

# Eclipse

Simon Armitage

Commissioned for *Connections 97* by the Royal National Theatre, this is a poetic drama set in Cornwall in 1999. An unseen group of adults gather on the headland to watch the eclipse of the sun, while their teenaged offspring - TULIP, Klondile, Midnight, Glue Boy, Polly and Jane - are on the beach below. A strange girl, Lucy appears to challenge each and every one of the young people and then vanishes. The action of the play alternates between the beach and the police station, where they try to make sense of and come to terms with Lucy's disappearance.

This scene is set in the police Interview Room, where TULIP, a tomboy wearing Dr Marten boots and a red headscarf tied like a pirate, gives her version of the events.

## TULIP

When she left us for good I was nine or ten. Ran off with the milkman, so Dad said. Ran off with the man in the moon, as far as I care. Grew up with uncles, cousins, played rugby-football, swapped a pram for a ten-speed drop-handlebar, played with matches instead, flags and cars, threw the dolls on a skip and the skates on a dustcart, flogged the frills and pink stuff at a car-boot sale, burnt the Girl Guide outfit in the back garden, got kitted out at Famous Army Stores and Top Man. And Oxfam. I'll tell you something that sums it up: found a doll's-house going moldy in the attic -boarded it up, kept a brown rat in it. Put it all behind now, growing out of it, Dad says, says I'm blossoming, and I suppose he must be right. Klondike? No, not a boyfriend, more like a kid brother, really, known him since as far back as I can remember, Kissed him? Who wants to know? I mean no, Sir, except on his head, just once, on his birthday. Him and Lucy? Well, she took a shine to him, he told her some things and I think she liked him. She just showed up and wanted to tag along, make some friends, I suppose, mess about, have fun;