

LESTER: What's your proper name?

FISH: Samson.

LESTER: Who's your mum?

*Silence.*

Who's your mum? Who's the lady in the tent?

*Silence.*

Your dad?

FISH: You, Less.

LESTER: Sisters?

FISH: Red and Hattie and Lane.

LESTER: Brothers?

FISH: Quick Lamb.

LESTER: You forgot one.

FISH: Fish Lamb.

LESTER: One more. Small.

FISH: Lon, That Lon. The baby.

LESTER: He's a grown-boy now, Fish. Where do you live?

FISH: Cloudstreet. The big house.

LESTER: That's right. You're clever enough, cobbler. Want to sing a song?

FISH: The house sad, Lestah.

LESTER: How do you know that?

FISH: It talks. It hurts.

LESTER *kisses him*. FISH *stares at the bath*.

Lestah, more water, Lestah?

LESTER: Can only give you a little bit, Fish. 'Cause when it's deeper, you try and get under it.

FISH: No.

LESTER: Yes, you do.

*Silence.*

FISH: Do stories?

LESTER: No. I'm all out of stories, Fish. I can't even work up a decent joke.

FISH: The farm ones, Lestah. Stories!

LESTER: All right. Well...

*He can't think of any.*

FISH: Lest! Lestah!

LESTER: There was this boy. And he lived on a farm. Actually, this is me, it's the first thing I remember in my life. It was last century. It was night and my father was carrying me across a flooded creek. I was on his shoulders and could see the swirling darkness below. I was holding onto his ears and gripping his neck between my knees and—

FISH: ~~Lestah!~~ Fish. Fish.

LESTER: All right, and there was this boy called Fish.

FISH: ~~Hah!~~

LESTER: And he lived on a farm with only his brother.

FISH: ~~Quiet!~~ ~~Whacko!~~ ~~Lest!~~

LESTER: Yeah, with Quick. Everyone else was gone on holidays. One night it started to rain, see, and it came down like all of Heaven was tryin' to get in the roof. It rained and rained until the creek bust its banks. Pretty soon there was water in the lounge and water under the beds. So Quick wakes Fish up and tells him they got to go. They have to try and make it into town. Now Quick is bigger than Fish. He helps him into his clothes and holds his hand as they wade out into the water. There's rain peltin' down and it's dark. Quick puts Fish up on his shoulders and he strides into the water. It's a swirling torrent—

FISH: ~~Yeah.~~ ~~And the water.~~ ~~Yes.~~ ~~They go inside the water.~~ To the big country. Yeah.

LESTER: No, that's not what happens—

FISH: ~~And people there for them.~~ There's people there.

LESTER: Oh, God.

FISH: I miss Quick, Dad.

#### SCENE 45

~~Cloudstreet. Pickles side. Morning. ROSE, dressed up as best she knows how, hurries off.~~

SAM: Where you going, Rosie?

ROSE: None of your business.