

THE GLASSWORKS

by

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CHARACTERS

DANIEL, *ten years old*

MIKAEL, *Daniel's father*

STEFAN, *Mikael's brother*

SARA, *Mikael and Stefan's mother*

JON, *Mikael and Stefan's father*

SETTING

The play takes place in and outside of JON and SARA's house in a rural area of coastal Sweden.

The first three scenes takes place on Christmas Eve. The forth scene takes place on Christmas Day.

In Sweden the main Christmas celebrations take place on Christmas Eve instead of Christmas Day.

SCENE 1

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE. JON is standing on a ladder, fixing an electricity box. SARA is standing at the bottom of the ladder, holding it.

JON Give me the hammer, will you?

SARA Which one?

JON The hammer. There's only one hammer. The hammer, for God's sake.

SARA lets go of the ladder to find the hammer.

JON Don't let go of the ladder, are you trying to kill me? There. Look. In the toolbox, in front of you. That's the one.

SARA Do you think you will be done soon? They will be here any minute and you still need to get changed.

JON Do I?

SARA I hope so. That's not what you're going to wear for Christmas, is it?

JON It's only family.

SARA We haven't seen Mikael and Daniel for years. Don't you want to look good when you see your grandson?

JON Give me another nail, will you?

SARA I still need to cook the ham.

JON And how are you going to do that without the electricity?

SARA Don't you think that's enough reinforcement?

JON It wasn't enough for the last two storms. Another nail please. And they've said this one will be even worse.

SARA They should be here by now.

JON They say it will be the worst storm for years. But I won't let it have the box this time. I'm going to nail it to the wall till it sits like a rock. There can be a tornado for all I care, this house will be powered over Christmas. Give me the rope.

SARA What rope?

JON The rope. Isn't there a rope down there somewhere?
Oh, it's over there on the table.

SARA goes to get it.

JON Don't leave the ladder.

SARA What am I supposed to do then?

JON You should've put it so you could reach it. I
thought you'd prepared everything.

SARA I didn't know you wanted the rope.

JON I did.

SARA Maybe we should call it enough?

JON We can call it whatever we want, but it won't help
us when the storm comes.

SARA We haven't seen them for years. Do you want us to
stand like this when they come?

JON If we want the house to be powered while they're
here, yes.

SARA We should have started earlier.

JON That's a bit late to think of now.

SARA I didn't think it would take such time.

We hear a the sound of a car arriving.

JON Look.

SARA What?

JON It's their car, isn't it?

SARA Oh, God. And nothing is prepared.

JON It's just family, it's not like we are running a
hotel.

MIKAEL and DANIEL enter carrying bags.

SARA Hello! How good to see you.

JON Don't let go of the ladder.

MIKAEL What are you doing up there dad?

JON I'm securing the power supply. They had a warning on the radio that there will be another storm tonight and it has already fallen down twice this year.

SARA Come down now Jon, so we can say hello properly and have a cup of coffee.

JON I'm just going to... Mikael, can you pass me that rope.

MIKAEL Do you remember your grandparents Daniel?

SARA Of course he does.

DANIEL I don't think so.

SARA He'll just need some time.

JON Mikael...

MIKAEL Yes, the rope.

MIKAEL hands JON the rope.

 Happy Christmas dad.

JON Yes, yes.

SARA I'm sorry we are not better prepared. I'm going to put on coffee as soon as we're done here. How's it going up there?

MIKAEL Aren't you too old to climb ladders dad? Don't you want me to do it?

JON You can't even hammer down a nail. No, I want it fixed properly. I've asked Stefan to do it, but he never does. Hand me a nail, will you?

MIKAEL hands him a nail.

 How is that small thing going to resist the storm? Give me one of the big ones. Where is Stefan, he should be here by now.

SARA The ones that live the closest always come last.

MIKAEL Are you going to nail the rope to the wall?

JON Yes I am. Why?

MIKAEL It doesn't look very stable, that's all.

JON I know what I'm doing.

SARA My arms are cramping. Do you want to hold the ladder for a while Mikael?

MIKAEL does so.

DANIEL Is this an old house?

SARA It's not that old.

DANIEL It looks old.

SARA Your grandfather built it himself when we started up the glassworks, nineteen fifty-seven I think it was.

DANIEL Wow, that's old.

JON And another one.

MIKAEL Are you sure you don't want me to do it for you?

JON I'm fine, give me another nail. I'm nearly done.

DANIEL Are there any ghosts living here?

MIKAEL Don't start Daniel.

DANIEL I'm just asking.

MIKAEL He saw The Sixth Sense the other day and since then he's been a bit obsessed.

SARA Oh, I see. Yes there have been some strange things going on here lately.

DANIEL What things?

SARA All kinds of things. Sometimes there are strange sounds. Especially on a windy day like this.

DANIEL What kind of sounds?

SARA Scary sounds.

DANIEL Like from someone being eaten alive?

SARA Yes, and if you listen carefully, you can hear whispering voices.

DANIEL Can you? What are they whispering?

SARA That's very personal. I think you will have to find out for yourself.

JON One more nail and that should do.

MIKAEL Be careful dad, you are starting to look a bit tired.

JON I never get tired. Now, isn't that Stefan's car? That's about time, just when I'm nearly finished.

We hear the sound of a car arriving.

SARA You do look a bit pale. Are you sure you don't need a break?

JON Just because I've turned seventy it doesn't mean I'm useless.

DANIEL These sounds, can you hear them in the attic?

STEFAN enters.

STEFAN No dad, what are you doing up there?

SARA You can, but there is no place in the house where they are as clear as in the glassworks.

JON I'm just reinforcing this bloody box-

STEFAN I've said I'll do that for you.

DANIEL The glassworks. Can we go there?

MIKAEL No Daniel.

DANIEL Why not?

JON loses his balance and falls to the ground. STEFAN tries to catch him, but isn't quick enough.

STEFAN Not again.

STEFAN sits down next to JON.

Are you all right?

JON I'm fine.

STEFAN What were you doing on the ladder again? I've told you I'll fix the box for you.

JON But you never do it.

STEFAN You know you get dizzy so easily, why do you have to start climbing ladders? Look at you, you're bleeding.

SARA I'll get tissues.

JON That's not necessary.

STEFAN Yes mum please, do that.

SARA exits into the house.

STEFAN How do you feel, nothing broken I hope.

JON I'm fine. I just lost my balance.

MIKAEL Has this happened before?

STEFAN We've been through this quite a few times, haven't we dad? You start feeling dizzy, but you're too stubborn to sit down when you feel it coming, so instead you fall and almost kill yourself.

JON You're making such a fuss about it.

MIKAEL Have you been to the doctor?

STEFAN Too proud. Don't think I haven't tried to convince him.

JON stands up.

JON There's nothing wrong with me.

SARA enters with napkins.

SARA Sit down so you don't lose your balance again.

JON I won't lose my balance.

SARA Just let me clean the cut for you.

JON I'm fine I said, why don't you listen to me? I'm perfectly fine. I lost my balance, it could have happened to anyone.

JON starts walking towards the ladder.

MIKAEL What are you doing dad?

JON There's just one nail left.

STEFAN Which I will hammer in for you.

JON I've been waiting for you to do that.

STEFAN I will do it as soon as you've gone inside and let
mum clean the cut for you.

JON All right, but don't blame me next time it falls
down.

They start going inside.

STEFAN God dad, you're worse than usual.

SARA Make sure you don't bleed on the carpet.

JON I'm hardly even bleeding.

*Everyone goes inside, except MIKAEL who stays and
lights a cigarette. Soon DANIEL comes out again.*

DANIEL Dad, what are you doing?

MIKAEL hides the cigarette in his hand.

MIKAEL Nothing. Go inside Daniel, I'll come in a minute.

DANIEL Are you smoking?

MIKAEL No, I was just lighting one to feel the smell of
it.

*He stubs the cigarette and takes out a nicotine
inhaler.*

MIKAEL These fake ones taste like shit.

DANIEL You shouldn't swear.

*DANIEL picks up a stone from the ground and sees
how far he can throw it.*

MIKAEL It'll be all right Daniel, don't you worry.

DANIEL I don't.

MIKAEL Your grandparents can be quite irritating
sometimes.

DANIEL I think they seem fine.

MIKAEL Oh, no, trust me, they can be quite irritating.

Pause.

What I wanted to say was that even if they seem irritating-

DANIEL I think they seem fine.

MIKAEL -they are good when it comes down to it.

STEFAN comes out from the house.

They just keep it inside. Deep inside.

MIKAEL sees STEFAN.

Oh hi there, I didn't hear you coming.

STEFAN You all right?

MIKAEL Yeah, how's dad?

STEFAN He'll be all right. I can't believe he's so stubborn.

MIKAEL As always.

STEFAN Yeah, I suppose. Drives me mad though. He wouldn't agree to rest until I'd hammered in the last nail.

DANIEL continues throwing stones.

DANIEL Dad look.

MIKAEL How are you anyway?

STEFAN Anyway?

MIKAEL Otherwise. I mean how are you?

STEFAN Yeah, I'm all right.

DANIEL Dad look!

STEFAN He's got big.

MIKAEL He grows fast.

STEFAN I hardly recognised him.

MIKAEL They grow fast that age.

STEFAN I haven't seen him for five years.

DANIEL You didn't look.

MIKAEL No, I'm talking to uncle Stefan.

STEFAN How's Linn?

DANIEL You said you were looking.

MIKAEL I didn't say anything. (to STEFAN) I don't know, why don't you ask Daniel?

DANIEL But you have to watch and see how far I can throw.

MIKAEL No, I'm talking to Stefan.

DANIEL You are talking all the time, can't you talk and watch at the same time?

STEFAN I'm watching you Daniel.

MIKAEL You've got a new car.

STEFAN Yeah, the old one was falling apart. (to DANIEL) Well done Daniel, you've got the technique.

DANIEL Have I?

STEFAN Your dad and I used to play like that. We would compete and see who could throw the furthest. Your dad always won, but then he was five years older than me. I tried so hard to beat him. I practised every day and when I thought I was good enough I challenged him. Do you know what he said?

DANIEL No.

STEFAN That he didn't play with stones anymore, that he was too old for that kind of games.

DANIEL That's unfair.

STEFAN Isn't it? You know what, why don't we have a competition?

MIKAEL No.

STEFAN Come on, it's fun.

Pause.

Or are you afraid you'll lose?

DANIEL Are you dad? Are you afraid you'll lose?

MIKAEL Of course I'm not.

STEFAN Then why don't we have a competition?

MIKAEL I don't know.

STEFAN Come on!

DANIEL Are you afraid you will lose dad?

MIKAEL All right, I'll have a go.

He finds a stone.

I haven't done this since we were kids.

He throws.

That wasn't too bad, was it?

STEFAN It's all right.

MIKAEL Let's see what you can do then?

STEFAN All right.

STEFAN throws.

DANIEL Wow, that's far.

STEFAN It's all right.

DANIEL It was really far.

STEFAN Enough to beat your dad at least. Now let's see what you can do Daniel.

DANIEL Okay, watch this one.

DANIEL throws.

STEFAN Yeah, quite good.

DANIEL Yeah?

STEFAN You have to work on your technique though, you're throwing like a girl.

DANIEL I'm not.

STEFAN Yes, you are.

DANIEL No, I'm not. You are.

STEFAN I'm not, you are.

DANIEL No, you.

STEFAN You.

DANIEL You.

STEFAN You.

DANIEL I'm not.

STEFAN Who throws the furthest then?

DANIEL Well, you but...

STEFAN But but but... Here, let me show you. Hold the stone like this.

DANIEL Okay.

STEFAN And then you throw it overarm like this. Not that direction, this. Have a go. Yeah, that's better. There you go.

DANIEL That's pretty far, right?

MIKAEL It's all right.

DANIEL It's much further than you two have thrown so far.

STEFAN At least further than your father.

MIKAEL It's not.

STEFAN All right, it was further than I've thrown as well. I think we have a winner.

MIKAEL What do you mean you think we have a winner? He's had two tries, I've only had one.

DANIEL Go on then, see if you can throw any further.

MIKAEL All right, watch this one.

MIKAEL throws.

No, I didn't focus enough there. Check this one out.

He throws again.

DANIEL Now it's Stefan's turn.

STEFAN No, you go on. I'm gonna hammer in that last nail so dad can get some rest.

MIKAEL I'm not finding the right stone. Look at this one.

MIKAEL continues trying. STEFAN goes to hammer the nail in. DANIEL gives up on the stone throwing and stands looking out over the sea.

DANIEL How come birds can fly?

STEFAN They have wings, don't they?

DANIEL But every time they go like this (*raises his arms like a bird*) it should make them go down.

MIKAEL What do you mean Daniel? Check out this one.

DANIEL Because every time they go like this (*lowers his arms*), it makes them go up, but then they have to go like this (*arms up*), to be able to go like this (*arms down*) again and when they go like this (*arms up*) it should make them go down.

MIKAEL I don't know Daniel. One more try.

He misses.

All right, I give up. Dad's too old for these kind of games. You should have seen me when I was your age. I could throw a stone from here where we are now, all the way down to the sea.

STEFAN is finished with the box.

STEFAN That'll do. What do you think?

MIKAEL It looks like it's going to fall any second.

STEFAN I know, but don't say that to dad, or he'll be going on about it for the rest of the Christmas.

MIKAEL Shall we go inside then?

STEFAN Yeah, let's go into the warmth before the storm comes.

They exit into the house.

SCENE 2

THE LIVING-ROOM. MIKAEL sits on the floor next to a television, reading a manual. JON and SARA are watching him. STEFAN and DANIEL are looking at a box of chocolate.

MIKAEL No, turn it off. Let me see.

SARA turns the television off.

Introduction, important information, safety information, environmental information.

DANIEL I think that's the marzipan one.

MIKAEL Why can't they just say how to do it? Here we go, getting started.

STEFAN No, it's not the right pattern.

MIKAEL Insert batteries, connect television to power supply. I think we will be better off without this.

DANIEL *(to MIKAEL)* Can I have a look?

JON We decided it was for the best to wait until you came.

STEFAN turns the chocolate box upside down so that all the pralines fall out.

SARA Watch out!

STEFAN starts picking up the pralines and putting them back into the box.

STEFAN I was just trying to read on the back.

JON We haven't been able to watch television for months.

MIKAEL Couldn't Stefan have done it?

STEFAN I said I could have a look at it.

SARA We call you when the car breaks down Stefan, when it comes to this kind of stuff we wait for Mikael to come around.

JON Which means we sometimes have to wait for quite a while.

MIKAEL It's not rocket science.

DANIEL It says here you should connect the box to the television using a SCART cable.

MIKAEL Yeah, I know that Daniel.

DANIEL I'm just saying what it says.

JON Maybe we should've let Stefan look at it instead, but we thought you were kind of the expert.

MIKAEL Did you?

SARA It's what you do, isn't it? Film and television?

MIKAEL I'm doing CGI mum, I'm not a television technician.

JON No need to tell.

MIKAEL Look there's the start screen. Insert country code. That should be two for Europe.

SARA I knew you were going to fix it.

JON Does anyone want a drink?

SARA This early?

JON It's Christmas.

MIKAEL Strange.

DANIEL What's strange?

MIKAEL I've pressed two, but I can't press enter.

JON Do you want a drink Mikael?

MIKAEL No, I'm fine thank you.

JON You sure?

MIKAEL Yeah, I don't drink alcohol.

JON You don't drink alcohol?

MIKAEL No.

JON You've always drunk alcohol.

MIKAEL I'm not anymore.

JON That's a shame. You want one, don't you Stefan?

STEFAN Please. Does anyone want the last piece of marzipan?

JON starts pouring drinks.

JON Sara, go and see if you find something alcohol free for the children.

STEFAN holds out the chocolate box for DANIEL.

STEFAN Daniel?

DANIEL No, you have it.

SARA We have Coca Cola if you want?

DANIEL Yes please.

SARA Mikael?

MIKAEL Yeah, that's fine.

JON hands out drinks.

JON So what are we singing?

SARA Are we doing that as well?

JON Otherwise it wouldn't be much of a Christmas. What's that funny one called, the one with the man from Taiwan?

SARA hands MIKAEL and DANIEL Coca Cola.

MIKAEL Maybe we should save that for later.

JON I keep forgetting the lyrics.

MIKAEL That's probably for the best, they were quite inappropriate as I remember them.

STEFAN Let's just drink dad, we can sing later.

JON Yeah all right, happy Christmas then.

SARA Happy Christmas.

STEFAN Happy Christmas.

DANIEL Happy Christmas.

They drink.

JON How's it going Mikael? You sure you don't want Stefan to look at it?

MIKAEL No, I know what I'm doing, I just need to change the language settings.

DANIEL Can I have a try?

MIKAEL Let me just try this Daniel...

JON Otherwise you can act it out for us. I'm sure you would do it much better than Disney.

MIKAEL I'm doing special effects dad, it has nothing to do with acting.

DANIEL Can't you let me have a look?

MIKAEL And Disney is not the one doing the voices either.

SARA He's dead, isn't he?

DANIEL I think I know what to do.

MIKAEL It's not easy Daniel. The menus are quite hard to understand when they are in Chinese.

JON Let him try, he can hardly make it any worse.

MIKAEL Yeah all right, you have a try.

MIKAEL hands DANIEL the remote.

DANIEL If we just go back to the start screen and put in country code forty-six... There you go.

STEFAN And Christmas is saved.

SARA Bravo Daniel.

JON You just deserved your presents this year Daniel. Do you think Santa will come tonight?

DANIEL I can be Santa this year.

JON What do you mean?

DANIEL Like Stefan was Santa last time we were here.

STEFAN That wasn't me.

DANIEL I can have a beard and come down through the chimney.

STEFAN It was Santa.

MIKAEL Daniel hasn't believed in Santa for years Stefan.

JON But you believe in ghosts?

DANIEL Only the ones that are real.

STEFAN That's a good distinction to make.

DANIEL Is the ghost in the glassworks real?

JON The ghost in the glassworks? I don't know, why don't you go down and ask him?

DANIEL Can I do that?

MIKAEL Not on your own. It's too dangerous down there.

DANIEL Please.

JON I was only joking Daniel, there's no ghost in the glassworks.

DANIEL Of course there is, what else would the whispering voices come from? Who lives there, is it a king?

SARA What do you think?

DANIEL I think it is. I think it's the king of winter.

SARA The king of winter. Yes, I think you're right.

DANIEL Tell me about him.

SARA Oh, the king of winter. Not many people knows the story about the king of winter. When he was young he was just an ordinary man, but one day something happened that made his heart freeze.

JON Isn't it bad enough you make these stories up yourself? Don't get Daniel into it as well.

MIKAEL What stories?

JON She has started making up these fairy tales which she keeps telling.

SARA When his heart froze it started pumping out cold blood in the veins of the king and his entire body went cold. So cold in fact that you could see his breath, and everything he touched froze to ice.

JON I've told her to write it all down, but she keeps boring me with it.

MIKAEL Can't you be quiet dad?

JON If she kept it to fairy tales it would be all right, but she keeps mixing it up with reality.

DANIEL Shhh!

SARA The man had a hard time getting used to his new condition. He couldn't drink a glass of water without sharp icicles scratching his throat, and when he tried to step into a hot bath, his foot just bounced against the hard block of ice that the water had turned into. But as time passed, the man started enjoying his cold environment. He found that the hard ice was perfect to sculpt in, and he quickly became very good at it.

JON Does anyone want another drink?

SARA He started by sculpting simple things like jewellery and statuettes, but soon his sculptures became both bigger and more complicated.

JON Stefan?

STEFAN Yes please.

SARA He also sculpted practical things like cutlery and furniture and soon he had made an entire house out of ice.

JON Mikael? You sure you don't want one? It's Christmas for God's sake.

MIKAEL No, I want to hear this.

SARA When other people saw how beautiful the man's house was, with its shiny ice walls and frozen garden, they asked him to build their houses as well and after a few years he had build an entire town out of ice. His own house he made into a castle and so it came natural that he would be the king of the winter land he had created. They called him the king of winter.

JON Now I remember it. *(sings)* There once was a man from Taiwan-

MIKAEL Not now dad.

JON *(sings)* Who said to his girl, 'You're a tight one'-

MIKAEL Dad!

JON *(sings)* She said, 'Pardon my soul,
But you're in the wrong hole.
There's plenty of room in the right one.'

 Cheers then!

JON drinks.

DANIEL Which hole was the right one?

MIKAEL I think it's time for Donald Duck, should we see if the television still works.

JON How I was laughing when I first heard that song. I think it was Roland who sang it.

MIKAEL All we should need to do is to push this button and...

Nothing happens.

 And... shit, it worked five minutes ago.

JON God, how we laughed. Everyone except Roland's wife of course. She just turned around, left the room and slammed the door.

MIKAEL Let's see. What happens if we push the button on the television.

And it works. On the screen there is an old man lighting a candle.

SARA Bravo.

JON Well done Mikael, maybe you should aim for a career as television technician after all.

TELEVISION And now over to what we've all been waited for. It's time for Donald Duck and his friends to wish us a merry Christmas...

STEFAN Now it feels like Christmas.

We hear about five seconds of the jingle of Donald Duck, then we hear a crash, the power cuts out and everything becomes dark.

JON I told you. I told you it would fall. Did you hammer in that last nail Stefan?

STEFAN Yes, of course I did.

JON I should have done it myself.

MIKAEL Do you have a torch somewhere?

JON No.

STEFAN Yes you do, I bought you one after the last power cut. It should be next to the fridge.

JON It's out of batteries.

STEFAN What's the point of having an emergency torch if you don't have any batteries in it?

DANIEL What was that?

SARA What Daniel?

DANIEL It was the ghost.

MIKAEL There's no ghost Daniel, it's just a power cut.

DANIEL But I saw it. I swear I saw it.

MIKAEL Wait Daniel, where are you going?

JON See what you've done Sara, Daniel already thinks he's seeing ghosts.

MIKAEL Daniel! Did anyone see where Daniel went?

JON It's too dark, you can't see a bloody thing.

MIKAEL Daniel? Daniel?

STEFAN He's probably just hiding somewhere, waiting to jump out and scare us.

SARA The kingdom of winter was said to be the most beautiful kingdom in the world. During daytime the transparent walls would let the sun through and everything became bright and shiny, and during the night the entire kingdom sparkled from the reflections of the stars, which jumped from wall to wall as if the houses were made out of mirrors.

DANIEL Hello?

SARA But one day summer came and the kingdom melted.

DANIEL Hello? Are you there? Where is everyone? Why don't you say something?

The light comes on again, but something is not right. Everyone but DANIEL is gone and the room looks different. Instead of being in the living-room he now stands in the glassworks. He has no clue of how he got there.

DANIEL Hello? HELLO? Where are you? Hello everyone! Okay come out now. It's not funny anymore. What is this place? What's up with all the glass...

DANIEL realises where he is. Under a chandelier stands an old-fashioned mirror. DANIEL goes and stands in front of it. He talks to his reflection.

DANIEL Who are you?

You know who I am.

The king of winter?

I am your uncle.

My uncle? But you are not older than I am.

Only when you see me in the mirror.

Where are you then?

I'm hiding underneath the thousand stars.

What stars? What thousand stars?

The power cuts again. It's dark.

Hello?

SCENE 3

THE GLASSWORKS. MIKAEL and STEFAN enter. STEFAN carries a torch.

STEFAN It's even colder down here.

MIKAEL It will warm up as soon we've got the oven lit.

STEFAN At least there was a tiny bit of light coming in through the windows upstairs, here's pitch black. And the smell...

MIKAEL Dad is right though. This is the only place we will be able keep warm without the electricity.

STEFAN I really looked forward to a hot Christmas meal. Pickled herring is great, but not without potatoes and not when you are already freezing.

MIKAEL Point the torch over here.

STEFAN He should get a proper electrician fixing that box, but he won't let anyone else touch the house.

MIKAEL I've been dreaming of this place.

STEFAN Have you?

MIKAEL Do you know how to work the oven?

STEFAN Not a clue, I'm never down here.

MIKAEL Don't you ever watch dad working?

STEFAN He doesn't want me to.

MIKAEL Shine here.

STEFAN He doesn't want anyone around when he's working.

MIKAEL This is the gas control, but first we need to put in the coal.

STEFAN Do you know how to use it?

MIKAEL I used to sit and watch dad working.

STEFAN He never let me near the glassworks.

MIKAEL See if you can find a barrel over there in the corner.

STEFAN What for?

MIKAEL It's where he keeps the coal.

STEFAN points the torch at a pile of broken glass in different colours.

STEFAN Look at all this glass.

MIKAEL That's all the failures. I've tried to convince him to put up a shelf for seconds in the store, but he refuses sell anything that's not a hundred percent perfect.

STEFAN has found the coal barrel.

STEFAN How much do we need?

MIKAEL Just a few shovels.

STEFAN starts to shovel coal into the oven.

STEFAN Do you know why there are two ovens in here?

MIKAEL This is the one he uses to melt the glass. The other one is not as hot. That's where he puts the glass to cool down. Otherwise it breaks.

STEFAN How do you know all this?

MIKAEL That should be enough.

MIKAEL pours lighting liquid on the coal.

Do you have a lighter, I've quit smoking.

STEFAN No.

MIKAEL Actually I might have one still. Oh, here it is. Do you want to light it?

MIKAEL hands the lighter to STEFAN, who lights the oven.

MIKAEL Good. Now turn that wheel.

STEFAN turns the control and gas starts blowing out on the fire. The room becomes lighter.

STEFAN That's cool. And warm! Still a bit dark though.

MIKAEL We need to light the thousand stars.

STEFAN The what?

MIKAEL The chandelier. Dad made it for mum for her fortieth birthday. It was supposed to hang in the living-room, but it was too heavy. The only ceiling that would hold it was the one down here.

MIKAEL starts lighting the thousand stars.

STEFAN Look at all those tools. What do you use this for?

MIKAEL That's the blowpipe. You use it to blow air on the fire to make it hotter.

STEFAN I can't believe you know all this.

STEFAN puts the blowpipe into the fire and tests it.

MIKAEL Just be careful when you take it out, it's extremely hot in there.

STEFAN You sound just like dad. What's this?

MIKAEL That's the punty.

STEFAN The punty?

MIKAEL That's what he used to scorch me with.

Pause. MIKAEL smiles slightly and STEFAN starts laughing.

STEFAN You nearly got me there.

MIKAEL I think you can put on another shovel.

STEFAN doesn't do anything, so MIKAEL shovels more coal on the fire instead. STEFAN takes over MIKAEL's previous task of lighting the candles in the chandelier.

Do you remember anything from our childhood?

STEFAN Of course I do.

MIKAEL What do you remember?

STEFAN I don't know, loads of things.

MIKAEL Like what?

STEFAN I don't know, things. Most things I suppose. Why, what do you remember?

MIKAEL Do you remember this place?

STEFAN This place?

MIKAEL The glassworks.

STEFAN I was never down here.

MIKAEL I was.

STEFAN Yes, you said so.

MIKAEL He never took you here?

STEFAN I wasn't allowed to go down here, was I?

MIKAEL I don't know, that's why I'm asking.

STEFAN I wasn't allowed down here, I told you. What are you on about?

MIKAEL Nothing, I'm just interested. We never get the chance to talk.

STEFAN No, 'cause you're never around.

MIKAEL I've been dreaming of this place.

STEFAN Yes, you said so.

MIKAEL About a boy.

STEFAN A boy?

MIKAEL He looks just like I did. I think he's my brother?

STEFAN You are dreaming about me?

MIKAEL No, not you.

STEFAN You only have one brother.

MIKAEL I know I only have one brother.

STEFAN It's starting to warm up.

MIKAEL Yes, this will do. Do you want to go upstairs telling the others it's ready?

STEFAN Yeah. Sure.

STEFAN exits. MIKAEL walks around the room, looking at all the glass. He finds a bottle of vodka, which he opens and smells. He pours himself a glass and downs it. JON and STEFAN are coming down the stairs carrying a table.

JON Two more steps. And now you are down. A bit to the right.

STEFAN Yours or mine?

JON Yours. No, your other right. Great, now we're stuck.

MIKAEL What are you doing out there?

STEFAN We're trying to bring down a table.

JON If we push it this direction.

STEFAN No, it just makes it worse.

MIKAEL Do you need help?

JON No, I just need to push hard enough.

MIKAEL Be careful dad, don't you want me to do it?

STEFAN Watch out.

STEFAN falls backwards into the room, followed by the table.

JON There we go.

JON, SARA and DANIEL enter.

SARA At least it's warm down here.

JON Hopefully the heat will have spread to the rest of the house before we go to bed. Then Stefan will fix the box first thing tomorrow morning if the storm's over.

STEFAN Or we call for an electrician, and get it fixed properly?

JON And spend a thousand krona on them doing the same thing as you can do in five minutes?

STEFAN Otherwise it will just fall down again as soon there's another storm.

JON Not if you do it properly. But if you don't want to...

STEFAN It's not that I don't want to.

JON What is it then?

STEFAN It feels pointless putting it up the same way time after time when it keeps falling down. Maybe it needs to be completely reconstructed.

JON There's nothing wrong with the construction.

STEFAN I can pay for it.

JON If I thought someone else could do a better job, I would pay for it myself. Don't worry about it, I'll just fix it myself.

STEFAN No, I'll do it.

JON All right then. Who wants to join me for a game of Christmas poker?

MIKAEL Christmas poker?

JON It's a new tradition we have. Every Christmas Eve we play a game of poker.

SARA If you win we say it brings you luck.

JON But if you lose it means there's a misfortune awaiting you. So who's in? Everyone puts in two hundred krona for bidding.

MIKAEL Two hundred?

JON We could of course lower the stakes for the beginners.

MIKAEL No, I don't need any special treatment.

JON So you're in then? What about Stefan?

STEFAN I'm always in.

DANIEL Can I be in it?

MIKAEL You can be on my team Daniel.

DANIEL I don't want to be in your team, you suck at cards.

STEFAN I'll put money in for Daniel.

MIKAEL No, you shouldn't do that.

STEFAN Don't worry about it, I'll win it back.

DANIEL We will see. I'm in league with the ghost.

MIKAEL Great, we're teaching my son to gamble.

JON Better to start early and become good at it.

STEFAN Shall we start then?

JON Not with empty glasses. You sure you don't want a glass Mikael?

MIKAEL I don't drink alcohol.

JON Sara, why don't you get some Coca Cola for Daniel and Mikael.

MIKAEL No, I'm fine thank you. I'm not thirsty.

JON Suit yourself.

JON starts pouring vodka for himself, SARA and STEFAN. SARA hands DANIEL a bottle of Coca Cola. STEFAN shuffles and deals.

STEFAN Texas hold 'em. Does everyone know the rules?

MIKAEL I don't think Daniel does.

DANIEL Yes, I've seen it on the telly.

STEFAN Everyone gets two cards, we bid, then three cards on the table, bid, then one card, bid, one card and final bidding.

JON puts a glass full of coins in the middle of the table.

JON Help yourself to change if you need it.

STEFAN So, everyone look at your cards, decide what you think of them and we'll start bidding. I dealt, so Daniel goes first. You can either say pass or raise the bid.

DANIEL I say fifty.

MIKAEL That sounds a bit much Daniel.

STEFAN Yeah, we usually start with ten or twenty.

DANIEL I want to bid fifty.

STEFAN Remember we are five people playing Daniel.

DANIEL I know.

SARA I think Daniel knows what he's doing. Don't forget he's in league with the ghost.

MIKAEL Just don't make a habit of letting the ghost decide how to spend your money, all right?

DANIEL I know what I'm doing.

JON The bid is laid, let's continue playing.

MIKAEL I won't challenge that.

JON I'll see your bid Daniel, I think you're bluffing.

SARA I fold.

STEFAN I'm in, I'm gonna win my money back.

SARA Are you sure you don't want something to drink Mikael?

MIKAEL Actually, I wouldn't mind a glass.

JON Coke I suppose.

MIKAEL No, it's Christmas after all.

JON Vodka?

MIKAEL It's Christmas after all. I guess one glass couldn't hurt.

JON pours MIKAEL a glass of vodka.

DANIEL You don't drink alcohol.

MIKAEL I know Daniel, I'm just having a glass to celebrate Christmas.

DANIEL Can I have a glass of vodka to celebrate Christmas as well?

MIKAEL No, it's bad enough that you are gambling.

STEFAN deals another card. JON hands MIKAEL his drink.

MIKAEL Thanks dad.

DANIEL I raise by fifty.

JON Again?

STEFAN Then you're down to half of your money, do you really want to do that?

DANIEL Yes.

JON I can't let you get away with this. I raise by twenty.

STEFAN This is madness, I fold. Daniel, are you in?
DANIEL puts in twenty krona.

MIKAEL You better have some good cards now.

STEFAN Let's see the last card.
STEFAN deals the last card.

MIKAEL Don't bid any more now Daniel.

DANIEL Thirty.

STEFAN You must have some incredible cards.

SARA Please fold now Jon.
JON thinks about it.

JON No, he's bluffing. I can't let him get away with it.
JON puts in thirty krona.

SARA This is nerve-racking, I can't watch.
SARA goes over to the fire and puts another shovel of coal into it.

STEFAN So let's see what you've got. Daniel first.
DANIEL lays down his cards.

DANIEL Pair of fives. I was bluffing.

MIKAEL Shit Daniel. Shit. I really thought you had something.

DANIEL What do you have Jon?

JON Pair of threes.

SARA What?

JON I knew he was bluffing. I had to see what he had.

SARA Well done Daniel, I knew you would beat him.
SARA gives DANIEL a hug.

STEFAN I should have stayed in.

MIKAEL You just earned a month's worth of allowance
Daniel, you still shouldn't take such risks.

DANIEL I didn't, I listened to the ghost.

MIKAEL I should take you to a psychiatrist after the
Christmas break.

JON I need a drink, does anyone else want one?

MIKAEL Yes please, I'll just have one more to celebrate my
son's success.
STEFAN shuffles and deals.

STEFAN Are you sure Mikael?

MIKAEL Oh, come on. I haven't even had half as much as you
tonight.

JON Are you trying to catch up with the rest of us?

MIKAEL I wouldn't be able to do that in a decade.

STEFAN I'm just thinking of the last time.

JON I think Mikael is old enough to take responsibility
for himself. What do you think Mikael?
JON pours himself and MIKAEL a drink.

Aren't you?
He hands MIKAEL the drink.

MIKAEL Cheers then.
MIKAEL drinks.

STEFAN Yeah, do whatever you want. Mikael you start bidding.

MIKAEL I say twenty.

JON I'm in, I'm going to beat you all this time.

MIKAEL You aren't strong enough.

JON Pardon?

MIKAEL You aren't strong enough to beat us.

JON What's that supposed to mean?

SARA I'm in.

JON What the hell is that supposed to mean?

SARA Don't swear Jon.

MIKAEL Nothing.

STEFAN I fold.

JON I said I was going to beat you, not give you a beating.

MIKAEL I didn't say you did.

DANIEL I fold.

SARA Listen to that one. You could think he had played for years.

STEFAN deals.

MIKAEL I just meant that your hand wasn't strong enough. I raise by one.

JON What do you know about my hand?

MIKAEL Nothing. I'm merely speculating.

JON I'll prove you wrong. I'm in.

STEFAN Was that your last coin dad?

JON I'll win it back.

SARA I fold.

STEFAN Dad's out of money, so I suppose that means cards on the table.

MIKAEL Three of a kind.

JON Haha, straight.

STEFAN shuffles and deals.

MIKAEL Fuck.

DANIEL Dad!

SARA You shouldn't swear Mikael.

JON I told you I was going to beat you.

MIKAEL It's not over yet.

JON No, you'll know it's over when that pile in front of you lies here.

MIKAEL What, the way you're playing? It's only luck you didn't just lose your last coin.

JON Luck has got nothing to do with it.

SARA It's just a game you two. Don't get so competitive.

STEFAN Another round then? Dad you start bidding.

JON I'm on a roll, I say two.

STEFAN Sara?

SARA I fold, you never give me any good cards.

JON It's not about the cards, it's about the bidding.

SARA Does anyone want a drink?

STEFAN Yes please.

MIKAEL Yes please.

JON No, I'm gonna win this.

MIKAEL That's not like you, saying no to a drink.

JON I need to focus on the game.

STEFAN I'm in.

STEFAN deals another card.

JON So almost everyone's in, I'll say three.

STEFAN What are you looking at Daniel?

DANIEL He's saying something.

MIKAEL Who?

DANIEL The boy in the mirror.

JON Is that how you know whether to bid or not, you're looking in the mirror?

MIKAEL Don't be silly dad, there's no way he could see your cards from there.

JON What's he looking at then? That's qualified cheating if you ask me.

SARA I don't think anyone has.

MIKAEL You can't see dad's cards, can you Daniel?

DANIEL No.

JON What is he looking at then?

MIKAEL Stop looking into the mirror Daniel, let's continue playing.

JON What are you looking at Daniel? I'm not playing with someone who's trying to cheat.

DANIEL I'm not looking at your cards.

JON What are you looking at then?

DANIEL I'm listening to the boy.

MIKAEL What boy Daniel?

DANIEL The boy under the thousand stars.

JON He's gone mad.

SARA What's the boy telling you?

JON Don't you start now as well.

DANIEL He says it was an accident.

JON *(to SARA)* I can't believe you're encouraging this.

SARA What was an accident Daniel?

DANIEL His death. And he tells me to bet on this round.
I'm in.

JON Good, then maybe we could focus on the game and
stop talking nonsense. Mikael.

MIKAEL What?

*SARA stands up, goes over to the mirror and looks
into it.*

JON Are you in or not?

MIKAEL I'm in. Daniel, can you tell me what this boy looks
like?

STEFAN lays out another card.

DANIEL He looks exactly like I do.

STEFAN What do you say dad?

JON What are you looking at Sara, it's just a mirror.

SARA I know it's just a mirror.

STEFAN It's your bid dad.

JON I'll go all in.

SARA It reminds me of the time you made it.

MIKAEL That's the boy I've been dreaming about.

STEFAN I fold.

MIKAEL I have started having these dreams lately.

DANIEL I'm in.

STEFAN Are you sure about this Daniel?

SARA He knows what he's doing.

MIKAEL puts in money.

MIKAEL About a small boy, lying on the floor.

STEFAN lays out the last card.

STEFAN Dad's down to zero again, so let's see what you all have.

MIKAEL He's looking almost exactly like Daniel, but it's not.

MIKAEL puts down his hand.

STEFAN Full house, well done Mikael. Dad?

JON Full house, in threes and... *(as he lays them out)* ace.

MIKAEL And it keeps returning to me. The dream.

JON starts collecting the money.

STEFAN Wait dad, let's see what Daniel has first.

MIKAEL Night after night. I've actually started thinking it might not be a dream at all, but a memory.

DANIEL Four kings.

SARA The four kings.

JON That's cheating. You must be cheating.

SARA Diamonds for summer, clubs for autumn, spades for winter and hearts for spring.

JON No one gets four of a kind the first time they play.

SARA Diamonds for money, clubs for luck, hearts for love and spades for death.

JON Shut up, will you?

DANIEL What does it mean?

SARA The four spirits want to tell you something.

JON Stop rambling, will you. Please.

STEFAN Dad.

JON What?

MIKAEL And now Daniel sees this boy in the mirror, looking exactly like the boy in my dream.

JON Am I not allowed to say that? That she's rambling.

STEFAN You are just in a bad mood because you lost the game.

JON No, but I think someone should represent some normality in this family.

SARA And that would be you?

JON Don't you think Daniel is a bit old to believe in ghosts?

MIKAEL Why don't you ask him how he died Daniel?

JON But instead of telling him they don't exist, you feed his imagination with even more nonsense.

MIKAEL The boy. Go to the mirror and ask him how he died.

JON Look Daniel. Maybe you had some extreme luck tonight, or maybe Stefan was fiddling with the cards, but there was no ghost helping you, and four kings means nothing but a really good hand.

MIKAEL grabs DANIEL and pulls him over to the mirror.

MIKAEL Do you see him? Is he there?

DANIEL I don't know.

JON I know you love your father and your grandmother Daniel, and so do I, but your grandmother is growing senile and your father is a bit of a lunatic.

MIKAEL Ask him Daniel, ask him how he died.

DANIEL You're hurting me.

MIKAEL I'm not hurting you.

STEFAN Let him go Mikael.

MIKAEL He killed him, didn't he? Dad killed him and burnt him in the oven.

JON Especially when he's drinking, he's never been able to handle alcohol very well.

MIKAEL Why don't you tell me what you see?

DANIEL I don't see anything.

MIKAEL You could see him five minutes ago, why can't you see him now?

DANIEL Because there is nothing to see. There are no ghosts, only a lunatic would think it was a real ghost.

MIKAEL slaps DANIEL, who stumbles into the mirror. Both the mirror and DANIEL falls to the ground. DANIEL runs out bleeding. STEFAN runs after him. MIKAEL sits down.

MIKAEL It was an accident.

Pause.

JON Who wants a drink?

MIKAEL Yes please.

SARA I don't think you two should have any more.

JON I think we're old enough to decide that for ourselves.

SARA Haven't you caused enough trouble as it is tonight?

JON It was an accident.

SARA The ceiling wasn't strong enough, was it?

MIKAEL What?

JON She's rambling again.

SARA But you were the one who built the house, how could you not know that the ceiling wouldn't be strong enough?

JON It's all the stories she comes up with, it's gone to her head. 'The four kings', what was all that about? One for luck, one for money, one for love...

SARA And the last one for death. That's a story my mum used to tell me when I was a child and since Daniel is so fascinated by ghosts I thought he might be interested. But I suppose that's not simple and square enough for you to understand. You've never been smart Jon, but I have accepted that and learnt to live with it. But there are situations in which you should accept that you are stupid and just shut up, and this is one of those.

JON *(to MIKAEL)* See what I have to put up with.
STEFAN enters.

STEFAN He was to quick for me, I lost him.

MIKAEL I'll find him.

SARA Don't go after him.

MIKAEL Why not?

SARA The way you've behaved tonight, I think he'll be better off alone.

MIKAEL It's pitch black up there.

SARA He knows where the torch is.

MIKAEL He was bleeding.

SARA Not that bad.

MIKAEL And there's a storm outside.

STEFAN I think he'll be all right.

MIKAEL Oh, you think so, do you?

SARA It doesn't help to get upset Mikael.

MIKAEL Thank you, that's good to know. It doesn't help to get upset. That's some great advice, really, but it's not your son that's lost.

SARA Are you sure about that?

MIKAEL Is it all right if I smoke in here?

SARA No.

MIKAEL lights a cigarette.

STEFAN I thought you'd quit.

JON Should we play another round then?

STEFAN You don't have any money left.

JON I can add some.

STEFAN We don't play for more than two hundred dad. You were the one who made up that rule.

JON Did I? Let's do something else then. It's hot in here. Isn't it hot in here?

STEFAN It's quite nice actually.

JON stands up and walks towards the oven.

JON We need to turn the oven down. How much did you set it to?

MIKAEL Not more than usual.

JON God, it's hot.

JON stumbles, but catches the balance.

STEFAN Dad, are you all right?

JON Yeah, of course I am. Stop looking at me, I'm fine. It's just too hot in here, I got a bit dizzy. I think I need a drink. Can someone turn down the heat?

JON sits down. STEFAN goes to turn down the heat.

SARA Have a glass of water.

JON I want vodka.

SARA You can't have any.

JON I'm thirsty.

SARA Have a glass of water.

JON I don't want water, I want vodka.

SARA You can't have any.

JON stands up.

JON This is ridiculous, do you see how she treats me? Stefan, give me a glass of vodka. Could anyone pour me a glass of vodka, or do I have to do everything myself in this house.

STEFAN Sit down dad, you're all red in the face.

JON There's nothing wrong with me.

STEFAN Then why do you need to hold on to the chair?

JON I just need a drink, it's too hot in here. A fucking drink, is that too much to ask for?

STEFAN Have a glass of water.

JON sits down. STEFAN pours a glass of water for him.

JON I don't want water.

A sack of Christmas presents falls down the chimney of the oven that isn't lit.

STEFAN Fucking hell!

DANIEL falls down on the sack, dressed as Santa Claus.

MIKAEL What's happening?

SARA I don't know.

JON Daniel just fell down the chimney.

MIKAEL Oh my God, are you all right Daniel?

DANIEL Daniel, who is Daniel, I don't know a Daniel.

STEFAN Daniel?

DANIEL Ho ho ho.

STEFAN I think he's got a concussion.

JON It's not Daniel, it's Santa Claus.

MIKAEL Daniel. Are you all right. Are you hurt?

DANIEL Who's Daniel? Is this Seaside Street?

MIKAEL What were you doing on the roof Daniel, you're not allowed to be up there.

DANIEL I don't know a Daniel. Is this Seaside Street near Surahammar?

JON Yes.

DANIEL Then you must be Jon, is that right?

JON Yes, that's me.

DANIEL You have made yourself guilty of lying, is that correct?

JON No, I-

DANIEL I can see in the record that you as late as today claimed that ghosts do not exist?

JON Yes.

DANIEL Do you regret this crime?

JON What?

DANIEL Will you ask righteous Father Christmas for forgiveness?

JON No.

DANIEL You will therefore receive no presents this year. Instead I will give your presents to Stefan.

MIKAEL Daniel, what are you doing?

DANIEL I don't know a Daniel. Do we have Mikael here?

MIKAEL Yes.

DANIEL Have you been a good boy this year?

MIKAEL Yes, well, I think so.

DANIEL Did you not promise your son you would stop smoking?

MIKAEL Oh, you mean this, this is just-

MIKAEL stubs out his cigarette.

DANIEL And you stink of alcohol.

MIKAEL Is this some kind of trial?

DANIEL You've got yourself blind drunk on Christmas Eve.

MIKAEL I'm not blind drunk. Look, I'm sorry I pushed you, I didn't try to-

DANIEL I will therefore give all your presents to Stefan.

SARA Is he getting all the presents?

DANIEL Do we have Sara here?

MIKAEL Daniel, listen to me.

DANIEL I don't know a Daniel.

MIKAEL I'm not blind drunk, I've just had a glass or two. Daniel, listen to me. You know I never drink.

DANIEL Do we have Sara here?

MIKAEL goes and pulls DANIEL by his arm.

MIKAEL Daniel, listen to me. I'm trying to say I'm sorry. I didn't mean to push you into the mirror.

DANIEL I'm not afraid of you.

JON Leave your son alone Mikael.

MIKAEL let's go of DANIEL.

MIKAEL I just want to talk to him. I just want to tell him I'm sorry.

STEFAN Why don't you get some rest Mikael.

MIKAEL I don't need a rest, I need to talk to my son.

STEFAN You can talk to him when you're sober.

MIKAEL Daniel-

DANIEL I'm not Daniel. I will have to ask you either to sit down and be quiet, or to leave the room. You are disturbing the present giving.

MIKAEL goes to sit down.

Okay, where was I? Do we have... Do we have... Fuck it, who the fuck is next?

STEFAN You don't have to continue Daniel.

DANIEL Who's Daniel? I don't know a Daniel.

SARA tries to put a hand on DANIEL's shoulder, but he pulls back.

DANIEL Leave me alone. Do we have Sara here?

SARA Yes.

DANIEL Okay. Where did I put the sack?

SARA It's there.

DANIEL Where?

SARA Under the thousand stars.

DANIEL Under the thousand stars?

SARA Over there, under the chandelier.

DANIEL Is that the thousand stars?

SARA Yes.

DANIEL I've heard you've been a good grandmother, you can have the rest of the presents.

STEFAN What about my presents?

DANIEL You've already got dad's and grandpa's presents, isn't that enough?

STEFAN Yeah, I suppose-

DANIEL Does anyone else want any fucking presents, or have you had enough?

JON I think we've had enough.

DANIEL Fine then, see you next bloody fucking Christmas.
DANIEL runs out and slams the door.

SARA I'll go after him.

STEFAN I'll come with you.
SARA and STEFAN exit.

MIKAEL I should make sure he's all right.

JON No, leave him be. He's stronger than you think.

MIKAEL I hope so.

JON I can see a lot of myself in that boy. We might be tricky to deal with sometimes, but we're survivors.

MIKAEL I can't believe he wouldn't give us any presents.

JON I'm sure you can get them back if you want to.

MIKAEL No, let's keep it the way Daniel wanted it.

JON I must say I enjoyed it though. I think Daniel was the best Santa I've ever seen. Much more inventive than Stefan used to be.

MIKAEL He's unique, isn't he? He's a genius, really, but sometimes I worry for him. He's too smart for this world, he doesn't fit in. He has so many questions I'm not able to answer. I just feel stupid when he asks them because I realise that he already knows more about the world than I do, do you know what I mean?

Pause.

Dad are you listening?

MIKAEL realises JON has fallen asleep.

Dad!

JON wakes up. He is slurring when he talks.

JON I must have fallen asleep.

MIKAEL Great.

JON What?

MIKAEL Nothing.

JON You said something.

MIKAEL I just said great.

JON What's great?

MIKAEL I don't know.

JON I'm tired.

MIKAEL You're drunk.

JON What time is it?

MIKAEL You can't even speak clearly. You make us all act like you are dying, but you're just drunk. You make everything revolve around you and that's exactly how you want it.

JON I'm tired.

MIKAEL Yeah, you're tired and you're drunk and you haven't listened to a word of what I've said. I don't even know why I'm speaking to you. I don't even know why we are here. Dad?

Pause.

Oh, you're sleeping again.

MIKAEL goes to the table, empties what's left of the vodka bottle in a glass and drinks it.

We'll get you to bed soon, I'm just gonna get some help from Stefan to get you up the stairs. I'll be back in a minute, don't try to stand up on your own. Dad? Dad!

JON What?

MIKAEL I'll be back in a minute, don't try to stand up.

JON falls back into sleep. MIKAEL exits. A few moments later DANIEL enters.

DANIEL So this is the thousand stars. Why, didn't you just say so to start with?

He goes to the cracked mirror, which now lies under the chandelier, and raises it. He talks to his reflection.

I'm under it now, I don't see you.

Yes you do.

I do?

You are looking straight at me.

So this is you?

Yes.

But it's me.

We do look very similar.

But you are not me?

You are missing something Daniel. Straight in front of you.

You are in front of me.

Between us Daniel.

The mirror.

Look at the sign carved into the frame.

'To Daniel on his third birthday'. Is this my mirror?

Read the date.

'Second of April, nineteen sixty eight.'

SCENE 4

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE. The scene is covered with snow. The electricity box lies on the ground. It is morning of the next day. STEFAN comes out with a snow shovel and starts shoveling a path from the door to the garage. DANIEL follows him with a smaller shovel and tries to help.

DANIEL Does the universe have an end?

STEFAN Everything has an end.

DANIEL But our teacher says it's infinite.

STEFAN What's infinite?

DANIEL The universe.

STEFAN What we want is a path so you can walk from the house to the garage.

DANIEL Does infinity have an end?

STEFAN Everything has an end.

DANIEL Does an end have an end?

STEFAN An end is an end.

DANIEL But how does it look? The end? Because it's nothing. It can't be black because even black is something.

STEFAN I think that if you looked at nothing, you would see nothing.

DANIEL And what would happen if you passed it?

STEFAN You are doing a good job Daniel. Try to aim for the garage door.

MIKAEL comes out with his and DANIEL's bags.

DANIEL If you passed the end of the universe? What would there be outside?

STEFAN I don't know Daniel.

DANIEL sees his father, puts the spade into the snow and leaves the stage without saying a word.

*MIKAEL puts down the bags and lights a cigarette.
STEFAN continues to shovel.*

So, you've woken up now.

MIKAEL I can't sleep in this house.

STEFAN Too many ghosts haunting you?

MIKAEL Too silent.

STEFAN Not like Stockholm out here, is it?

MIKAEL No.

STEFAN It's easy to forget where you come from.

MIKAEL I never liked the silence.

STEFAN So you're leaving right away?

MIKAEL Don't want to get caught in the rush hour.

STEFAN I promised Daniel to take you to McDonald's in Surahammar on your way home.

MIKAEL That's generous of you.

STEFAN Have you talked with him today?

MIKAEL Do you always shovel here?

STEFAN You don't expect mum and dad doing it themselves, do you?

MIKAEL Doesn't the ploughman come here?

STEFAN It's private property.

MIKAEL Can't you pay him?

STEFAN With what money?

MIKAEL You shouldn't have to do that.

STEFAN Someone's got to do it.

MIKAEL They should be able to get home help services.

STEFAN If you want to suggest to dad that they need home help services, then why don't you do so?

MIKAEL I still don't think you should have to do it.

STEFAN They've got to be able to get out.

MIKAEL Do you come here every day?

STEFAN If it's snowing every day.

MIKAEL I couldn't stand that. Don't you have a life of your own?

STEFAN What have you got to do with it, you haven't been here for five years.

MIKAEL I'm not welcome here.

STEFAN Mum misses you.

MIKAEL Dad hates me.

STEFAN Dad's dad.

MIKAEL I can't stand him.

STEFAN Mum's losing her memory.

MIKAEL Yes you said so in the letter. I think she seems all right.

STEFAN You don't notice it when you talk to her.

MIKAEL I like all these stories she comes up with, she never told us any stories when we were kids.

STEFAN Once she went shopping and came home with five kilos of minced meat and nothing else. Dad's not well either.

MIKAEL You mean the dizziness?

STEFAN He insists on doing everything himself, but he keeps losing his balance and falling.

MIKAEL He likes to make a scene out of it.

STEFAN It's just luck he hasn't broken anything yet. I'm here every weekend making sure everything is fixed so there won't be anything left for him to do, but he always finds something.

MIKAEL You shouldn't worry too much.

STEFAN He keeps complaining about the storms, but really I think he enjoys them. They always give him a reason to climb ladders and hammer things and be adventurous.

MIKAEL I would be more worried if he stopped.

STEFAN And you haven't even called to say hello.

MIKAEL I came here after you wrote to me.

STEFAN Just to get drunk and accuse dad of murdering a child. What's gotten into you?

MIKAEL I don't know.

STEFAN Then you left him in the glassworks, when he was too weak to stand up himself.

MIKAEL Did I?

STEFAN He said you'd told him to stay, that you'd be back in a minute. He must've been sitting there an hour before I came down.

MIKAEL Yeah?

STEFAN And throwing Daniel into a mirror, it's only luck he didn't hurt himself more than he did.

MIKAEL I know.

STEFAN What's wrong with you?

MIKAEL I don't know.

STEFAN You don't know?

STEFAN has finished shovelling. He exits into the house. MIKAEL lies down in the snow and makes a snow angel. JON comes out from the house with a toolbox. SARA comes after him.

SARA No you shouldn't do it yourself.

JON I want my morning coffee.

SARA Stefan told you to wait for him to do it.

JON I can't wait all day, can I?

Sees MIKAEL.

Is that Mikael? Is he still drunk?

SARA looks at MIKAEL.

SARA He is making a snow angel.

JON He's gone mad. Now where's that bloody box?

SARA Please make sure you don't get electrocuted.

JON goes to the electricity box and uncovers it from snow. STEFAN comes out from the house with a banana in his hand.

STEFAN Dad, what are you doing?

SARA I told him to wait for you.

JON I always do this myself.

STEFAN And you've nearly killed yourself a few times. What's so difficult with letting me do it?

JON No one would be happier than me if you did it.

STEFAN Then why don't you let me?

JON Because you never do it.

STEFAN I was just about to, I only went in to get a banana.

JON There's always something, isn't there?

STEFAN I haven't had any breakfast yet.

JON Yeah, I'll do it myself, don't you worry about it.

JON takes a hammer and a nail from the toolbox, lifts up the electricity box and starts climbing the ladder.

STEFAN All right, I won't eat it. If the electricity can't wait half a minute while I'm eating my banana, I guess it's better that I go hungry.

JON I want my morning coffee.

STEFAN puts down his banana and takes the box, hammer and nail from JON.

STEFAN Give that to me.

STEFAN climbs up the ladder and starts nailing the box to the wall. SARA goes over to MIKAEL and looks down at him.

SARA So you are leaving?

MIKAEL Yes.

DANIEL enters the stage. He is making snowballs and sees how far he can throw them. He does not take any notice of the others.

SARA Did you know the king of winter had three sons?

MIKAEL No.

MIKAEL lights another cigarette.

STEFAN Hand me another nail, will you?

JON hands STEFAN a nail.

SARA The two firstborn were twins. One was the prince of autumn and the other one the prince of summer.

STEFAN How's that small thing going to help, give me a proper one.

SARA Later they had another son who became the prince of spring.

JON gives him another nail.

STEFAN That's better.

SARA The sons kept complaining that the castle was too cold, but if the king had put the heating on, the castle would have melted. The prince of spring and the prince of autumn always froze, but the prince of summer had worse problems. Wherever he went things melted around him. He always had to move around, because if he stood still on the same spot for too long, the floor would melt under his feet.

STEFAN Another nail please.

JON You have to nail one to the right as well.

STEFAN I'm getting there.

JON You have to place them evenly, otherwise it won't hold.

STEFAN I'm not finished yet.

SARA As the prince grew older he also grew warmer and one day he was so warm that the ground wouldn't stop melting beneath him. He sank deeper and deeper into it and soon the entire prince was enclosed by the water that had melted around him. The king of winter tried to help him, but as soon as he came to the pool where the prince had sunk, the water on the surface froze to ice and prevented the prince from swimming up. So it was through a layer of ice that the king saw his son drowned.

STEFAN Nail.

MIKAEL Is that the end?

SARA Nothing has an end?

JON You need the rope as well.

STEFAN The rope won't make a difference.

JON It couldn't hurt, could it?

STEFAN All right, give me the bloody rope then?

JON I can't reach it.

STEFAN Just go and get it.

JON I'm not leaving the ladder with you up there. What if you fall?

STEFAN Mum, could you come and give us a hand please.

SARA goes to the ladder.

SARA What do you want?

JON Could you hand us the rope?

SARA The rope won't make a difference.

STEFAN No, but it couldn't hurt either.

DANIEL is still throwing snow balls. MIKAEL makes one himself and throws at DANIEL.

DANIEL What are you doing?

MIKAEL Want to see who can throw the furthest?

DANIEL You won't have a chance.

MIKAEL You want to give me one?

DANIEL Come on then, let's see what you can do.

STEFAN Nail please.

MIKAEL All right, watch this one.

MIKAEL throws.

DANIEL I know about it.

MIKAEL Your turn.

DANIEL You're not my dad.

MIKAEL I've not been the best dad ever, have I?

DANIEL No, you're not my dad at all.

DANIEL throws.

STEFAN Nail.

MIKAEL Good throw Daniel.

DANIEL I read the inscription on the mirror. It was a present for my third birthday. I was born in nineteen sixty five.

MIKAEL throws.

MIKAEL Were you?

STEFAN Nail.

DANIEL Yeah, I've figured it all out. I died when I was ten years old, that's why I don't look any older, even though I'm really forty two.

DANIEL throws.

MIKAEL Really?

DANIEL The boy in the mirror. It's me. He looks just like me.

MIKAEL Wow, Daniel. That's really something.

STEFAN Nail.

MIKAEL throws.

DANIEL But I wasn't ready to die, so I came back to haunt the house. But grandpa, who's my real father, didn't want me around, so he let you take care of me instead.

MIKAEL So I'm really your brother?

DANIEL Read the inscription yourself if you don't believe me. 'To Daniel on his third birthday, second of April, nineteen sixty eight.'

STEFAN Nail.

DANIEL throws.

MIKAEL Is that what it says?

DANIEL That's why you tried to kill me yesterday, when I started looking at the mirror. You were afraid I would find out. You can try again if you want to, I'm a ghost, I'm already dead.

MIKAEL I won't try to kill you again Daniel.

DANIEL Won't you?

MIKAEL No.

DANIEL It's your turn.

MIKAEL No I give up, we have to get going.

MIKAEL goes to pick up his bags. STEFAN flicks the power switch and the house lights up from the inside. He climbs down the ladder.

STEFAN What do you think?

JON It doesn't look very stable.

STEFAN It's the best I can do, if you don't like it you'll have to call for an electrician.

JON Maybe just a few more nails.

MIKAEL I think there are enough as it is.

JON You don't know what you're talking about.

STEFAN Are you off?

MIKAEL Yes.

SARA Don't you want to stay for lunch?

MIKAEL No, we don't want to get caught in rush-hour traffic when we hit Stockholm.

JON takes the hammer and a few nails and climbs up the ladder.

STEFAN Dad, what are you doing?

JON I can't stand seeing a job being left half done.

STEFAN Well I'll have to leave now as well. I've promised to take Daniel to McDonald's on the way. I can't stand here watching you all day just because you want to climb the ladder.

JON You do whatever you want. I built this house, don't you think I'm able to hammer in a few nails without your help?

STEFAN And what if you fall?

MIKAEL I think dad's old enough to take responsibility for himself.

JON Finally a wise word from someone.

STEFAN Well, I might just leave you here.

JON See you on Saturday Stefan.

STEFAN See you dad. Love you mum.

STEFAN gives SARA a hug.

JON Can someone hand me a better nail?

No one does.

MIKAEL Bye mum, it was lovely seeing you.

DANIEL Bye mum.

MIKAEL Happy new year dad.

JON Yes, yes.

DANIEL Bye dad.

STEFAN, DANIEL and MIKAEL exit. We hear the sound of two cars starting and leaving.

JON Hand me a better nail will you, this one's crooked.

SARA If you built the whole house yourself, I'm sure you'll be able to handle a crooked nail without my help. I want a cup of coffee.

SARA exits into the house. JON tries to hammer in the crooked nail, loses balance and falls to the ground.