



**Duologue from *Marianne* by Anna Jordan**

David (30's – 50's) and Allie (15) talk about the day David's daughter Marianne died. Allie was Marianne's best friend.

**Allie:** That day I was scared to see you. Both of you. But mainly Mrs F. The thought it made me feel sick. All that grief. I was surprised she didn't look different. I thought she would look twisted, somehow. Broken. But she just looked like Mrs F. Only smaller. I wanted to hold her up. Be strong, for her. But I couldn't do it. It was too massive. How did you get her through it Mr F?

**David:** I didn't.

**Allie:** I remember thinking to myself at the time, no matter how old I feel, or how maturely I behave, I'm not a grown up. Not yet.

**David:** That's right Allie. You stay a kid as long as you can, love.

**Allie:** Oh that were ages ago! I'm a fully-fledged adult now! I've had a nervous breakdown and everything.

**David:** When?

**Allie:** Just then! I mean, you saw it! What more proof do you need? Are there any crisps?

*Beat.*

**David:** Oh... Yes.

*He gets up and goes to the kitchen.*

*(Through the hatch) Walkers or Quavers?*

**Allie:** Oh, Quavers.

*He comes back in. He chucks her a packet. She munches away for a while. Pause.*

**Allie:** What about you Mr F?

**David:** Me?

**Allie:** How did you get through it?

**David:** I'm not sure that I did. I have my comics. And my plants. I like a drink. I like to be quiet. When I'm with the plants, there's a sense of quiet. When I sit in the shop, and I read my comics, there's peace. I can breathe.

**Allie:** But comics are for kids.

**David:** No! No they're not! And it's not just comics. There's annuals too, and first editions. It's not the Americans I like, the superhero's, *X-Men* and *Captain America*. No, my favourites are *Tin Tin*, *Dennis the Menace*, *Just William*. I like them because, well, they never grow up. I think I would have rather liked that. To stay a child, forever.

**Allie:** Yuk! I hated being a child. I couldn't wait to grow up!

**David:** Yes, well, I suppose girls are different than boys.

*Beat*

**Allie:** Do you not think that, well, what Mrs F does, all the screaming, and crying and shouting. That you might *need* to do a bit of that. In order to ...move on.

**David:** I don't know. I don't know that I want to 'move on'.

**Allie:** I mean, if you just sit quietly, and it's always just *there*, it might never get better.

**David:** Maybe. I don't know.

**Allie:** No. Well, I suppose women are different than men.

*David smiles. Pause*

**Allie:** Do you believe in life after death?

**David:** *(Quickly)* Oh – I can't talk about that with you, Allie. I can't talk about that.

*Beat*

**Allie:** I don't know what to think.

**David:** No. Me neither.

**Allie:** Someone read out this poem in assembly. It goes something like: 'Death is nothing at all; I have only slipped away into the next room'.

**David:** *(Joining in with Allie, in unison)* 'I have only slipped away into the next room.'

**Allie:** You know it!

**David:** Yes. Someone sent it to us.

**Allie:** I really liked the idea at first. I focused on it. I used to imagine, while we were in the kitchen, eating our tea, she was sitting in the lounge, watching TV. Or when I was lying in bed at night, she'd be next door, in the bathroom, sitting on the loo or something. But she was bored, lonely. Waiting for me to come in and play with her, like when we were little. Then if I tried to walk into the room she was in, she'd have to move to the next. We couldn't be together. It was no comfort at all, really. It should have been 'Death is nothing at all. I am standing right beside you. I'm pulling stupid faces at you, and flicking your ear in that annoying way I always did.' That would have made me feel better.

*Beat*

**David:** Yes. Yes that would be nice.

*Pause*

**Allie:** I dreamt about her last night. She was sitting right here. Talking to me. I made her laugh. Only when she laughed, her teeth were black. But it was still her. She got up and I followed her into the kitchen. She stood in front of the sink. I put my arms around her from behind and managed to hold her for a good three or four seconds, before she went limp in my arms.

I didn't want it to end.

It was good to see her.

*Beat*

**David:** Do you want to sleep in Marianne's room tonight, Allie?

**Allie:** Um....no. I think I'll sleep here, if it's alright. I'll just pop my head in there tomorrow. Say hello.

**David:** OK.