

Ros It could go on for ever. Well, not for *ever*, I suppose. (Pause.) Do you ever think of yourself as actually *dead*, lying in a box with a lid on it?

Guil No.

Ros Nor do I, really . . . It's silly to be depressed by it. I mean one thinks of it like being *alive* in a box, one keeps forgetting to take into account the fact that one is *dead* . . . which should make a difference . . . shouldn't it? I mean, you'd never *know* you were in a box, would you? It would be just like being *asleep* in a box. Not that I'd like to sleep in a box, mind you, not without any air – you'd wake up dead, for a start and then where would you be? Apart from inside a box. That's the bit I don't like, frankly. That's why I don't think of it . . .

Guil stirs restlessly, pulling his cloak round him.

Because you'd be helpless, wouldn't you? Stuffed in a box like that, I mean you'd be in there for ever. Even taking into account the fact that you're dead, really . . . *ask* yourself, if I asked you straight off – I'm going to stuff you in this box now, would you rather be alive or dead? Naturally, you'd prefer to be alive. Life in a box is better than no life at all. I expect. You'd have a chance at least. You could lie there thinking – well, at least I'm not dead! In a minute someone's going to bang on the lid and tell me

to come out. (*Banging on the floor with his fists.*) 'Hey you, whatsyername! Come out of there!'

Guil (*jumps up savagely*) You don't have to flog it to death!

Pause.

Ros I wouldn't think about it, if I were you. You'd only get depressed. (*Pause.*) Eternity is a terrible thought. I mean, where's it going to end? (*Pause, then brightly.*) Two early Christians chanced to meet in Heaven. 'Saul of Tarsus yet!' cried one. 'What are you doing here?!' . . . 'Tarsus-Schmarsus', replied the other, 'I'm Paul already.' (*He stands up restlessly and flaps his arms.*) They don't care. We count for nothing. We could remain silent till we're green in the face, they wouldn't come.

Guil Blue, red.

Ros A Christian, a Moslem and a Jew chanced to meet in a closed carriage . . . 'Silverstein!' cried the Jew, 'Who's your friend?' . . . 'His name's Abdullah', replied the Moslem, 'but he's no friend of mine since he became a convert.' (*He leaps up again, stamps his foot and shouts into the wings.*) All right, we know you're in there! Come out talking! (*Pause.*) We have no control. None at all . . . (*He paces.*) Whatever became of the moment when one first knew about death? There must have been one, a moment, in childhood when it first occurred to you that you don't go on for ever. It must have been shattering – stamped into one's memory. And yet I can't remember it. It never occurred to me at all. What does one make of that? We must be born with an intuition of mortality. Before we know the words for it, before we know that there are words, out we come, bloodied and squalling with the knowledge that for all the compasses in the world, there's only one direction, and time is its only measure. (*He*