

**MRS. GIVINGS.** Wait a moment.

Elizabeth, when the milk comes in, can you feel any love for the child?

**ELIZABETH.** I try not to think of love. I try not to think of Henry Douglas.

**MRS. GIVINGS.** Of course. Do you want more children, Elizabeth? That is a tactless question, you don't need to answer, forgive me, sometimes I say whatever is in my head. I want more children and my husband desperately wants more children but I am afraid of another birth, aren't you? When I gave birth I remember so clearly, the moment her head was coming out of my body, I thought: Why would any rational creature do this twice, knowing what I know now? And then she came out and clambered right onto my breast and tried to eat me, she was so hungry, so hungry it terrified me – her hunger. And I thought: is that the first emotion? Hunger? And not hunger for *food* but wanting to eat other *people*? Specifically one's mother? And then I thought – isn't it strange, isn't it strange about Jesus? That is to say, about Jesus being a man? For it is women who are eaten – who turn their bodies into food – I gave up my blood – there was so much blood – and I gave up my body – but I couldn't feed her, could not turn my body into food, and she was *so hungry*. I suppose that makes me an inferior kind of woman and a very inferior kind of Jesus.

**ELIZABETH.** Hmm.

**MRS. GIVINGS.** Oh, dear, they said you were very religious, that must have sounded –

**ELIZABETH.** I *was* very religious.

**MRS. GIVINGS.** Oh – I'm sorry, I –

**ELIZABETH.** I thought of Jesus while I was giving birth, like you. But I wasn't thinking about why was He a man. I was thinking, please save me Jesus. And He did. Now why He didn't save my Henry I don't know, so I stopped believing in Him.

Catherine  
# 1