

walked into the examination hall, took out his pen and wrote "God knows all the answers", then he handed in his paper and left.  
Rita (*impressed*) Did he?

Frank When his paper was returned to him, his professor had written on it, "And God gives out the marks".

Rita Did he fail?

Frank (*breaking away slightly*) Of course he failed. You see, a clever answer is not necessarily the correct answer.

Rita (*getting out her cigarettes*) I wasn't tryin' to be clever; I didn't have much time an' I...

Frank All right, but look, you've got some time now. (*He leans on her chair, bending over her*) Just give it a quarter of an hour or so adding some considered argument to this: "In attempting to resolve the staging difficulties in *Peer Gynt* I would present it on the radio because... and outline your reasons supporting them, as much as possible, with quotes from accepted authorities. All right?"

Rita Yeh. All right. (*She picks up the essay, pen, copy of "Peer Gynt", eight reference books, sticks the cigarette in her mouth, and starts to move towards the window desk*)

Frank Now, are you sure you understand?

Rita stops and speaks over her shoulder with the cigarette still in her mouth

Rita Yeh. What d' y' think I am, thick? (*She takes her usual chair and puts it in front of the window desk. She sits down and puts her belongings on the desk, moving Frank's briefcase out of the way*)

Frank moves the swivel chair to the v end of his desk and settles down to marking essays

Rita leans back in the chair and tries to blow smoke-rings

Y' know Peer Gynt? He was searchin' for the meaning of life wasn't he?

Frank Erm—put at its briefest, yes.

Rita Yeh. (*She pauses*) I was doin' this woman's hair on Wednesday...

Frank Tch...

Rita (*facing Frank*) I'm gonna do this, don't worry. I'll do it. But I just wanna tell y'; I was doin' her hair an' I was dead bored with what the others in the shop were talkin' about. So I just said to this woman, I said, "Do you know about *Peer Gynt*?" She thought it was a new perm lotion. So I told her all about it, y' know the play. An' y' know somethin', she was dead interested, she was y' know.

Frank Was she?

Rita Yeh. She said, "I wish I could go off searchin' for the meanin' of life." There's loads of them round by us who feel like that. Cos by us there is no meanin' to life. (*She thinks*) Frank, y' know culture, y' know the word culture? Well it doesn't just mean goin' to the opera an' that, does it?

Frank No.

Rita It means a way of livin', doesn't it? Well we've got no culture.

Frank Of course you have.

Rita What? Do you mean like that working-class-culture thing?

Frank Mm.

Rita Yeh. I've read about that. I've never seen it though.

Frank Well, look around you.

Rita I do. But I don't see any, y' know, culture. I just see everyone pissed, or on the *Valium*, tryin' to get from one day to the next. Y' daren't say that round our way like, cos they're proud. They'll tell y' they've got culture as they sit there drinkin' their keg beer out of plastic glasses.

Frank Yes, but there's ~~nothing wrong with that, if they're content with it.~~  
~~During the following Frank's attention is caught gradually and he stops marking and starts listening~~

Rita But they're not. Cos there's no meanin'. They tell y' stories about the past, y' know, the war, or when they were fightin' for food an' clothin' an' houses. Their eyes light up as they tell y', because there was some meanin' to it. But the thing is that now, I mean now that most of them have got some sort of house an' there's food an' money around, they know they're better off but, honest, they know they've got nothin' as well. There's like this sort of disease, but no one mentions it; everyone behaves as though it's normal, y' know inevitable that there's vandalism an' violence an' houses burnt out an' wrecked by the people they were built for. There's somethin' wrong. An' like the worst thing is that y' know the people who are supposed to like represent the people on our estate, y' know the *Daily Mirror* an' *The Sun*, an ITV an' the Unions, what are they tellin' people to do? They just tell them to go out an' get more money, don't they? But they don't want more money; it's like me, isn't it? Y' know, buyin' new dresses all the time, isn't it? The Unions tell them to go out an' get more money an' ITV an' the papers tell them what to spend it on so the disease is always covered up.

Frank swivels round in his chair to face Rita

Frank (*after a pause*) Why didn't you take a course in politics?

Rita Politics? Go way, I hate politics. I'm just tellin' y' about round our way. I wanna be on this course findin' out. You know what I learn from you, about art an' literature, it feeds me, inside. I can get through the rest of the week if I know I've got comin' here to look forward to. Denny tried to stop me comin' tonight. He tried to get me to go out to the pub with him an' his mates. He hates me comin' here. It's like drug addicts, isn't it? They hate it when one of them tries to break away. It makes me stronger comin' here. That's what Denny's frightened of.

Frank "Only connect."

Rita Oh, not friggin' Forster again.

Frank "Only connect." You see what you've been doing?

Rita Just tellin' y' about home.

Frank Yes, and connectin' your dresses/ITV and the *Daily Mirror*.

Addicts/you and your husband.

Rita Ogh!