Katy/Alice

COOMBES *moves behind her, puts a hand up her skirt, investigates.*

COOMBES. You would not talk this way if you spent but a minute with her. All the time I been bailiff, I have never encountered such wickedness, that is unthinkable there should be so much evil so close to home. She asked for a cup of water this morning. I found myself outside myself thinking: I am watching a devil drink a cup of water. How could the Devil deal in such dull things as cups of water?

He kisses her neck.

ELIZABETH. Perhaps she is not a devil. Perhaps she only lost her head in loyalty to one and now faces a hanging for it.

She stops churning. Deeply troubled. Removes COOMBES*'s hand.*

COOMBES. Ah, now, what's this then? Cheer up doll. Go on, that is awful to me, to see you so miserable.

ELIZABETH. Please Billy. Tell the Justice I was not at home.

He sighs.

COOMBES. Oh, suit yourself. I'll not carry you there. We'll sit with eleven, go quicker without you, there ent a woman on that jury wants to see her live.

She looks up at him.

I hate it when we quarrel.

Pause.

ELIZABETH. Katy!

KATY *comes running on. She has been painted with brimstone and is bright yellow.*

COOMBES. Just the maid I was looking for.

He holds out the daffodils to KATY*, she takes them, pleased and shy.*

ELIZABETH. I must go with Mr Coombes. Fetch my shawl.

COOMBES. That's the job!

KATY *runs off again.*

ELIZABETH. And a loaf of bread!

ELIZABETH *moves quickly, collecting butter paddles, taking washing from the line.*

COOMBES. I thought she was better.

ELIZABETH. So did I. I clean and wash and clean and wash and still my children itch.

KATY *returns with* ELIZABETH*'s shawl and a loaf of bread.*

Take the churn. Here are the paddles for when the butter comes, and after, rinse the heavy linens. I'll be back to help you fold.

ELIZABETH *puts her shawl on and gathers the paddles.* KATY *starts churning. She watches the sky as she does.*

COOMBES. When's this old comet coming then Kit? You spend so much time searching that sky, reckon your neck's gonna get stuck like that.

Start

KATY. Mr Halley said it shoulda come before Old Year's Night.

COOMBES. That's three months late then. I call that very rude.

KATY. I dassent miss it. I'll be dead before that comes round again.

COOMBES. You don't know that. That's in the future that is, you might live to a hundred, my granny did.

KATY. When does the future start?

COOMBES. Well. When the past ends, probly.

KATY. When does the past end?

COOMBES. Oh I dunno, reckon… reckon round about, uh… NOW!

He leaps on her, tickles her, she giggles.

ELIZABETH. I'd walk ahead if I were you Mr Coombes. That's stingy old weather, I won't dawdle, and your legs are shorter than mine.