

NIGHTMARE

by Clare Price

Betty has had a bad dream. After she wakes and composes herself she tells her friend about it.

BETTY.

(Waking with a start. A sudden gasp and a pause for breath. Looks at friend) Oh, thank goodness. I'm here. I'm really here. I had that nightmare again. It keeps coming back. *(Taking glass of water from friend)* Thanks. *(She drinks and walks around to get her bearings)* It starts as it always does. I'm walking through a wood of yellow leafed trees. It's dark. *(Imagining herself in the dream which she re-enacts)* It's getting colder and colder. In the trees there's a sudden sound of rustling. I start to run. Faster and faster. *(Pause)* Then the trees clear back, like a curtain. And then I see a harbour. There's a small red sailing boat. I scramble into the boat. *(Pause)* It rocks violently. I'm still frightened so I untie the boat and quickly row her away from the quayside. *(Pause)* Relaxing a little I put the sail up. *(Pause)* And the wind catches it, sending me with a lurch back into the boat. *(Pause)* I seem to hit my head. When I wake up I find I'm in the middle of a storm. The boat is battered from every side by enormous waves. I try to steer her into the wind but the wind is too strong. The boat capsizes. *(Pause)* I'm floating down and down into the deep. I struggle to come up for air. I'm drowning. It's too late. *(Pause)* Then I woke up and you were here. *(Searches her pockets to find a single leaf)* This leaf. How did it get in my pocket?