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BLUE REMEMBERED HILLS

A Play

by Dennis Potter

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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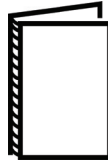


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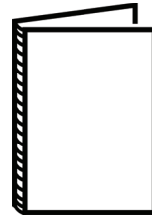
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AUTHOR'S NOTE

In this play, all the characters are children, allegedly speaking as children do, and the story is confined to the events of one summer afternoon in a wood, a field and a barn. The time is supposedly “real” time, one incident after another without the imposition or intervention of memory in the form of flashback, or premonition in the guise of an interior thought as it might be experienced by any one of the characters. Compared with most of the plays I have written, therefore, it is by far the simplest in both form and content, for as well as taking place without hindrance, contrivance, diversion or any kind of secondary plot, the characters—being children—are not allowed eloquence, obvious introspection, rhetoric or even the useful consolations (and normal dramatic lie) of properly consecutive thought.

The only significant exception to ripple the surface of “naturalism” (which, on the whole, I have almost always regarded as a stagnant pool, where the spawn never turns into tadpoles, let alone frogs and princes) is my prior decision to insist that the children be played by adults. I almost wrote “grown-ups”, but then realized I was talking about actors, who probably owe most of their skills to that devastatingly narcissistic “Look at me!” which keeps the majority of them—including the octogenarians—still embroiled in an emotional adolescence.

I *do* have an aversion to child actors, poor little creatures, though I am fully aware that the dislike should more decently be addressed to their greedy, ambitious and appallingly neglectful guardians. It would indeed have been a dire prospect to have had seven of them in one go, but this understandable dread was not the reason I decided to dispense with the little monsters. I did not deliberately seek novelty or complication in the telling of a very simple tale, for in the trade which I follow so-called “originality” is without question seen to be a curse and not a blessing, exactly as though a club foot were the consequence and not the cause of a limp.

Our culture has long since acknowledged that childhood is not transparent with innocence, and that its apparent simplicities are but the opacities of the very anxieties and aggressions which we occasionally seek to evade by means of a misplaced nostalgia for those “blue remembered hills” of Housman’s aching little verse. And yet although we do indeed know those things, we also (thank God) experience a countervailing grace when we actually

look at children at play. The harsh north winds of anxiety and disappointment cannot quite erase the smudged chalk of a hopscotch square.

I did not want an indulgent “Ah!” of softened retrospection to interfere with the sight of two little girls playing with a china doll, or four little boys deciding that, after all, there was nothing better than a box of matches for setting light to something. The fear of being mugged that I suddenly felt when stupidly walking at night in one of the many wrong parts of New York was almost exactly the same fear that I had felt four decades earlier about being waylaid by one particular bully in the high-hedged lanes which led away from my Forest of Dean primary school. And I did not want these, or any other, emotions to be distanced by the presence of young limbs, fresh eyes, and falsetto voices.

Another thing: children at play subtly alter what it is they do when under the gaze of adults, and since child actors are doubly under such censor, it seemed even more necessary to use the adult body not only as the magnifying glass but also, however paradoxically, as the seismograph which could more truthfully measure the quakes and tremors of childhood’s emotions. Hemingway’s characters may feel the earth move in their mutual orgasm, but a child can sense it spinning off its axis by the movement of a shadow on the wall.

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BLUE REMEMBERED HILLS

First shown on BBC TV on 30th January, 1979. The cast was as follows:

ANGELA

Helen Mirren

AUDREY

Janine Duvitski

PETER

Michael Elphick

DONALD DUCK

Colin Jeavons

WILLIE

Colin Welland

RAYMOND

John Bird

JOHN

Robin Ellis

Directed by Brian Gibson

Produced by Kenith Trodd

Designed by Richard Henry

Scene One

West Country. The long summer holiday, 1943.

A seven-year-old boy, played by a mature adult, is walking along a path that meanders from some distant houses into a stretch of gorse and scrub common, and beyond that to a wood. At one side of the common is a pasture field with an old wooden barn in the middle of it. He is eating a large cooking apple.

At first sight, no doubt, he will appear to be an imbecilic adult rather than a normal child—his walk, his fidgets, his expressions and, above all, his mannerisms being modelled on the non-stop near-gymnastics of a seven-year-old, brought into compelling focus by the adult body rather than simply parodied or caricatured.

As he walks and dawdles and eats and screws up his face and tunelessly whistles he kicks an old cigarette packet, or throws a stick or a stone. But then he sees a long, thin puddle of muddy water in a cart or lorry track, and swerves deliberately to go splish-splosh through it, with great pleasure. Then, mouth full of apple, he starts to make aeroplane noises, extending his arms into wings, and breaking into a run.

This now swooping, zooming Spitfire is known to his friends as WILLIE.

WILLIE Waaaaaaom vroooooaaaaaaak! (*Imitating gunfire*)
At-a-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat! Waaaaa-zzzzzzooooooom! At-a-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat!

Then WILLIE, at full flight, decides he has been shot down. The burning spitfire goes into a long death dive, “wings” sloping, “engine” howling.

Aaaaaaaaooooooooooooo...

WILLIE *staggers and crashes, with all due melodrama, sprawling on his back, finished. His run-and-dive has ended under the first of a few outriding trees, the gradual beginning of the wood. Four or five seconds of being dead are enough for WILLIE. He takes another bite from his huge apple, staring up into the sky.*

Then be all dead. Dead, dead. Burnt to nothing. *(A tuneless whistle, then a tuneless song. He sings)*

YOU ARE MY WOODBINE
 MY ONLY WOODBINE
 YOU MAKE ME *(burp)* HAP-PY
 WHEN SKIES ARE GREY
 YOU'LL NEVER—KNOW—DEAR... *(His voice trails off)*

Comically, a pair of sturdy, short-trousered legs are descending from the tree above him. It is PETER, played by a fairly burly adult. A bit of a bully, but none too bright. WILLIE's response is a little wary. PETER swings out along the lowest branch.

PETER Hatch open! Hatch open! *(And he drops dramatically on the ground)*

WILLIE Hello, Peter.

PETER What do you think of that, then, Willie? Good, weren't it?

WILLIE What are you doing?

PETER Parachute drop. What's it look like?

WILLIE Yeh. Pretty good.

PETER You got to bend at the knees, see. When you do hit the ground.

That's Rule Number One, that is.

WILLIE What happens if you don't?

PETER You break your flaming ankles.

WILLIE Cor! Bet that d'hurt!

PETER That's the first thing you gotta learn, my Uncle Arnold says. Him showed I. I be going to be a parachuter, see.

WILLIE I be going to be a commando.

PETER *has been looking avariciously at the apple.*

PETER Give us a bit of thik apple, Willie.

WILLIE *(trying to deflect his attention)* Your Uncle Arnold is a good parachuter.

PETER Oy. Him is. Got medals and all. Hundreds and hundreds.

WILLIE Do they keep their parachutes—bring 'um home, and that—?

PETER 'Course they do! *(He picks up a stone for no apparent reason, and hurls it away)* That's a good throw, that is. Near nigh half a bloody mile. *(He sniffs)* Expect him'll bring I a parachute when him d'come home.

WILLIE *(impressed)* Caw!

PETER Two or dree if I d'want 'em. They be made of silk.

WILLIE And summat else is—

WILLIE *sniggers.* PETER *looks at him suspiciously.*

PETER Was mean?

WILLIE Knickers is.

The two boys hoot and giggle. Then PETER's expression changes.

PETER I said give us a bit, didn't I?

WILLIE *(reluctantly)* Him's a cooker, mind.

PETER Wha—?

WILLIE Cooking apple. And him yunt half sour. Honest.

PETER Bist thou going to give I a bit or not? *(He stands straddle-legged over WILLIE, so far only half threatening)*

WILLIE You can have the core.

PETER And you can have my fist! What do I want with the flaming core, Willie?

WILLIE Our dad says it's the best part of the apple.

PETER Your dad is a loony, then.

WILLIE (*passionately*) Him yunt!

PETER They oodn't even have him in the Army! What sort of bloke is that?

WILLIE (*upset*) Shut thee chops!

PETER Your dad ent no blinking good for nothing at all.

WILLIE You wait till I tell him! Him'll sort you out!

PETER Yeh?

WILLIE Yeh!

PETER My dad's got a stripe. (*He points to his arm*) Him's in charge of hundreds of men. Hundreds and hundreds.

The two boys look at each other, but WILLIE is almost in tears, hugging the apple into this chest. Pause. PETER wipes his nose on the sleeve of his jersey.

'Xpect him'll end up a general or summat. That's what our mam says—and her ought to know. Her cousin is a sergeant!

Suddenly, and defiantly, WILLIE takes a bite out of the apple. PETER scowls ferociously at him. Just as WILLIE is about to swallow the bit of apple, PETER launches himself upon him with shattering force.

WILLIE (*gasping*) Oof!

PETER (*shouting*) You greedy devil!

WILLIE (*gasping*) Peter—no!

He spits the bit of apple out of his mouth. PETER subdues and pins the struggling, gasping, choking WILLIE to the ground, planting his knees hard on WILLIE's chest.

PETER Give in?

WILLIE Get off!

PETER I'll spit.

WILLIE No! No—Pe-ter!

PETER *(with immense satisfaction)* I will! I'll spit! Right in the middle of your face! *(And he makes a huge frothy bubble of spit, ready to drop)*

WILLIE Give in! Give in!

PETER *swallows his spit.*

PETER Sure? You sure?

WILLIE The apple's all dirty any road—thou's knocked it into the dirt, loony.

PETER Who's a loony?

WILLIE You be.

PETER *tightens his grip, viciously.*

PETER *Who is? Who is? Who is?*

WILLIE Ow! Ow! Ow!

PETER *(grinding his teeth)* *Who's a loony? Eh?*

WILLIE *(gasping)* I be—ow! Ow!

PETER Who? Who's a loony? Who?

WILLIE Me! *(He starts to cry)* I be.

Just to underline the point, PETER spits on him anyway.

PETER And doosn't thee forget it, you great babby!

PETER *releases his cruel grip, gets up, goes for the apple.*
 WILLIE *wipes the spit from his face.*

WILLIE *(tearful)* There's *dirt* on thik apple.

PETER *picks it up, rubs it on his sleeve, bites into it.*

PETER *(with his mouth full)* Don't make no odds.

WILLIE Germs!

PETER What?

WILLIE Horrible germs and things. You'll get the stomach ache,
 Peter. The dirt round here is really bad for you. Honest.

PETER Pooh. Bit of dirt never hurt nobody.

WILLIE *(sensing a shadow of doubt)* You'll be rolling about in
 terrible a-gony. *(He sucks in his breath)* There was a boy
 who died from eating a dirty apple. It was on the wireless.
 Honest. One bite, that's all. One bite and him was dead.

PETER *(alarmed, mouth still full)* Don't talk so soft!

WILLIE, *who is brighter, sees revenge opening up before
 him.*

WILLIE That's why the RAF drops 'em over Germany. Dirty
 apples.

PETER *has stopped chewing.*

PETER What for? What you on about?

WILLIE *(with relish)* They do! So that Germans'll pick 'em
 up, wipe 'em on their German sleeves, eat 'em and then go
 home and *die*. In agony. *(He sniffs)* Good, ennit?

PETER *(alarmed)* Who told you that? If you're having I on, I'll—

WILLIE *(quickly)* It's true! Honest it is. Cross my heart and
 hope to die!

PETER *looks at him, then spits out what is left in his
 mouth. But then has a thought.*

PETER (*suspicious*) The apples'd smash to bits if they were dropped like that.

They're too squishy.

WILLIE That—that's why they fly very low. Dive-bombers. Aaaaaaa—splosh!—aaaaaa.

PETER Who told you?

WILLIE *draws in his breath, then releases a name of obvious significance.*

WILLIE Wallace Wilson did.

PETER (*impressed*) Wallace did?

WILLIE And Wallace yunt cock of the class for nothing. Wallace d'know what him's on about, Wallace do.

PETER *purses his lips, swivels on his heel, and hurls the remains of the apple away.*

PETER I don't want nern a rotten cooker, any road. Too sour for I. (*He leers daringly at WILLIE*) Give I the shits.

WILLIE *giggles.*

WILLIE That was a good throw.

PETER Best ever. I can throw an apple, mind!

WILLIE Near nigh as good as Wallace Wilson's.

PETER Better. I got the best throw in Standard One. And the most deadliest.

WILLIE You oodn't say that if Wallace was here. Him can hit a butterfly out of the air.

PETER Shut thee chops!

WILLIE Anyway, we shall be in Standard Two when we d'goo back.

PETER Standard Two! Oy—that's right, Willie. We shall and all!
(He wipes his nose on his sleeve again) Where is Wallace,
I wonder.

WILLIE Down the quarry, I'll bet. Mooching about.

PETER No. I been there. The Williams' gang's there this marnin'.
They have got hold of an old tyre, the lucky devils.

WILLIE I'm not going there, then!

PETER Got any fags?

WILLIE There ent none to be had. Con't get hold of nern a one.

PETER Ant your grancher left none on the mantelpiece?

WILLIE No.

PETER Nasty old devil.

WILLIE And him do count 'em now. Told our dad there was two
or dree gone, and I didn't half get a good hiding.

PETER *sniggers, picks up another stone, and hurls it
away. They start to walk towards the wood—all over
the place in their movements.*

Scene Two

Deep in the woods.

They rarely stay still, scarcely for a moment.

PETER Can't you get hold of no matches?

WILLIE What's the good of a match wi'out a fag?

PETER Set fire to a gorse bush. Couldn't us?

WILLIE (*giggling*) Mrs Baker caught Wallace Wilson peeing on a gorse bush.

PETER (*delighted*) Her didn't, did her?

WILLIE Her did! Last Saturday.

They start to double up with childish glee.

PETER What—hoo! hoo!—what did—hee! hee!—what did Wallace say?

WILLIE Him said—him said—

He has to stop so that they can laugh some more.

Him said as him thought the gorse was on fire and—and—

PETER Hee hee ho ho ho!

WILLIE (*gasping*) —and him was trying to put it out!

Overcome, they roll about in helpless laughter.

PETER (*eventually*) Wallace can pee the highest. I'll give him that.

WILLIE Oh, that Wallace! Him have got a lot of belly!

PETER And a punch like I-don't-know-what. A donkey.

WILLIE gives him a sly, sidelong look.

WILLIE Made *your* tith rattle, didn't he Peter?

PETER (*stung*) Shut thee chops, Willie. I'm Number Two a'ter Wallace—and don't you forget it.

WILLIE (*sullen*) I gotta go.

PETER Where to?

WILLIE Oh—um—Donald Duck's.

PETER (*jeering*) What for?

WILLIE (*shrugging*) Play football. P'raps. I'm easy.

PETER Him ant got nern a ball or nothing! The sissy. Him's scared of everything.

WILLIE Scared of his mam, all right.

PETER Her 'oodn't treat *I* like it!

WILLIE I saw her hit'n with a shovel. Right round the yud.

PETER Honest?

WILLIE Cut his mouth and his ear an' all.

They fall silent. Then, as if to break a tension they cannot understand, PETER runs on ahead suddenly, and stoops over.

PETER Come on!

WILLIE sprints, and vaults over him. They walk on.

WILLIE I think I'll go and call on Donald Duck. We be going to collect empty jam jars.

PETER That's a waste of time. There yunt none left. I bin all over. They be all bloody gone.

WILLIE I dunno, mind. Donald got ninepence last week.

PETER (*scornfully*) Ne-ver!

WILLIE Him did! Him showed I! Seven two-pound jars—

PETER That's only sevenpence, soggy yud!

WILLIE And four pound jars. Ninepence, see.

PETER Where did he get them?

WILLIE (*obviously evasive*) Dunno. Somewhere.

PETER *glares at him, suspiciously.*

PETER Come on. Out with it.

WILLIE (*uncomfortable*) I bent supposed to say, be I?

PETER *puts his fist to his mouth, threateningly.*

PETER You better had, Willie! You better tell me. Else!

WILLIE Oh leave I alone will ya!

PETER I'll—ah—I'll let you have a look at my *Dandy*.

WILLIE If I can get hold of two or dree big jam jars and take 'em back to the shop I can buy me own comic.

PETER If.

WILLIE I d'have the *Dandy* any road.

PETER (*put out*) *Beano* is better. How about the *Beano*—?

WILLIE I'd rather have the *Dandy*. 'S got Desperate Dan.

But PETER is distracted.

PETER (*excitedly*) See that! See!

WILLIE Wha?

PETER is already running into the trees.

Scene Three

The Chase.

PETER (*shouting*) A squirrel! A squirrel!

Warbling and hooting like Red Indians on the warpath the two "boys" charge deeper into the woods after the squirrel. A wild, fast, breath-pumping chase, ending up beneath a huge, gnarled old oak, isolated a little from the other trees, at the side of a woodland path.

Scene Four

The Old Oak.

WILLIE (*pant, pant*) Is him up there? Did you see him?

PETER (*gasping*) This is where him went all right. (*He pants*)
By God, didn't him move!

WILLIE Like lightning.

PETER Him went up these tree like a don't-know-what.

WILLIE We can't get'n, then. Him have beat us.

PETER (*surveying the scene*) Him can't jump across to thik tree
over there. 'S too far. Him's trapped, Willie. We've got him
trapped, good and proper.

WILLIE How we gonna get him down?

They look at each other.

PETER Frighten the bugger.

WILLIE (*enthusiastically*) Oy. Put the fear of God in him!

They giggle with excitement.

PETER Throw stones up into the branches. Knock him down!
Eh?

WILLIE Or climb up. Get a bit closer.

PETER They got sharp tith, mind. Like little red-hot needles. And
once they get hold of you they never let go, squirrels don't.

WILLIE But we might be able to capture him. Live, I mean. Eh?

PETER Nah! You can get a tanner just for his tail. That's what
Wallace said they pay down at the police station. There's a
lot I could do wi' a sixpence.

WILLIE True nuff! Still—

All the time they are circling round and round the tree, gathering stones, peering up into the branches.

Two more “boys” appear through the trees. They are JOHN and, in cowboy hat and gun-belt, RAYMOND.

JOHN What’s up in thik tree, then?

WILLIE How be, John. Hello, Raymond.

RAYMOND (*grinning*) How b-be.

RAYMOND is almost always grinning. But, alas, he also stutters.

PETER We got us a squirrel, John.

JOHN (*delighted*) Have ya? Honest?

RAYMOND (*excitedly*) Wh-Where? Where? (*He pulls out his lead pistol*)

WILLIE Him’s *trapped* up there. Good—ennit! We have really got him!

JOHN (*peering up*) Ah, but how are you going to get him down? You bent going to get him down. Him’ll never come down from there. You tell me how you are going to get him down.

But RAYMOND has been working his face.

RAYMOND P-P-Poor littool devil.

PETER (*to JOHN*) Throw stones, o’ course. Knock him down. That’ll do’t.

JOHN (*sniffing*) Be better to climb up. You tell me how you are going to get him down.

WILLIE Don’t keep on.

PETER (*jeering*) Who’s going to climb up there! Break your neck. Aaaaaa—crack! Just like that, loony!

JOHN Wallace Wilson ood. Him ood goo up there. Like a shot.

RAYMOND W-Why don't we l-l-lul-leave it al-lul-lone—?

PETER Hark at him!

JOHN	} (<i>singing together</i>)	WHEN THE MUM-MOON SHINES
WILLIE		ON THE CUE-COWSHED...

RAYMOND's smile wavers. They peer up into the tree again.

WILLIE I reckon we ought to catch him alive. Put him on show. Be the start of a circus. No—it ood, though. Wouldn't it?

JOHN (*the sceptic*) How do we know him's still up there? You tell me that. I can't see nothing. Him ent up there.

PETER That's where him is, all right. Look! See!

PETER aims with his forefinger and makes a gun noise. This, in turn, triggers off the other three. Whooping and yelling and letting off "gunfire" they hop and dance round and round the tree. Up, up, in the thick foliage—a swift glimpse of a squirrel.

Scene Five

The old barn. Nearby. Same time.

Wooden. Cobwebs at a broken window. A scatter of tools. A wheelbarrow. An old feeding trough. A big pile of hay. A cartwheel, etc.—A great place to play.

Two seven-year-old girls, ANGELA, pretty, with ringlet curls and blue ribbons, and AUDREY, who is plain, with cheap owl-like metal-framed glasses and short, straight hair, are “playing house” with the splay-footed, timid, anaemic-looking boy nicknamed DONALD DUCK, who has shoes or boots, but no socks. He also has nasty scabs round his mouth. An abused child.

They have a battered, squeaking old pram with a buckled wheel, which holds a chocolate-coloured china doll called “Dinah”. Dinah, when tilted, closes her eyes and emits a plaintive little “Ma-ma! Ma-ma!”

Pretty ANGELA—who owns the doll—tilts and tilts Dinah, watched with an extremely aggressive expression by disgruntled AUDREY.

ANGELA (*as Dinah “cries”*) Now, now, now. Go to sleep, Dinah. You naughty naughty *naughty* little babby.

AUDREY Smack her one in the chops, Angela. That’ll keep her quiet!

DONALD No, no. You can’t do that. No smacking. Not in my house.

ANGELA (*to Dinah*) There, there, there. Mummy is with oo den.

DONALD You can’t hit a little babby, Audrey. You’d kill it.

AUDREY What dost thee know about it, Donald Duck? You ant never had a babby. Smack her arse, Angela.

DONALD I be supposed to be the daddy here, byunt I? And—
and—don't call me Donald Duck.

ANGELA No. Don't call him that, Aud. You *are* the daddy, Donald.
Coming home from work, aren't you?

DONALD (*smirking*) That's right. I be tired out and all, working
on them sawmills. I cut me thumb off and all. (*He imitates
a saw*) Zzzzzzzzz-chop! Ow! Ow! Bang goes me thumb.

ANGELA Oh, dear. Poor, poor Donald. My poor husband.

DONALD Ow! Ow! Ow! It don't half hurt. Blood all over the
saw. Blood all over me. Blood everywhere. Blood. Blood!

ANGELA Never mind. I'll put the kettle on. We'll have us a
nice cup of tea.

DONALD With four lots of sugar. Eh?

AUDREY (*aggressively*) Are *you* Mummy, then! Why should
you be Mummy all the time?

ANGELA 'Course I be. I got the babby, ant I? It chunt *your*
doll, Audrey.

AUDREY Who be *I*, then?

DONALD Where's my bloody tea, Missis? Where's my tea, then?
I want my cup of tea! (*He is stamping up and down in
angry imitation of "Authority"*)

ANGELA The kettle's just coming up to the boil, sweetie pie.

DONALD (*with enormous deliberation*) I should bloody damn
and bloody blast and bugger and bloody flaming bloody
think so and all. Give us a kiss. (*He hugs himself in glee,
rocking slightly*)

AUDREY (*insistent*) Who be I then? Eh? Tell me that!

ANGELA Oh, Aud-rey!

AUDREY I bent just going to do nothing and be nobody. It's
not fair.

ANGELA You can be my other daughter, Audrey. My naughty daughter.

AUDREY (*stamping her foot*) No. I'm not going to be that. No!

DONALD *is coming out of his trance-like reverie.*

DONALD Aw come on, Aud. Doosn't spoil it.

AUDREY (*hotly*) I'm not spoiling it.

DONALD Yes you are. You always do. Don't her, Angela?

ANGELA *crosses her arms in mimicry of adult exasperation.*

ANGELA Who'd you want to be, Aud?

AUDREY's *eyes glint.*

AUDREY The nurse. I wanna be the nurse. With a little scissors.

DONALD Oy—that's a good 'un. You can see to my finger. I mean, me thumb. When I've had my bit of tea.

AUDREY What's wrong with your thumb?

DONALD Cut the bugger off, ant I? Zzzzzzz. Aaaaaagh!

ANGELA *tilts her nose in disapproval.*

ANGELA You want to stop swearing, Donald Duck.

DONALD (*pained*) Doosn't call I that, Angela! You promised!

AUDREY Let me see thik thumb. I got some special stuff in my bag in my car. I'll stick'n back on.

ANGELA *is looking at DONALD. Suddenly, as he shows AUDREY his thumb:*

ANGELA Quack! Quack! Quack!

Deeply upset, DONALD jerks his hand away from AUDREY.

DONALD Angela! Don't do that!

AUDREY Oh, dear. Oh, dear. I'll have to put some stingy stuff on that. It'll make you jump, mind.

DONALD *is giving ANGELA anguished looks.*

ANGELA (*responding*) He'll have to have his tea first, Nurse. He needs his hot cup of tea.

AUDREY I can't wait around all day. You want to clean this place up, too. I can't wait.

ANGELA No, and I'm not letting his tea get cold neither. I'm not slaving away here all day for him to come in at all hours and think his bit of tea have got to be ready and waiting. I'm sick to death of it, I can tell you.

AUDREY Oo, Angie. That's our mam, that is!

DONALD (*smirking*) Hurry up. I be off up to the *bloody* pub in half a tick. To get *bloody* drunk.

ANGELA I shall wash thy mouth out with soap!

AUDREY (*pleased*) Shall us, Angela? Shall us?

DONALD Nine or ten pints of scrumpy, that's what I want. I've lost a lot of blood.

AUDREY *grabs his thumb.*

ANGELA You're not coming home stinking of drink at all hours and expect *me* to put up with it are you?

AUDREY *sucks his thumb.*

DONALD (*excited*) Shut thee mouth, 'ooman. Nag, nag, nag. I'm not going to put up with it, so there.

AUDREY (*spitting*) There. I've stopped the blood gushing out. You'll die in a minute, though. *Really* die, I mean.

DONALD Brave, aren't I? I bent half bloody brave, mind!

A sudden shift from ANGELA.

ANGELA Quack! Quack! Quack!

DONALD Shut up!

AUDREY Smack her one, Donald.

ANGELA Yes, and if he hits me I shall tell his mam. Her'll skin him alive, won't her, Donald Duck? Won't her? She hits you with the poker, don't she!

DONALD Leave me alone. Leave me alone.

ANGELA Quack! Quack! Quack!

DONALD (*screaming*) Shut up! Shut up!

AUDREY looks at ANGELA. Their eyes seem to flare. They join forces.

AUDREY (*venomously*) Quack! Quack! Quack!

Horribly, the two girls round on him.

DONALD (*tearfully*) Please don't. Please don't. Please.

AUDREY	} (<i>together</i>)	Donald Duck! Donald duck! Quack!
		Quack! Quack!
ANGELA		Donald Duck! Quack! Quack!

Jabbing their forefingers at him, they drive him towards the barn wall. He claps his hands to his ears to shut out their jeering taunts. In what looks, in adult form, almost like a psychotic frenzy, the two girls—and particularly AUDREY—tug and pull at his hair. He howls, totally submissive.

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