

## OCG Past Questions

June 2025

**18.1 Explain and justify how you would direct your cast from the start of the extract to line 52, to emphasise the Officers' differences of opinion about the 'Question of Liz'.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.2 As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Liz in the extract, to show how she has been transformed by her experience of being in the play.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.3 As a designer, explain and justify how you would use two or more design elements to achieve your intended effects in this extract.**

**[10 marks)**

### **EXTRACT**

#### **Question 18 Wertebaker: Our Country's Good**

#### **From Act Two, Scene Ten**

#### **The Question of Liz**

**Ralph, Ross, Phillip, Collins, Campbell.**

**COLLINS: She refused to defend herself at the trial. She didn't say a word.**

**This was taken as an admission of guilt and she was condemned to be hanged. The evidence against her, however, is flimsy.**

**ROSS: She was seen with Kable next to the food stores. That is a fingering fact.**

**COLLINS: She was seen by a drunken soldier in the dark. He admitted he was drunk and that he saw her at a distance. He knew Kable was supposed to be repairing the door and she's known to be friends with Kable and Arscott. She won't speak, she won't say**

where she was. That is our difficulty.

ROSS: She won't speak because she's guilty.

PHILLIP: Silence has many causes, Robbie.

RALPH: She won't speak, Your Excellency, because of the convict code of honour. She doesn't want to beg for her life.

ROSS: Convict code of honour. This pluming play has muddled the muffy Lieutenant's mind.

COLLINS: My only fear, Your Excellency, is that she may have refused to speak because she no longer believes in the process of justice. If that is so, the courts here will become travesties. I do not want that.

PHILLIP: But if she won't speak, there is nothing more we can do. You cannot get at the truth through silence.

RALPH: She spoke to Harry Brewer.

PHILLIP: But Harry never regained consciousness before he died.

RALPH: James Freeman was there and told me what she said.

PHILLIP: Wasn't this used in the trial?

COLLINS: Freeman's evidence wasn't very clear and as Liz Morden wouldn't confirm what he said, it was dismissed.

ROSS: You can't take the word of a crooked crawling hangman.

PHILLIP: Why won't she speak?

ROSS: Because she's guilty.

PHILLIP: Robbie, we may be about to hang the first woman in this colony. I do not want to hang the first innocent woman.

RALPH: We must get at the truth.

ROSS: Truth! We have eight hundred thieves, perjurers, forgers, murderers, liars, escapers, rapists, whores, coiners in this scrubridden, dust-driven, thunder bolted, savage-run, cretinous colony. My marines who are trained to fight are turned into ghoully gaolers, fed less than the prisoners –

PHILLIP: The rations, Major, are the same for all, prisoners and soldiers.

**ROSS:** They have the right to more so that makes them have less. Not a ship shifting into sight, the prisoners running away, stealing, drinking and the wee ductile Lieutenant talks about the truth.

**PHILLIP:** Truth is indeed a luxury, but its absence brings about the most abject poverty in a civilisation. That is the paradox.

**ROSS:** **LINE 52.** This is a profligate prison for us all, it's a hellish hole we soldiers have been hauled to because they blame us for losing the war in America. This is a hateful, hary-scary, topsyturvy outpost, this is not a civilisation! I hate this possumy place.

**COLLINS:** Perhaps we could return to the question of Liz Morden.

*(Calls.) Captain Campbell.*

*Campbell brings in Liz Morden.*

**COLLINS:** Morden, if you don't speak, we will have to hang you; if you can defend yourself, His Excellency can overrule the court. We would not then risk a miscarriage of justice. But you must speak. Did you steal that food with the escaped prisoner Kable?

*A silence.*

**RALPH:** She –

**COLLINS:** It is the accused who must answer.

**PHILLIP:** Liz Morden. You must speak the truth.

**COLLINS:** We will listen to you.

*Pause.*

**RALPH:** Morden. No one will despise you for telling the truth.

**PHILLIP:** That is not so, Lieutenant. Tell the truth and accept the contempt. That is the history of great men. Liz, you may be despised, but you will have shown courage.

**RALPH:** If that soldier has lied –

**ROSS:** There, there, he's accusing my soldiers of lying. It's that play, it makes fun of officers, it shows an officer lying and cheating. It shows a corrupt justice as well, Collins –

**CAMPBELL:** Good scene that, very funny, hah, scchhh.

**COLLINS:** Et tu, Campbell?

**CAMPBELL:** What? Meant only. Hahah. 'If he be so good at gunning he shall have enough – he may be of use against the French, for he shoots flying' – hahaha. Good, and then there's this Constable ha –

**ROSS:** Campbell!

**PHILLIP:** The play seems to be having miraculous effects already. Don't you want to be in it, Liz?

**RALPH:** Morden, you must speak.

**COLLINS:** For the good of the colony.

**PHILLIP:** And of the play.

*A long silence.*

**LIZ:** I didn't steal the food.

**COLLINS:** Were you there when Kable stole it?

**LIZ:** No. I was there before.

**ROSS:** And you knew he was going to steal it?

**LIZ:** Yes.

**ROSS:** Guilty. She didn't report it.

**COLLINS:** Failure to inform is not a hangable offence.

**ROSS:** Conspiracy.

**COLLINS:** We may need a retrial.

**PHILLIP:** Why wouldn't you say any of this before?

**ROSS:** Because she didn't have time to invent a lie.

**COLLINS:** Major, you are demeaning the process of law.

**PHILLIP:** Why, Liz?

**LIZ:** Because it wouldn't have mattered.

**PHILLIP:** Speaking the truth?

**LIZ: Speaking.**

**ROSS: You are taking the word of a convict against the word of a soldier –**

**COLLINS: A soldier who was drunk and uncertain of what he saw.**

**ROSS: A soldier is a soldier and has a right to respect. You will have a revolt on your hands, Governor.**

**PHILLIP: I'm sure I will, but let us see the play first. Liz, I hope you are good in your part.**

**RALPH: She will be, Your Excellency, I promise that.**

**LIZ: Your Excellency, I will endeavour to speak Mr Farquhar's lines with the elegance and clarity their own worth commands.**

#### **JUNE 2024**

**1 8 . 1 Explain and justify how you would direct your cast from line 37 to the end of the extract to achieve your preferred effects for the audience.**

**[10 marks]**

**1 8 . 2 As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Dabby from the start of the extract to line 55 to convey your interpretation of her character to the audience.**

**[10 marks]**

**1 8 . 3 As a designer, outline your ideas for costume and make-up for Liz and Ketch, and explain and justify how these would be appropriate for the characters and the action at this point in the play.**

**[10 marks)**

#### **EXTRACT**

**The source is taken from pages 80 - 83 of Our Country's Good by Timberlake Wertenbaker Line 37 is stage direction 'Liz Morden comes on'**

**June 2023**

**18.1 Explain and justify how you would direct the actors playing Ralph and Ketch in SCENE 9 to achieve your preferred audience response to each character.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.2 As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Wisemhammer in SCENE 10 to convey your interpretation of his character to the audience.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.3 As a designer, outline and justify your ideas for set and lighting for EACH of the scenes and explain how you would achieve a smooth transition between them.**

**[10 marks]**

## **EXTRACT**

**From Act One, Scenes Nine and Ten**

**RALPH: I'm not a convict: I don't sin.**

**KETCH: To be sure. Forgive me, sir. But if we're in God's power, then surely he makes us sin. I was given a guardian angel when I was born, like all good Catholics, why didn't my guardian angel look after me better? But I think he must've stayed in Ireland. I think the devil tempted my mother to London and both our guardian angels stayed behind. Have you ever been to Ireland, sir? It's a beautiful country. If I'd been an angel I wouldn't have left it either. And when we came within six fields of Westminster, the devils took over. But it's God's judgement I'm frightened of. And the women's. They're so hard. Why is that?**

**RALPH: Why have you come here?**

**KETCH: I'm coming to that, sir.**

**RALPH: Hurry up, then.**

**KETCH: I'm speaking as fast as I can, sir —**

**RALPH: Ketch —**

**KETCH: James, sir, James, Daniel, Patrick, after my three uncles. Good men they were too, didn't go to London. If my mother hadn't brought us to London, may God give peace to her soul and breathe pity into the hearts of hard women — because the docks are in London and if I hadn't worked on the docks, on that day, May 23rd,**

1785, do you remember it, Sir? Shadwell Dock. If only we hadn't left, then I wouldn't have been there, then nothing would have happened, I wouldn't have become a coal heaver on Shadwell Dock and been there on the 23rd of May when we refused to unload because they were paying us so badly, Sir. I wasn't even near the sailor who got killed. He shouldn't have done the unloading, that was wrong of the sailors, but I didn't kill him, maybe one blow, not to look stupid, you know, just to show I was with the lads, even if I wasn't, but I didn't kill him. And they caught five at random, Sir, and I was among the five, and they found the cudgel, but I just had that to look good, that's all, and when they said to me later you can hang or you can give the names, what was I to do, what would you have done, Sir?

**RALPH:** I wouldn't have been in that situation, Freeman.

**KETCH:** To be sure, forgive me, Sir. I only told on the ones I saw, I didn't tell anything that wasn't true, death is a horrible thing, that poor sailor.

**RALPH:** Freeman, I'm going to go to bed now —

**KETCH:** I understand, Sir, I understand. And when it happened again, here. And I had hopes of making a good life here. It's because I'm so friendly, see, so I go along, and then I'm the one who gets caught. That theft, I didn't do it, I was just there, keeping a look out, just to help some friends, you know. But when they say to you, hang or be hanged, what do you do? Someone has to do it. I try to do it well. God had mercy on the whore, the thief, the lame, surely he'll forgive the hang — it's the women — they're without mercy — not like you and me, Sir, men. What I wanted to say, Sir, is that I heard them talking about the play. [Pause.] Some players came into our village once. They were loved like the angels, Lieutenant, like the angels. And the way the women watched them — the light of a spring dawn in their eyes. Lieutenant — I want to be an actor.

#### Scene Ten WISEHAMMER AND MARY BRENHAM EXCHANGE WORDS

[Mary is copying 'The Recruiting Officer' in the afternoon light. John Wisehammer is carrying bricks and piling them to one side. He begins to hover over her.]

**MARY:** 'I would rather counsel than command; I don't propose this with the authority of a parent, but as the advice of your friend' —

**WISEHAMMER:** Friend. That's a good word. Short, but full of promise.

**MARY:** 'That you would take the coach this moment and go into the country.'

**WISEHAMMER:** Country can mean opposite things. It renews you with trees and grass, you go rest in the country, or it crushes you with power: you die for your country, your country doesn't want you, you're thrown out of your country. [Pause.] I like words. [Pause.] My father cleared the houses of the dead to sell the old clothes to the poorhouses by the Thames. He found a dictionary — Johnson's

dictionary — it was as big as a Bible. It went from ‘A’ to ‘L’. I started with the A’s.  
Abecedarian: someone who teaches the alphabet or rudiments of literature.  
Abject: a man without hope.

MARY: What does indulgent mean?

WISEHAMMER: How is it used?

MARY: [reads] ‘You have been so careful, so indulgent to me.’

WISEHAMMER: It means ready to overlook faults. [Pause.] You have to be careful with words that begin with ‘in’. It can turn everything upside down. Injustice. Most of that word is taken up with justice, but the ‘in’ twists it inside out and makes it the ugliest word in the English language.

MARY: Guilty is an uglier word.

WISEHAMMER: Innocent ought to be a beautiful word, but it isn’t, it’s full of sorrow. Anguish. [Mary goes back to her copying.]

MARY: I don’t have much time. We start this in a few days. [Wisehammer looks over her shoulder.] I have the biggest part.

WISEHAMMER: You have a beautiful hand.

MARY: There is so much to copy. So many words.

WISEHAMMER: I can write.

MARY: Why don’t you tell Lieutenant Clark? He’s doing it. WISEHAMMER: No... no... I’m —

MARY: Afraid?

WISEHAMMER: Diffident. MARY: I’ll tell him. Well, I won’t. My friend Dabby will. She’s —

WISEHAMMER: Bold. [Pause.] Shy is not a bad word, it’s soft.

MARY: But shame is a hard one.

WISEHAMMER: Words with two L’s are the worst. Lonely, loveless.

MARY: Love is a good word. WISEHAMMER: That’s because it only has one L. I like words with one L: Luck. Latitudinarian. [Mary laughs.]

WISEHAMMER: Laughter.

**JUNE 2022**

**18.1 Explain and justify how you would direct Ralph's exchanges with Meg and with Mary to show his contrasting attitudes towards the two women.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.2 As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Sideway in the extract, to show his pride in his 'profession' and his love of the theatre.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.3 As a designer, explain and justify how your designs for make-up, costumes and accessories for two characters in the extract would be appropriate at this point in the play.**

**[10 marks]**

**EXTRACT**

**WERTENBAKER: 'Our Country's Good'**

**From Act One, Scene Five**

**AN AUDITION**

**[Ralph Clark, Meg Long. Meg Long is very old and very smelly. She hovers over Ralph.]**

**MEG: We heard you was looking for some women, Lieutenant. Here I am.**

**RALPH: I've asked to see some women to play certain parts in a play.**

**MEG: I can play, Lieutenant, I can play with any part you like. There ain't nothing puts Meg off. That's how I got my name: Shitty Meg.**

**RALPH: The play has four particular parts for young women.**

**MEG: You don't want a young woman for your peculiar, Lieutenant, they don't know nothing. Shut your eyes and I'll play you as tight as a virgin.**

**RALPH: You don't understand, Long. Here's the play. It's called 'The Recruiting Officer'.**

**MEG: Oh, I can do that too.**

**RALPH: What?**

**MEG:** Recruiting. Anybody you like. [She whispers.] You want women: you ask Meg. Who do you want?

**RALPH:** I want to try some out.

**MEG:** Good idea, Lieutenant, good idea.

Ha! Ha! Ha!

**RALPH:** Now if you don't mind —

[Meg doesn't move.]

Long!

**MEG:** [frightened but still holding her ground] We thought you was a madge cull.

**RALPH:** What?

**MEG:** You know, a fluter, a mollie. [Impatiently.] A prissy cove, a girl! You having no she-lag on the ship. Nor here, neither. On the ship maybe you was seasick. But all these months here. And now we hear how you want a lot of women all at once. Well, I'm glad to hear that, Lieutenant, I am. You let me know when you want Meg, old Shitty Meg.

[She goes off quickly and Robert Sideway comes straight on.]

**SIDEWAY:** Ah, Mr Clark.

[He does a flourish.]

I am calling you Mr Clark as one calls Mr Garrick Mr Garrick, we have not had the pleasure of meeting before.

**RALPH:** I've seen you on the ship.

**SIDEWAY:** Different circumstances, Mr Clark, best forgotten. I was once a gentleman. My fortune has turned. The wheel... You are doing a play, I hear, ah, Drury Lane, Mr Garrick, the lovely Peg Woffington. [Conspiratorially.] He was so cruel to her. She was so pale —

**RALPH:** You say you were a gentleman, Sideway?

**SIDEWAY:** Top of my profession, Mr Clark, pickpocket, born and bred in

Bermondsey. Do you know London, Sir, don't you miss it? In these my darkest hours, I remember my happy days in that great city. London Bridge at dawn — hand on cold iron for good luck. Down Cheapside with the market traders — never refuse

a mince pie. Into St Paul's churchyard — I do love a good church — and begin work in Bond Street. There, I've spotted her, rich, plump, not of the best class, stands in front of the shop, plucking up courage, I pluck her. Time for coffee until five o'clock and the pinnacle, the glory of the day: Drury Lane. The coaches, the actors scuttling, the gentlemen watching, the ladies tittering, the perfumes, the clothes, the handkerchiefs. [He hands Ralph the handkerchief he has just stolen from him.]

Here, Mr Clark, you see the skill. Ah, Mr Clark, I beg you, I entreat you, to let me perform on your stage, to let me feel once again the thrill of a play about to begin. Ah, I see ladies approaching: our future Woffingtons, Siddons.

[Dabby Bryant comes on, with a shrinking Mary Brenham in tow. Sideways bows.]

Ladies. I shall await your word of command, Mr Clark, I shall be in the wings.

[Sideway scuttles off.]

DABBY: You asked to see Mary Brenham, Lieutenant. Here she is.

RALPH: Yes — the Governor has asked me to put on a play.

[To Mary.] You know what a play is?

DABBY: I've seen lots of plays, Lieutenant, so has Mary.

RALPH: Have you, Brenham?

MARY: [inaudibly.] Yes.

RALPH: Can you remember which plays you've seen?

MARY: [inaudibly.] No.

DABBY: I can't remember what they were called, but I always knew when they were going to end badly. I knew right from the beginning. How does this one end, Lieutenant?

RALPH: It ends happily. It's called 'The Recruiting Officer'.

DABBY: Mary wants to be in your play, Lieutenant, and so do I.

RALPH: Do you think you have a talent for acting, Brenham?

DABBY: Of course she does, and so do I. I want to play Mary's friend.

RALPH: Do you know 'The Recruiting Officer', Bryant?

DABBY: No, but in all those plays, there's always a friend. That's because a girl has to talk to someone and she talks to her friend. So I'll be Mary's friend.

**RALPH:** Silvia — that's the part I want to try Brenham for — doesn't have a friend. She has a cousin. But they don't like each other.

**DABBY:** Oh. Mary doesn't always like me.

**RALPH:** The Reverend Johnson told me you can read and write, Brenham?

**DABBY:** She went to school until she was ten. She used to read to us on the ship. We loved it. It put us to sleep.

**RALPH:** Shall we try reading some of the play? [Ralph hands her the book. Mary reads silently, moving her lips. I meant read it aloud.] As you did on the ship. I'll help you, I'll read Justice Balance. That's your father

Nov 2021

The extract is taken from Act Two, Scene Five: The Second Rehearsal.

**18.1** Explain and justify how you would direct the actors from line 1 to line 40 in order to achieve your preferred effects for the audience.

[10 marks]

**18.2** As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Ross in order to reveal his attitudes either towards Ralph or towards the convicts.

[10 marks]

**18.3** As a designer, explain and justify how your designs for set and lighting would be appropriate to the action at this point in the play.

[10 marks]

## EXTRACT

The extract is taken from Act Two, Scene Five: The Second Rehearsal.

*Ralph Clarke, Mary Brenham and Robert Sideway are waiting. Major Ross and Captain Campbell bring three prisoners Ceasar, Wisehammer and Liz Morden. They are still in chains. Ross shoves them forward.*

**Ross** Here is some of your caterwauling cast, Leitenant. 1

**Campbell** The Givernor chhht said, release, tssst, prisoners. 2

Ross Unchain Wisehammer and the savage, Captain Campbell (*points to Liz*) She stays in chains. She's being tried tomorrow, we don't want her sloping off. 3

Ralph: I can't rehearse with one of my players in chains, Major. 4

Cambell Eeh. Difficult. Mmmm. 5

Ross We'll tell the Governor you didn't need her and take her back to prison. 6

Ralph No. We shall manage. Sideway, go over the scene you rehearsed in the prison with Melinda please. 7

Cesar I'm in that scene too Lieutenant. 8

Ralph No, you're not. 9

Liz & Sidway Yes he is Lieutenant 10

Sideway He's my servant 11

*Ralph nods*

Ralph The rest of us will go from Sylvia's entrance as Jack Wilful. Where's Arscott? 12

Ross We haven't finished with Arscott yet, Lieutenant 13

Campbell Punishment, eeh, for escape. Fainted. Fifty-three lashes left. Heeeeh 14

Ross (*Pointing to Cesar*) Cearsar's next. After Morden's trial 15

Cesar cringes

Ralph Brenham, are you ready? Wisehammer? I'll play Captain Plume. 16

Ross The wee lieutenant wants to be in the play too. He wants to be promoted 17  
to convict. We'll have you in the chain gang soon Mr Clark haha 18

*A pause. Ross and Campbell stand, watching. The convicts frozen.*

Ralph Major, we will rehearse now. 19

*Pause no one moves*

We wish to rehearse 20

Ross No one's stopping you, Lieutenant 21

Silence

Ralph Major, rehearsals needs to take place in the utmost euh – privacy, secrecy you might say. The actors are not ready to be seen by the public 22

Ross Not ready to be seen?

Ralph Major, there is a modesty attached to the process of creation which must be respected. 23

Ross Modesty? Modesty! Sideway, come here. 24

Ralph Major, Sideway – stay – 25

Ross Lieutenant. I would not try to countermand the orders of a superior officer 26

Campbell Obedience. Ehh, first euh, rule. 27

Ross Sideway 28

*Sideway comes up to Ross*

Ross Take your shirt off. 29

*Sideway obeys Ross. Ross turns him and shows his scarred back to the company.*

Ros One hundred lashes on the Sirius for answering an officer. Remember Sideway? 30 Three hundred lashes, for trying to strike the same officer. 31

I have seen the white of this animal's bones, his wretched blood and reeky convince 32 urine have spilled my boots and he's feeling modest? Are you feeling modest 33 Sideway?

He shoves Sideway aside

Ross Modesty 34

Bryant. Here. 35

*Dabby comes forward*

Ross On all Fours 36

*Dabby goes on all fours*

Now wag your tail and bark, and I'll throw you a biscuit. What? You've forgotten? 37

Isn't that how you begged for your food on the ship? Wag your tail, Bryant, bark! 38 We'll wait.

Brenham 39

*Mary comes forward*

Ross Where's your tattoo, Brenham? Show us. I can't see it. Show us 40

*Mary tries to obey, lifting her skirt a little*

Ross If you can't manage. I'll help you. 41

*Mary lifts her skirt a little higher*

Ross I can't see it 42

*But Sideway turns to Liz and starts acting, boldly, across the room, across everyone.*

Sideway 'What pleasures I may receive abroad are indeed uncertain; but this I am  
43 sure of, I shall meet with less cruelty among the most barbarous nations than I  
have found at home.'

Liz 'Come, Sir, you and I have been jangling a great while; I fancy if we made up our  
44 accounts, we should the sooner come to an agreement.'

Sideway 'Sure madam, you won't dispute your being in my debt – my fears, sighs,  
45 vows, promises, assiduities, anxieties, jealousies, have run on for a whole year  
without payment.'

Campbell Mmmhem, good, that. Sighs, vows, promises, hehem, mmm. Anxieties.  
46

Ross Captain Campbell, start Arscott's punishment. 47

*Campbell goes.*

Liz 'A year! Oh Mr Worthy, what you owe to me is not to be paid under a seven  
years' 48 servitude. How did you use me the year before –

*The shouts of Arscott are heard.*

Liz 'How did you use me the year before - 49

She loses her lines. Sideway tries to prompt her.

Sideway 'When taking the advantage –' 50

Liz 'When taking the advantage of my innocence and necessity you –' 51

*But she stops and drops down, defeated. Silence, except for the beating and Arscott's cries.*

## **NOV 2020**

**18.1 Explain how you would direct the actors from LINE 11 to LINE 84 in order to demonstrate how the convicts have developed into integrated members of Ralph's 'tiny colony'.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.2 As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Dabby from LINE 85 to LINE 184 in order to achieve your preferred audience response.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.3 As a designer, explain and justify your ideas for costume and accessories for TWO of the following characters at this point in the play:**

- The Aborigine
- Mary
- Wisehammer.

**[10 marks)**

## **EXTRACT**

**Question 18 Wertenbaker: Our Country's Good From Act Two, Scene Eleven**

## **JUNE 2018**

**18.1 Explain and justify how you would direct the performers from line 72 to line 123 in order to highlight the fear that the convicts feel towards Major Ross.**

**[10 marks] line 72 marked on extract line 123 is the final line of the extract**

**18.2 As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Ralph in his exchanges with Liz and Duckling, in order to show his softening attitudes towards the convict women at this point in the play.**

**[10 marks]**

**18.3 As a set designer, outline your ideas for this extract. Explain and justify how these ideas would help to create an appropriate environment for the action at this point in the play.**

**[10 marks]**

**EXTRACT**

**Question 18 Wertenbaker: Our Country's Good**

**From Act One, Scene Eleven**

**RALPH: You've seen rich ladies, haven't you?**

**LIZ: I robbed a few.**

**RALPH: How did they behave?**

**LIZ: They screamed.**

**RALPH: I mean before you – euh – robbed them.**

**LIZ: I don't know. I was watching their purses.**

**RALPH: Have you ever seen a lady in her own house?**

**LIZ: I used to climb into the big houses when I was a girl, and just stand there, looking. I didn't take anything. I just stood. Like this.**

**RALPH: But if it was your own house, you would think it was normal to live like that.**

**WISEHAMMER: It's not normal. It's not normal when others have nothing.**

**RALPH: When acting, you have to imagine things. You have to imagine you're someone different. So, now, think of a rich lady and imagine you're her.**

**LIZ begins to masticate.**

**What are you doing?**

**LIZ: If I was rich I'd eat myself sick.**

**DABBY: Me too, potatoes.**

**The convicts speak quickly and over each other.**

**SIDEWAY: Roast beef and Yorkshire pudding.**

**CAESAR: Hearts of palm.**

**WISEHAMMER: Four fried eggs, six fried eggs, eight fried eggs.**

**LIZ: Eels, oysters –**

**RALPH: Could we get on with the scene, please? Brenham, it's your turn to speak.**

**MARY: 'Oh, Madam, I have heard the town commended for its air.'**

**LIZ: 'But you don't consider Silvia how long I have lived in't!'**

**RALPH:** (to LIZ) I believe you would look at her.

**LIZ:** She didn't look at me.

**RALPH:** Didn't she? She will now.

**LIZ:** 'For I can assure you that to a lady the least nice in her constitution no air can be good above half a year change of air I take to be the most agreeable of any variety in life.'

**MARY:** 'But prithee, my dear Melinda, don't put on such an air to me.'

**RALPH:** Excellent, Brenham. You could be a little more sharp on the 'don't'.

**MARY:** 'Don't.' (MARY now tries a few gestures.) 'Your education and mine were just the same, and I remember the time when we never troubled our heads about air, but when the sharp air from the Welsh mountains made our noses drop in a cold morning at the boarding-school.'

**RALPH:** Good! Good! Morden?

**LIZ:** 'Our education cousin was the same but our temperaments had nothing alike.'

**RALPH:** That's a little better, Morden, but you needn't be quite so angry with her. Now go on Brenham.

**LIZ:** I haven't finished my speech!

**RALPH:** You're right, Morden, please excuse me.

**LIZ:** (embarrassed) No, no, there's no need for that, Lieutenant. I only meant – I don't have to.

**RALPH:** Please do.

**LIZ:** 'You have the constitution of a horse.'

**RALPH:** Much better, Morden. But you must always remember you're a lady. What can we do to help you? Lucy.

**DABBY:** That's you, Duckling.

**RALPH:** See that little piece of wood over there? Take it to Melinda. That will be your fan.

**DUCKLING:** I'm not fetching nothing for Liz.

**RALPH:** She's not Morden, she's Melinda, your mistress. You're her servant, Lucy. In fact, you should be in this scene. Now take her that fan.

**DUCKLING:** (gives the wood to LIZ) Here.

**LIZ:** Thank you, Lucy, I do much appreciate your effort.

**RALPH:** No, you would nod your head.

**WISEHAMMER:** Don't add any words to the play.

**RALPH:** Now, Lucy, stand behind Morden.

**DUCKLING:** What do I say?

**RALPH:** Nothing.

**DUCKLING:** How will they know I'm here? Why does she get all the lines? 72

Why can't I have some of hers?

**RALPH:** Brenham, it's your speech.

**MARY:** 'So far as to be troubled with neither spleen, colic, nor vapours –'

The convicts slink away and sink down, trying to make themselves invisible as **MAJOR ROSS**, followed by **CAPTAIN CAMPBELL**, come on. 'I need no salt for my stomach, no –' She sees the officers herself and folds in with the rest of the convicts.

**RALPH:** Major Ross, Captain Campbell, I'm rehearsing.

**ROSS:** Rehearsing! Rehearsing!

**CAMPBELL:** Tssaach. Rehearsing.

**ROSS:** Lieutenant Clark is rehearsing. Lieutenant Clark asked us to give the prisoners two hours so he could rehearse, but what has he done with them? What?

**CAMPBELL:** Eeeh. Other things, eh.

**ROSS:** Where are the prisoners Kable and Arscott, Lieutenant?

**CAMPBELL:** Eh?

**RALPH:** They seem to be late.

**ROSS:** While you were rehearsing, Arscott and Kable slipped into the woods with three others, so five men have run away and it's all because of your damned play and your so-called thespists. And not only have your thespists run away, they've stolen food from the stores for their renegade escapade, that's what your play has done.

**RALPH:** I don't see what the play –

**ROSS:** I said it from the beginning. The play will bring down calamity on this colony.

**RALPH:** I don't see –

**ROSS:** The devil, Lieutenant, always comes through the mind, here, worms its way, idleness and words.

**RALPH:** Major Ross, I can't agree –

**ROSS:** Listen to me, my lad, you're a Second Lieutenant and you don't agree or disagree with Major Ross.

**CAMPBELL:** No discipline, tcchhha.

**ROSS** looks over the convicts.

**ROSS:** Caesar! He started going with them and came back.

**RALPH:** That's all right, he's not in the play.

**CAESAR:** Yes I am, please Lieutenant, I am a servant.

**ROSS:** John Wisehammer!

**WISEHAMMER:** I had nothing to do with it!

**ROSS:** You're Jewish, aren't you? You're guilty. Kable was last seen near Wisehammer's hut. Liz Morden! She was observed next to the colony's stores late last night in the company of Kable who was supposed to be repairing the door. (To LIZ.) Liz Morden, you will be tried for stealing from the stores. You know the punishment? Death by hanging. (Pause.) And now you may continue to rehearse, Lieutenant.

*ROSS goes. CAMPBELL lingers, looking at the book.*

**CAMPBELL:** Ouusstta. The Recruiting Officer. Good title. Arara. But a play, tss, a play.

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*He goes. RALPH and the convicts are left in the shambles of their rehearsal. A silence.*