kitchen window is wide open. With some ceremony, MARGARET goes towards it and throws out the silver necklace. It turns over and over, catching the light and shining. It whirls off, into infinity.

Cut to:

74. Interior. Kitchen. Day.

Some time later. The bull terrier is lapping Guinness from a saucer. FRANCIÉ is playing a slow air, MARGARET sits in PHILIP's chair, wearing Cleopatra's gorgeous robe.

The room is a mess, breakfast still uncleared and so is lunch - the remains of fish and chips in newspaper. There are several empty bottles of Guinness.

VICTORIA, surrounded by the choicest toys from the shop, is asleep on the rag rug, with her head on the sleepy bull terrier. FINN sits in the armchair by the fire. MELANIE sits on the floor at his feet. He is playing with her hair.

A rocket goes by outside. Whoosh!

MELANIE

Somebody couldn't wait until dark.

FINN

(Dreamy.)

H'm?

MELANIE

Nothing ... You shouldn't have given Victoria that Guinness.

FINN

It was only a mouthful!

MELANIE

Do you think we should take her up to bed?

FINN is galvanised into life.

FINN

Oh yes, I think we should.

MELANIE dissolves in giggles. The slow air ends. FINN leans forward, puts his finger on MELANIE's lips to quiet her giggling.

FINN

Ssh...

FRANCIE and MARGARET are locked in an embrace.
MELANIE's eyes grow huge. FINN draws her to her feet.

Cut to:

75. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Day.

It is growing dark. FINN tucks VICTORIA into bed.
When she stirs, he gives her Edward Bear. She snuggles
down again, content.

MELANIE sits down on the edge of the bed, brooding.

Cut to:

76. Exterior. Square. Dusk.

PHILIP crosses the square; he looks disapprovingly at
the bonfire. The swan's head and beak are visible
among the sticks and broken chairs but PHILIP does
not see them.

Cut to:

77. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Dusk.

FINN and MELANIE sit on the edge of the bed, not
touching.

MELANIE

I thought she was fondest of you,
because you were the youngest.

FINN

Did you now.

MELANIE

Surely she is older?

FINN

What difference does *that* make?

MELANIE is hugging her arms round herself, as if
she's cold. Whoosh! Another rocket flies past the
window.

Cut to:

78. Exterior. Front of shop. Dusk.

PHILIP stares in blank disbelief at the 'closed' sign
on the door. He fishes in his pocket, produces an
enormous key, starts to unlock the door.

Cut to:

79. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Dusk, as before.

MELANIE

How long has -

FINN

All the time.

Whoosh - bang!

Cut to:

80. Interior. Kitchen. Dusk.

There is no light in the kitchen, except for the glowing embers of the fire. PHILIP flicks the switch. He registers shock and horror at the mess.

Cut to:

81. Interior. Girls' room. Dusk.

MELANIE cranes forward to look out of the window.

MELANIE

All that rain is making it hard for the fire to catch. And I don't see the guy. They haven't put the guy on the bonfire yet.

FINN approaches her from behind.

FINN

(Sly, yet tender,
sexual teasing.)

Shall you take all your clothes off now, and I'll finish off your portrait?

She dissolves in giggles again, seizes him firmly by the shoulders, thrusts him back on to the bed.

FINN

Careful! Mind the little girl!

They lie without touching, gazing at one another. They suddenly become serious, even grave, as if deliberating the effects of what they may be about to do.

Cut to:

82. Interior. Landing, Dusk.

PHILIP's hand lies on the doorknob of the room

opposite the kitchen - the master bedroom. It lies for a moment, as if PHILIP is unwilling to open the door and see what it might contain: then he turns the doorknob. The door opens.

A beam of unearthly light falls on PHILIP's face, which is a mask of shock and horror. The mask shatters, like glass, as his mouth opens.

Cut to:

83. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Dusk.

At the sound of a shriek from below, FINN and MELANIE start up from the bed. Crash from below. Such a crash the dangling light bulb dances, flowers fall from the plant. VICTORIA awakes.

Then bang, crash. Shriek again. FINN hugs the sisters. All cower together on the bed. Crash.

Cut to:

84. Interior. The master bedroom. Night.

The wedding photograph showing the children's parents and PHILIP falls to the ground from the top of a chest of drawers. Its glass shatters as PHILIP lunges across the room at MARGARET, who darts away from him out on to the landing.

MARGARET is screaming. PHILIP tries to follow but FRANCIE makes a flying tackle and brings him to the ground. PHILIP bellows. His bowler hat falls off and rolls across the floor. He reaches inside his coat and produces a chisel. He twists round and threatens FRANCIE with the chisel.

Cut to:

85. Interior. Girls' bedroom. Night.

The door flies open; MARGARET stands there. Bodice ripped, hair streaming. She brings with her a huge wind that makes the curtains flap, the bedcovers flap, the windows rattle - the room seems about to take flight.

VICTORIA scrambles forward, clutches MARGARET.

VICTORIA
Auntie Margrit, Auntie Margrit...

MARGARET
Would I part with you, my treasure?

She scoops up the little girl. She looks with

infinite sorrow at FINN and MELANIE.

FINN

Kiss me before you go.

MARGARET kisses him on the mouth; for the first time, we register she is much taller than he. She kisses him in a very formal and stately way. Her hair billows out round them, concealing him for a moment. Then MARGARET kisses MELANIE. We are swept up into the red storm of her hair and let down again. The wind increases in strength. The red storm of hair fills the room.

MARGARET and VICTORIA vanish. Literally. When the wind dies down, they are no longer there.

The noise from downstairs continues unabated.

Cut to:

86. Interior. Master bedroom. Night.

FRANCIE, menaced by the chisel, backs away against the bed with its disordered sheets. PHILIP is winded and breathing heavily; FRANCIE, quicker on his feet, manages to rush past him. PHILIP lunges at him and sprawls across the bed.

Cut to:

87. Interior. Kitchen. Night.

There is now a terrible silence. Devastation, smashed crockery. The cuckoo hangs out of the cuckoo clock, mutilated by a knife; they are bleeding. The table is smashed. The chairs are smashed.

The bull terrier has leapt up on to the mantelpiece and, as FINN and MELANIE enter, jumps into the portrait of itself and disappears.

FINN and MELANIE look round the room and see nobody.

Cut to:

88. Interior. Workroom. Night.

Brandishing the chisel, PHILIP descends into the workroom, in pursuit of FRANCIE.

The curtains twitch; FRANCIE disappears inside the theatre. The puppets, hanging from their hooks stir and tremble.

PHILIP, on his way to the theatre, overturns FINN's workbench. Toys, paint tins and brushes fall to the floor. The puppets rattle even more.

PHILIP

Francie?

He strides to the theatre, ignoring the sand crackling under his feet. From inside the theatre comes a mocking phrase of fiddle music. PHILIP roars.

PHILIP

Francie!

He tears open the curtains. The painted beach is there. The sand and shell are there. But the swan's strings dangle, empty, and below them, is a pile of splinters and feathers.

89. Interior. Shop. Night.

The parrot is free of its chain and is flying round the shop squawking: *No sale!*

The shop is in the throes of change; as FINN and MELANIE slip through, a jack-in-the-box pops up and roars with laughter. Dolls stir and titter. The toys are coming to life. FINN and MELANIE go out through the door. The bell jangles for the last time. The parrot flies out above their heads. FINN calls after the parrot:

FINN

I served my time, and so did you.

Cut to:

90. Interior. Workroom. Night.

FRANCIE sits on the catwalk in the flies, fiddle under his chin, looking down at PHILIP, who is stirring the refuse of the swan with his foot. The hatchet lies among a pile of splinters and feathers.

FRANCIE plays a mocking, ironic phrase on the fiddle. PHILIP looks up at him, and hisses.

PHILIP

Who touched my swan?

FRANCIE plays another mocking ironic phrase. PHILIP lunges for the ladder to the catwalk, trips over the hatchet and thumps on to the stage.

There is a rustling and a clicking in the workroom. Slowly, out of the shadows, come the puppets: they descend from their hooks, 'The Artist', the Coppelia doll, some with faces and clothes, many uncompleted, featureless ones. They move towards the theatre, with a clattering, wooden sound. They start to climb up on

to the stage.

PHILIP looks up at a circle of wooden faces, all of which he has created himself.

FRANCIE strikes up a lively air. The puppets begin to clap in time. The ballerina doll hauls PHILIP to his feet and pushes and prods him into dancing with her. The puppets continue to clap.

The ballerina whirls PHILIP round in a succession of pirouettes. The music goes faster and faster. The surrounding, clapping puppets whirl into a blur.

Cut to:

91. Exterior. Square. Night.

The bonfire in the square garden is now so big it threatens to topple over. Dozens of children mill round it excitedly, engaged in forming a rough circle round the fire. Amongst the old sofas and floorboards we catch a brief glimpse of a white neck and a yellow beak.

FINN is kneeling by the fire with a box of matches in his hand. To the unspoken question of a curious child, he says:

FINN

Me brother's fetching the guy.

He lights a match, touches a twist of paper. At another part of the bonfire, MELANIE kneels, too. She strikes her match and touches the bonfire with it; a little flame ripples up.

The children continue to assemble in a circle round the fire, watching it catch with solemn eyes. FINN and MELANIE retreat until they are together again. Absent-mindedly they hold hands. They are on tenterhooks with anxiety. The circle of children eye them with faint suspicion; the children could easily turn against the two adolescents if they do not keep their promise. FINN and MELANIE peer anxiously at the shop.

Behind them, the shop suddenly lights up with brilliant light and all the fireworks in the window go off, bursting through the glass. FRANCIE emerges from the door, carrying a limp puppet, trailing strings. A full size puppet.

The puppet is the image of UNCLE PHILIP.

The children see FRANCIE and start to laugh and cheer. Some break away from the bonfire to take a closer look

at FRANCIE's armful, forming a rough and ready procession behind him as he walks towards the fire.

FRANCIE's fiddle case is lodged precariously under his arm; a child takes it and carries it safely for him.

Cut to:

92. Exterior. Square. Night.

The children have liberated the toyshop and, as the bonfire dies down, enthusiastically play with hobby horses, masks and dolls from PHILIP's store. There is much noise and laughter.

FRANCIE stands before the embers, playing the fiddle. His outlines waver; it could be the effect of the heat of the fire. He goes on playing.

His outlines waver. He goes on playing. He dissolves.

The fiddle remains, suspended in the air, playing itself.

Cut to:

FINN and MELANIE silhouetted against the blazing bonfire.

MELANIE

I already lost everything once.

FINN

So did I.

MELANIE

But then I had a brother and a sister left.

FINN

So had I.

MELANIE

Everything is gone, now.

FINN

Nothing is left but us.

As if both gripped in the same instant by the same revelation, they turn urgently to one another. But freeze before they touch, at the moment at which the movie ends.

Screenplay by Angela Carter