Helen

Start

HELEN. I intended to, only… I wanted someone here to speak for the girl. We lived next to her parents' house for some time. That was an unquiet home. They kept a great number of ferrets and the children were always dirty. The stepfather, Francis Cobb was, I do not like to speak ill but, well –

ELIZABETH. He was a queer bitch.

HELEN. Yes.

,

I – yes and the brother, Silas, too but Sally doted on him and would take the blame for all his misdeeds. The breaking of a window. The theft of a ham. Small things, but I wonder if that is what happened here with Thomas McKay. If you had seen her during the trial… the way she looked at him… it was… a stupid look. But full of love.

We none of us know what happened that night except Sally herself and she will say nothing. There was not a single person to speak for her in that courtroom and now she thinks to save herself with a lie that no one will believe. But I do not think she did it, Lizzy. I am sure of it.

End

HANNAH *and* KITTY *come over.*

KITTY. Are we putting theories? Cos we've one –

HANNAH. Justice says there is no possibility it was an accident, right? Cos of the amount of force, you see / but

KITTY. but what if, cos you've heard about this comet that Mr Halley has predicted?

ELIZABETH. I have.

KITTY. Right so you know that's just a fucken big lump of rock, right?

HANNAH. Flying through the sky

KITTY. Flying through the sky, exactly and all of us waiting to see it go over but / what if

HANNAH. *but what if that already went, the night Alice Wax died, and we missed it.*

They both beam at her, triumphant. Pause.

ELIZABETH. So what if it did?

KITTY. So, d'you not? Very well, so she's going quite a speed is she not? And say she flies over Alice Wax, taking a midnight stroll / and

HANNAH. and a lump falls off her

KITTY. and a lump falls off her. Huge lump.

HANNAH. and now that's falling

KITTY. hundreds of miles that's hurtling to earth, gathering speed

HANNAH. and force

KITTY. gathering speed and force, faster and faster and when it finally falls, what's between her and the ground?

HANNAH. little Alice Wax

KITTY. little Alice Wax's poor wee head.

Pause.

ELIZABETH. It is a very vivid proposal.

KITTY. Thank you.

ELIZABETH. But not a little unlikely, do you not think?

HANNAH. To say a thing is unlikely does not make it impossible.

KITTY. True, Mary Middleton's husband's prick is shaped like a question mark and yet they have five children.

MARY *hears her name and looks up.*

MARY. What's that?

KITTY. Nothing pet, eat your bread.

HELEN. Could I ask a question?

KITTY. Yes darlin'.