

The Riot (extract)

Maude throws down the silver, takes a plug of Bogey Roll from her apron pocket, puts her feet up on the table and fills a pipe

SARAH *(hunting for things to eat)* I couldn't rouse 'is mother. She might be dead but I left er breakfast with er 'case she wake up peckish. Goin riot? Myra's down arbour cus she wanna see the fish, Sally went Union and Betty's gone Cross cus she reckon the Yorky's gonna muster I said Yorkys dunt wanna fight. I said you wanna get on Lariggan bridge cus if our buccas march on Penzance the Penzance mob int gonna let em past that bridge. If there's gonna be a battle twil be on the bridge. So I'm goin bridge.*(watching Maude light her pipe)* Bin wi' Jumbo? *(no reply)* Down quay? *(no reply)* Last night? *(no reply)* Filthy bitch.

Maude smokes

MAUDE Didn't say did and I didn't say didn't did I.

SARAH Didn't means did.

MAUDE Didn't say didn't.

SARAH Didn't say it but ya meant it.

MAUDE Didn't say nothin.

SARAH Nothin mean didn't and didn't mean did.

MAUDE All mean did to you dun it.

SARAH Well did ya?

MAUDE Yes!

SARAH Filthy bitch.

MAUDE I'll go again tonight.

SARAH If e id'n dead.

Exit Sarah

MAUDE *(offering pipe)* Smoke? *(handing Harriet pipe)* Keep your mouth shut.

HARRIET ?

MAUDE 'bout Jumbo.

Harriet inhales and chokes

MAUDE Too strong for ya? Yorky tobacco thass why. Come across from Russia. Duty-free. Bogy Roll. Best there is. Don't get Black. Black'll kill ya. Black's deadly. Black's black as a dog's gut.

Tis only good for chewin but they d'smoke it. Jumbo. Porky. Spindle. Tin Tack. Cronjie. Yorky boys.

They smoke

HARRIET Go wi' Yorkies do ya?

MAUDE No. One Yorky. Jumbo. Alright?

HARRIET Yup.

MAUDE good.

They smoke

Harriet gets the hang of it

HARRIET Duchess is nothin, we ad a prince up Botallack.

MAUDE Did ya?

HARRIET Father shook the bugger's 'and.

She hands the pipe back to Maude, who smokes

HARRIET Thass where me brothers is.

MAUDE Botallack?

HARRIET No. Bulawayo.

MAUDE Africa?

A short burst of African drumming

HARRIET Israel!

MAUDE Eh?

HARRIET E's the dead one.
(sings) Israel, in thy youthful prime
Hast leapt the bounds of time,
Suddenly from earth released:
Taken to an early rest,
Caught into eternity
I wish you was down ere with me.

MAUDE How did e die?

HARRIET Bolitha killed im.

MAUDE *(shocked)* What?

HARRIET Yes.

MAUDE How?

HARRIET E shut down Botallack Mine. Me brothers ad no work. They went Bulawayo. Israel died.

MAUDE So Bolitha didn-

HARRIET Yes e did! Dun't didn-did me!

MAUDE But e didn-

HARRIET Bloody Queen know all about it.

MAUDE Eh?

HARRIET E was mentioned in despatches.

*African drums
Buckingham Palace*

COURTIER (*Borlase*) Colonel Spreckly Your Majesty. Gifford's 'orse.

The Queen (Bolitho) inclines her head

SPRECKLY (*Capps, kneeling*) A battle near Bulawayo Ma'am. Over three hundred mortalities.

QUEEN Yes?

COURTIER Tell 'er Majesty all about it.

SPRECKLY On Saturday morning last a battalion of troopers under my command was sent to look for rebels. We found em! My men crossed the Donga, opened out in skirmishing order and charge!

*200 troopers on horseback gallop through the bush
The drumming increases*

SPRECKLY The natives fled. Rifles were discarded by my men who used revolvers for close-quarter work.

Revolvers are drawn from inside tunics -

SPRECKLY We shot em up trees, in bushes, down 'oles. Four hundred rebels were killed outright.

QUEEN Any fatalities on our side?

SPRECKLY Yes Ma'am. One. As plucky a little bugger as I've had privilege to command. But e was a conscript ma'am, recruited over there from the mining community, so e ain't cost us nothin.

VICTORIA Name the little bugger..

SPRECKLY Screetch. Israel Screetch. He was advancing at the head of a column on the Westward side. Driving the enemy back with his revolver.

Enter Billy

His garnsey is splattered with blood

*His face is covered and hair matted with blood
He carries a barrel stave*

BILLY Matey picked a fight wi' John Clemo in the Union. They beat the shit out ob'm -

HARRIET *(on seeing Billy)* Israel.

SPRECKLY A hidden native -

*High up a Matabele can be seen holding an assegai aloft, poised, muscles tense
The Matabele hurls the assegai*

SPRECKLY Through the neck, ma'am.

Israel falls at Harriet's feet, a spear through his neck

HARRIET *(heart-rending)* Israel!

MAUDE Who?

BILLY Yorky chap e argued wid about the fishin, Clemo scat'n one and e didn't knaw John was a cripple cus e's from Mousehole so the Yorky it'n back and that was it.

MAUDE What the hell is a Yorky doing in the Union?

BILLY *(lifting the hem of his garnsey, several packets of tobacco drop to the floor)* Sellin this.

MAUDE *(picking up tobacco)* Jumbo!