

big black trees . . . ! (Alone.) . . . Nobody listens to the mad boy. . . .

He turns in circles, holding up his hands as though catching snowflakes.

Snow - snow - snow - I'm going to build a snowman for Christmas. I'll make him big and strong like Marshall Howe, with a hat and a clay pipe, and a stick in his hand. He'll be all right while it stays freezing. But when it gets warmer his face will go black and dirty, and he'll get old, and when the sun comes out again, I'll watch him melt away to a little pool of dirty water. Then he'll be all gone, and there'll be nothing left except his hat and his clay pipe and his stick, and I expect I'll wonder why I bothered to make him at all. . . . (He looks very sad for a second, then bends down scrabbling in the snow and making noises.) Nobody listens to the mad boy! (Exits, bell tinkling.)

The Gut Girls

Sarah Daniels

The play is set mainly in the gutting shed of the slaughterhouse at the cattle market in Deptford at the turn of the century. Annie, aged 16, is the 'new girl'. She worked previously as a servant, and since the stillbirth of her illegitimate baby, lives in a home for 'friendless girls'. She is at first shocked and sickened by the foul conditions in the meat gutting sheds. In this scene she has made friends with an older girl, Ellen, and is visiting her room.

ANNIE. I was in service, oh, not round here, no, in a beautiful house in Blackheath, and I was real proud of meself, oh, I was. The master and mistress was all right, never thrashed you or anything, they was above that. Had a son at Oxford University, really nice spoken, educated gentleman. When he came home in the holiday, he wouldn't let me be. In front of anybody, I mean, he treated me like dirt, but would creep up on me when no one was about. I fought him. I pleaded with him, I threatened him, but he'd laugh. His mama would never believe it of her darling son. Oh, and I wasn't the only one, and it didn't only happen once and when I fell, that was it - got shot of me. I 'ad nowhere ter go, nowhere. I walked the streets and I was picked up and taken to be examined - six months gone I was - for diseases, to them I was a prostitute and the way they treat you and the way they look at you, and the way they hate you, and the way they blame you and everyone blames me. But I never cried, not one of them saw me cry and when I got to that home, it was awful but it was heaven. And even when I was told it was dead I never cried. Why don't they tell