



SOPHIE

MOTHER SAID “brush your teeth or they’ll fall out” – and I didn’t. See! – they’re all there, waiting!’ and the ancient shows a row of stumps, black and brown. Rambles off.

‘He won’t talk to us about the revolution’, Mack says. ‘It’s still his, the one he fought for. It’s done, won, over, complete –

achieved. It's true – some got rich, some left. They built a school, so, all the kids will emigrate.'

'It's you,' she says. 'He'll talk. You don't want to hear. You're building something big to house yourself, and he's a topos. A brick. If you spoke together, you might see how you are wrong. You won't. You've collected him. He's your actor, with your script. You juggle with parts of him – indent, indenture, you say: teeth! all body parts working for us under contract, semi-slaves, whipped and ground, escaping, crumbling down – he's fixed in your chemical, your words, not his. His mother meant – act now, enjoy later. Is that enjoyment? What he has?'

'I'm right, though,' he says. 'He

made it, his revolution. No going back, he's stuck with what he is.'

'You've found another stereotype,' she says. 'There's no politics, no philosophy here. Maybe there's theology. I think for you, it's all fresco.'

'Think for him,' he says. 'The fighter. There was light. Then it became time. They say time's more problematic – you measure it all the time, differently, it's slippery. There's a whole closetful of lengths of string ... a length for waiting, breeding, parting, invading, resisting, exiting. Each one – a different measure, thick or thin.'

'How long is our string?' she asks. 'Us two?'

'It's a metaphor,' he says. 'Not history.'

'I'm not into history,' she says.

‘I like to know, is all.’

‘I think always of your terrible life,’ he says. ‘Cover it with superficiality like you do – and it’s always terrible. Corporations, banks, state, politicians – killers and thieves.’

‘Yours is empty,’ she says.

‘It’s the terrible that concerns me,’ he says. ‘I know because I’ve not been involved in awful things, it doesn’t mean my life, a life, is good. Or touches goodness.’

‘There’s more complication than you know,’ she says. ‘You could even rescue me.’

‘There’s no rescue,’ he says. ‘You are you. If I rescue you, it’s you. Just say your life out loud – it’s evident. Everyone would know – a foulness.’

‘We’re on the leading edge of time,’ he says. ‘All of us who can speak and have a pulse, all on the same plane. Look down – are they building, or dismantling? All grey and ochre – smoky fires of halms, and fires of homes. Here comes the future ... and there it goes, a perfect past! Has someone been here before? What did they make of it? You can’t do much with time ... roast it, carve it? It’s not on.’

‘I’m holding tight,’ she says. ‘I feel the wind tug at my hair, I need some other bodies round me, it’s so cold!’

‘Everybody’s holding on,’ he says. ‘Those that aren’t, aren’t there.’

‘Your old terrorist,’ she says. ‘Harmless and poor.’

‘He didn’t look so poor,’ he says. ‘Behind the mound – those goats.’

‘Terrorists have changed,’ she says. ‘Not poor. Young and well-read.’

‘I don’t know if he could read,’ he says. ‘It’s always a surprise, when old people say they can.’

‘There’s not many now who fight,’ she says. ‘You see it on the news, because there’s always less. The real stuff’s about wind and water, and this heat – not guys with guns and pistols.’

‘If there’s not people who suffer, it doesn’t stick, it doesn’t count,’ he says.

‘That’s cinema,’ she says. ‘That’s where you see people suffering. On film. Then where you watch, a whole audience of sufferers. In the beginning,

someone holds the camera, someone else does the sound, and then there's someone else who organises.'

Then there's actors, who try to be as real as possible. They offer up themselves, they suffer. You don't, my dear, you don't suffer. It's not our life that's empty, it is you,' she says.

'You don't want to understand,' he says, 'The politics.'

'Yes,' she says. 'It's always something else from what you see. The hunt. Our side.'

