

*From David Hare. Skylight*

... Patterned carpets which have worn to a thread and a long wall of books. [...] At once through the main door comes Kyra. She is returning to her flat, blue with cold. She has a heavy overcoat, and is wearing thick woolen gloves, carrying large plastic bags. .... Then she turns, not taking her coat off, as she comes through the main room again... She gets a small electric fire out and plugs it in.

[...] It's around 2.30 a.m. Kyra, in sweaters and a cardigan,... picks up the school exercise books which she had put on the floor for the meal, then turns on a low side-light, pulls the heater nearer the chair. [...] This is how Tom finds her as he now appears in the doorway.

[...]

TOM. Do you know what you're doing for Christmas? It's just I've now got a place in the sun... it's perfect... Beaches. Great fish. Unless of course you'd made other plans... You enjoy this teaching of yours?

KYRA. I wouldn't say 'enjoy'. It can be pretty stressful [...] And there's always something new. [...] I'm not a soft liberal. Far from it. My views have got tougher. They've had to... Tom, these are kids from very tough backgrounds... At the very least you offer them support. You give them an environment where they feel they can grow. But also you make sure you challenge them... Finding that balance ... There's nothing I've done in my life which is harder. Forty per cent speaking English as a second language! ... But I take it quite seriously. Because ... apart from anything, I'm older than most of the teachers... It's a young person's area. A young teacher comes out of college. They think, this is the kind of work I want to do. Then pretty soon ... well, they move house, they marry ... They decide they want something a little bit easier... A little bit less arduous. Mostly.

TOM. But that's not happened to you?

KYRA. Early on, you know ... Maybe, the first day or two... I went home and I cried. Then I thought, right, this is it. No more crying. From today I learn certain skills – survival skills, if you like. I master certain techniques ... I learned how you have to survive... I think, for years I lived in a dream. I don't mean that unkindly. Everything you gave me I treasured. But the fact is, you go out, you open your eyes, you see this country as it really is.

[...] TOM. And I kept on saying, "Maybe Kyra is going to come back." [...] I try to go out, to enjoy myself... But I'm getting no pleasure at all... You'd also been loyal to something inside yourself. What happens now? Do we just leave it? [...] You've chosen to live in near-Arctic conditions... *Exaggeratedly gesturing round the room.* I'm deeply impressed with it... You can take hostages and tell them this is Beirut!

KYRA. Tom, I have to tell you... The fact is, you've lost all sense of reality. This place isn't special. It's not specially horrible. For God's sake, this is how everyone lives!

TOM. In one thing you're different from everyone else in this part of town... you're the only person who has fought so hard to get into it, when everyone else is desperate to get out! [...] You have a first-class degree... I can't see anything more tragic, more stupid than you sitting here and throwing your talents away... Kyra, you're teaching kids at the bottom of the heap!

KYRA. Well, exactly! I would say I was using my talents. It's just I'm using them in a way you don't approve. [...] I'm tired of those [who] work contentedly in offices and banks... sit pontificating in parliament, in papers... And why? Because they need to feel better by putting down everyone whose work is so much harder than theirs. [...] Well, I tell you, I spend my time among very different people. People who are getting on with the day-to-day struggle of trying to

survive. [...] And ... if you actually have to learn to survive, well, it's a thousand times harder than leading an export drive, being in government, or... yes, even harder than running a bank!.. And the sad thing, Tom, is that you once knew that. When I first met you... It made you different.

TOM (*not worried by her irritation*). [...] I can see that you're furious. I'm not sure I wholly know why. [...] I remember that morning so clearly. I remember coming downstairs... I rang you. You put down the phone... At the office they said you'd simply walked out.

KYRA. I did. [...] I've made a life here.

TOM. It's built on escape. [...] Most things are chance... I suppose I just wanted some of them back... Goodbye.

KYRA. Goodbye, then. [...]

*He walks out of the room... She turns out the lights, then goes to the little heater, and pulls the plug out.  
The red glow dies.*

*From the darkness, morning light begins to shine at the window. ... The room looks wrecked. There is a loud knocking at the door. Kyra comes flying through, pulling on her clothes as she comes.*

KYRA (*off*). Oh, I don't believe it!

*Then the two of them appear. Edward [Tom's 18-year-old son who she used to babysit], wrapped in scarves, is carrying an enormous box... He has put it in the middle of the table... getting out knives and forks.*

EDWARD. I've brought you breakfast. You said [the other day] you missed breakfast more than anything else. [...] Marmalade. And there are croissants... The toast... *Coffee is in a silver thermos, which he now opens. Then he takes another dish from the hot box and opens it.* The eggs are scrambled. ... I thought you'd be pleased. ... And... the napkins.

[...] KYRA. Incredible. Oh, Edward, thank you. Thank you so much. *She wipes her cheeks.*

*Now he puts a small vase with a rose in it as the last touch. The table looks perfect.  
[...] Kyra smiles, sets about getting ready for work, gathering her schoolbooks together.*

KYRA. I have to eat quickly. There's a boy I'm late for... Extra lessons. Early, so early! [...] I wake at five-fifteen... I think, what am I doing? What is this all about? But then I think, no, this boy has the spark. *She throws him a nervous smile.* It's when you see that spark in someone... The boy is fourteen, fifteen... He lives in the place I cannot describe to you. It's so appalling. [...] I mean, to be a teacher, the only thing you really have going for you ... there's only one thing that makes the whole thing make sense, and that is finding one really good pupil.

*After a moment, Edward goes to behind one of the chairs he has set out at the table.*

EDWARD. Your chair.

*Kyra puts the books on a side-table and goes where he wants her to sit.*

KYRA. That looks terrific. Come on, Edward, let's eat.

*They sit opposite one another.... smile at each other, and start eating happily. [...] As they eat, the light from the window fades to dark.*