

## Joni - 16

### ANCIENT LIGHTS SHELAGH STEPHENSON

First performed at the Hampstead Theatre Club in November 2000 and set in a country cottage in Northumberland at Christmas, where Bea has invited her oldest friends – Kitty, Tom Cavallero and Tom's girlfriend, Iona – to spend the holiday with her and her new lover, Tad.

Tom is a Hollywood actor and Iona is making a documentary film about his life. Bea's daughter, Joni, is also staying over Christmas but would much rather be with her friends in Shepherd's Bush. Nevertheless, she is anxious to be part of the filming.

In this scene it is two o'clock in the morning and Joni is playing out an imaginary scene in which she is being interviewed about her 'first film role'. She is posing by a chair in her nightdress, trying to look provocative. She is interrupted by Tom before she has completed her 'interview' and dashes out of the room, mortified.

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## Joni

*(Lights up, later. Two a.m. Spotlight on Joni posing by the chair in her nightdress. Wild applause, wolf-whistles, camera bulbs flashing. Screen images washing over the set. She strikes a series of provocative poses as the applause dies down)*

Yeah, I'm really really happy that the truth's out at last. Yeah, he gave me this ring. *(She holds out her hand)* It belonged to his mother, so you know, it seemed right. Right, it's incredible, I know, my first film and I'm nominated for an Oscar, I can't believe it, it's been an amazing year. Well, I've known Tom since I was tiny, so I've never been in awe of him or anything, and getting the film was nothing to do with our relationship because I'd already got the part before all this happened. Yeah, I met Iona a couple of times, and it was really terrible about the car crash and everything, but I think the relationship was more or less over by then. Decapitated. She never knew what hit her. I think I probably helped him to get over it. Well, it takes a bit of getting used to being over here in Beverly Hills with all the palm trees and everything, it's not much like Hammersmith, I can tell you. And getting mobbed by fans and not being able to leave the house. I've had a couple of stalkers, you know, the usual, God it's so boring. I can't go places like the supermarket any more, but we have staff and everything. Would I take my clothes off on film? I think that's a very difficult question, but yes, if the part demanded it –

*(Lights change abruptly as Tom comes in, still in his bathrobe, clutching his mobile phone and a glass of whisky. He's sniffing, as if he's taken coke, and is obviously mid-conversation)*

Tom . . . I was just going to bed, goodnight – *(She dashes out, mortified).*