

Clare McIntyre

MY HEART'S A SUITCASE



NICK HERN BOOKS

London

www.nickhernbooks.co.uk

Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Original Production](#)

[*My Heart's a Suitcase*](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Copyright and Performing Rights Information](#)

My Heart's a Suitcase was first staged at the Royal Court Theatre in London. First preview was 8 February 1990; press night was 13 February 1990. The cast was as follows:

CHRIS, thirty	Frances Barber
HANNAH, thirty	Sylvestra le Touzel
TUNIS, early twenties	Anna Patrick
LUGGAGE, indeterminate age	Amelda Brown
ELLIOTT, early fifties	Fred Pearson
PEST, eighteen	Paul Wyett

Directed by Max Stafford-Clark

Designed by Anabel Temple

Lighting by Steve Whitson

Sound by Bryan Bowen

The Set

The setting for the play is a room in a flat on the first floor of a building overlooking the sea in Brighton. The building is at least a hundred years old. It was built in the heyday of the English Riviera when the Front was promenaded by the wealthy rather than the unemployed. The room has a pair of large windows which over look the sea. They have been left open. Torn, semi-drawn net curtains are blowing in the breeze. There are autumn leaves on the floor. There is a

cupboard on one wall. Among the things in the room there needs to be a television: this is standing on a little table and is covered by a dust sheet. There also needs to be a telephone and a sofa. There are two doors into the room: one, the front door as it were into the flat, the other a door leading to the rest of the flat. In the text I refer to the former as the front or exterior door and the latter as the interior door.

The set, like the play, should be both real and unreal. Two of the characters come and go through the walls.

Scene One

Friday afternoon 4 p.m.

CHRIS and HANNAH are standing in the room. The exterior door is open. They have 'overnight' bags with them. CHRIS's is a plastic laundry bag. HANNAH's is a rucksack.

CHRIS. I don't like it.

HANNAH. It's wonderful. God it's amazing . . . It's enormous.

CHRIS. I don't like it.

HANNAH. Why?

CHRIS. I just don't.

HANNAH. Why?

CHRIS. It gives me the creeps.

HANNAH. Why?

CHRIS. Stop saying 'Why' will you.

HANNAH. What's the matter?

CHRIS. Let's go and stay in a hotel. It's bloody derelict.

HANNAH. It's not. It's just been empty for a while that's all.

CHRIS. The whole building's empty. There's no one in the flat downstairs is there?

HANNAH. I don't know.

CHRIS. There isn't. I looked.

HANNAH. Well they're new flats aren't they? It's brilliant. You can see the sea. Who lives in places like this? Retired colonels?

CHRIS. People who've got au pairs.

HANNAH. I wonder if you can see France.

CHRIS. 'Course you can't. Let's go to a hotel.

HANNAH. I can't afford a hotel.

CHRIS. I'll pay.

HANNAH. You haven't got any money.

CHRIS. It's only for the weekend. We'll find somewhere.

HANNAH. I thought this Colin bloke wanted you to use the place.

CHRIS. He does.

HANNAH. Well then. Don't look a gift-horse in the mouth.

CHRIS. What's that supposed to mean?

HANNAH. Why are you in such a pissy mood? It's brilliant here. It's a bit weird but I really like it. You're not going to stay here on your own are you?

CHRIS. No.

HANNAH. So what are you getting in a flap about? It was your idea to come. You invited me. Remember? Colin's your friend not mine.

CHRIS. I'll pay for a hotel.

HANNAH. You can't afford a hotel and neither can I and I like it here. You've brought your sleeping bag haven't you? We could make a fire and . . .

CHRIS. Where? There's no fireplace.

HANNAH. I'm not going to drive all the way back until I've had my weekend away.

CHRIS. I'm not saying we should go back.

HANNAH. I'd rather go back than waste money on a hotel.

CHRIS. Alright, let's go back.

HANNAH. Don't talk wet. What'd you say to Colin? He'd think you were barmy.

CHRIS. There's been a dosser in here. You can smell him.

HANNAH. I can't.

CHRIS. I'm going to tell Colin we got here too late and his holiday flat's been squatted by a bunch of winos.

HANNAH. Is that why he wants us to stay here? To stop it being squatted?

CHRIS. I wouldn't put it past him.

HANNAH. What a laugh.

CHRIS. Believe me I know him. That's the way his mind works . . . He wasn't lying when he said there wasn't anything here was he?

HANNAH. Has he just bought it?

CHRIS. Must have done. I really don't know.

HANNAH. He has to have money to burn to have this place and a home as well.

CHRIS. He has.

HANNAH. It's another world money isn't it? I suppose it's an investment.

CHRIS. Knowing Colin it will be. Or it'll be tax deductible. Or it'll be in his wife's name and it'll be a fiddle. Or the company had to lose some money and it'll just sit here, empty, increasing in value till they sell it. Whatever it is it'll be about making a killing, that's for sure.

HANNAH. Who cares?

CHRIS. Feels like that window's been open for centuries.
Feels like the whole place has been left here to rot.

HANNAH. 'S a good job somebody's bought it then isn't it? I thought we were going to play at being rich for the weekend. I don't want to stay in a poxy little hotel. Knowing you we'd end up in a grotty bed and breakfast and they'd want us out by dawn and we'd spend the

whole weekend killing time with nowhere to go. You've been invited to stay here for the weekend . . .

CHRIS. As long as I like.

HANNAH. Well then that's settled. Whether it's a tax dodge or an investment or a red herring or a white elephant doesn't matter a monkey's to me.

CHRIS. At least bed and breakfasts aren't creepy: they've got signs of life about them like other people and carpets and curtains.

HANNAH. You hate other people.

She exits through the interior door. CHRIS removes a dust sheet and uncovers a television on a small table. She switches the television on. At this stage the volume is turned right down. She channel-dodges.

HANNAH (*off*). Jesus! Get a load of the bathroom. It's got double wash hand basins. You can shave together . . . Gold taps . . . Talk about gross.

CHRIS *turns up the television.*

Have you got a television in there?

CHRIS. Yeah.

*She listens to the following news report. (HANNAH's speech and the sound from the television should overlap it. The overlap is marked * *.)*

TELEVISION. The body of the missing Petworth newspaper girl Tracy Hogg has been discovered in a shallow grave in wood -land just five hundred yards from her home. Police say she had been sexually assaulted and strangled. Tracy, who was fourteen, disappeared six days ago. And detectives now believe her kidnapper took her away from the area by car, returning several days later to bury the body. * * The schoolgirl's bicycle was found in a bus shelter close to her home but not on her paper run; and it is thought that she was trying desperately to reach home

when the murderer caught up with her and forced her into his car. Tracy's parents, who are both in a state of shock, are being comforted by friends. Police have appealed for anyone who has been near Durran Woods in the past week to contact them on 0273 15145.

And that's the end of the news flash.

CHRIS *turns the television off.*

HANNAH (*off*). **There's another one in here. How decadent can you get? Bloody Hell, you can change channels from the bed. I think we should move in, be caretakers. (*She switches the television on. We can hear it faintly.*)

CHRIS. **What?

HANNAH (*off*). **We could be caretakers. We could swan around all day watching telly and getting paid for it. That'd beat work -ing wouldn't it?

HANNAH *enters.*

CHRIS. Let's go.

HANNAH. What's got into you? We've just taken three hours getting here. Why can't you relax?

CHRIS. I don't know.

HANNAH. Listen.

CHRIS. What?

Pause.

HANNAH. Absolute quiet.

From the sofa CHRIS removes a lumpy object which is beginning to irritate her. It is a man's jacket.

CHRIS. There has been a dosser here. He's left his jacket.

HANNAH. It won't be a dosser's: it'll be one of the workmen's.

CHRIS. It's filthy. We can't stay here if . . .