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# If You Go Down to the Bank Today...

A Full-length Comedy

by

Peter Nunan & Paul Tumilty

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# If You Go Down to the Bank Today...

by Peter Nunan & Paul Tumulty

## **SETTING:**

A BRANCH OF A BANK LOCATED IN A SMALL PROVINCIAL TOWN

## **CHARACTERS:**

ARTHUR HUMPHRIES, *the bank manager (Middle-aged)*

FRANK JOHNSON, *his assistant manager (Mid-twenties)*

SHEILA SMITH, *the rather dowdy, spinsterish bank clerk*

MANDY ANDREWS, *Frank's girlfriend; a clerk at another bank*

HAMOODSKI/DOG/NAYLOR, *criminal mastermind & master of disguise*

TOM, *a bank robber (not too bright)*

GERRY, *another bank robber (equally daft)*

PC GRAY, *a policeman*

## **ETC:**

SETTING THE STAGE; *the door to the street is upstage right with a coat stand just inside the door. There is an L shaped counter with a hatch to separate the public from the staff. In the center of the working area is an office table along with filing cabinets and two swivel chairs. In the upstage wall is a door to the assistant manager's flat, and upstage left, a door to the basement. Centre stage left is a door to the manager's office, and downstage left, a door to the broom closet. The Basement door must be self-closing and the office door should be partially glazed with obscure glass.*

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**ACT I, SCENEONE**

*(AT RISE: Inside the branch of a small bank in a tiny provincial town. FRANK, the assistant bank manager, is standing at the counter that separates the public area from the staff area but is preoccupied and not paying any attention to his work. SHEILA, the bank clerk, is working at a computer on the office table in the central work area.)*

FRANK

Boring, boring, boring, boring, boring.

SHEILA

Please don't keep on, Frank.

FRANK

Well it's all right for you. You don't have to go on this boring course, do you? You've probably got something to look forward to this weekend, haven't you? Something really exciting... *(SHEILA looks up and FRANK realizes that "exciting" and "Sheila" do not really go together)*... well, something nice, anyway. Something better than a boring Banker's course, anyway. Flower pressing ... or crocheting... or creative writing... or mud wrestling... or...

SHEILA

Frank! Will you please stop going on about it. You've been driving me mad all day. You have to go on these courses or you will never advance your career. You will never reach the heights of having your own branch, *(In awe)* like Mr. Humphries.

FRANK

Old Humpty? If I was talking ambitious, I wouldn't use old Humpty as my role model. Useless, pompous old g...

SHEILA

Frank! Really! Mr. Humphries is your manager and I think it only fair that you show him the respect he truly deserves.

FRANK

Truly deserves! ... Well... I'm sorry Sheila, I really am, but I don't know what you see in the old far ... fool. Surely even you can see that he's beyond hope. He's got about as much life in him as those bodies in Willett's funeral parlour next door. He'll never take the plunge and ask you out. You're wasting your time and you're respect.

SHEILA

Well that's just where you're wrong, Frank Johnson! You don't know the half of it and if you did, you might just be surprised. Anyway, that's all I'm going to say on the matter.

FRANK

Oh yes. Come on you can't leave it like that. What don't I know?

SHEILA

I'm not saying any more... and I've got work to do... even if you haven't.

*(The street door opens and in comes MANDY ANDREWS. FRANK obviously knows her but does not want to let on to SHEILA who carries on with her work without looking up.)*

MANDY

*(Mock haughtily)* Excuse me young man.

FRANK

Mandy...? Sorry, I didn't see you come in...Err; good afternoon Miss Andrews... how are you today? *(Whispering)* What are you doing here? I thought we'd agreed to meet later?

MANDY

I'm very well thank you, Mr. Johnson. Still hard at it, I see. It's a pleasure to see people tackling their tasks so conscientiously. I must mention it to your manager next time I see him.

FRANK

*(Alternating between "public" speech and whispering)* You cheeky... Why are you here? You don't want to get me into trouble, do you? "Err... yes I can change that for you, Miss." What's happening, I thought we were meeting at the course?

MANDY

Haven't you been told?

FRANK

Haven't I been told what?

MANDY

The Course... "Err, yes please, and I'd like some £1 coins also." It's been cancelled. There was a letter in the post, second delivery. How come you haven't been told?

FRANK

The second post is still over there...old Humpty hasn't got to it yet. Come to think of it, he hasn't got round to much today. He's spent most of the time in his office and when he has come out he's been in a really funny mood. Anyone would think he's in love! "There you are Miss, are those enough for you?"

MANDY

Err, "Yes thank you." Anyway, the good news is we don't have to go on that stuffy old course, so I thought that we could cozy up here for the weekend.

FRANK

Well that's no good. You know how Humphries is paranoid about who I entertain here. I thought having the bank flat and living above the premises would be an advantage, instead of which he's always sniffing around here checking that I haven't got the flat filled with "unauthorized personnel". Even on the weekends or my days off. Sad git doesn't have a life of his own. Spends all of his time ruining mine. *(Puts on a funny voice)* "Remember our watchword Johnson: security, security, security."

MANDY

That's three words, Frank.

FRANK

I know how many words it is ... anyway, it doesn't alter the fact that if I'm here, then he'll be poking his nose in! Could we go to your place?

MANDY

No my flatmate's parents are coming for the weekend.

FRANK

Great! Another little example of Life's rich tapestry. Would you believe it? When are we ever going to get some time on our own?

MANDY

You're right. We never get any quality time to ourselves. We need to get our own flat.

FRANK

Fat chance of that on my salary. Or yours as well, come to that.

MANDY

What you need is a promotion. If you were a manager then we could get a mortgage.

FRANK

Pigs might fly. Anyway that doesn't solve the problem of this weekend and old snooty poking his nose in.

MANDY

I wonder...

FRANK

He's got no life of his own, that's his trouble.

MANDY

Sshh! Just listen a minute will you? If you're away on the course, he won't have any reason to check up on you, will he?

FRANK

Yes but you said the course has been cancelled?

MANDY

You know that and I know that, but until Humphries reads that letter...

FRANK

Exactly! He's only got to read that letter...

MANDY

But if he didn't get that letter...

FRANK

But he's going to get that letter and as soon as he reads it then...

MANDY

Yes but if he didn't get it...

FRANK

How can he not get that letter?

MANDY

Just suppose something happened to delay that letter...

FRANK

Hey, tell you what, if I take that letter and keep it till Monday, then he won't know the course is cancelled, will he? And therefore he won't know I'm here, will he? ...And we could spend the whole weekend here and not be disturbed.

MANDY

*(Disingenuously)* What a great idea.... Why didn't I think of that?

FRANK

I'll go and see if it's there. Hang on. "I'll just check for you, madam." *(HE crosses to the pile of post, goes through it and removes a letter and returns to MANDY.)* Got it! *(Making sure SHEILA doesn't see him, HE puts it in his pocket.)* Right! All set then. I've already packed my bag, so I'll leave as though I'm still going to Hounslow, and I'll meet you at the station. We'll have a coffee and come back here when everyone's gone.

MANDY

A whole weekend together, undisturbed. I can't wait! "Thank you Mr. Johnson, you've been very helpful." ... See you later. *(And with a wink, SHE exits.)*

*(FRANK goes back to his work in a much happier mood, whistling a lively tune then breaking into a song.)*

FRANK

“Yes we have no bananas, so don't bring the monkey to play.”

SHEILA

Well, well, you've brightened up suddenly. What's got into you?

FRANK

Nothing! ... Just my sunny disposition kicking in.

*(The door to the office opens and out comes Mr. HUMPHRIES. HE stands in his doorway for a few seconds looking at FRANK and then SHEILA.)*

HUMPHRIES

Ah, Johnson. If you've got a minute, perhaps you'd be good enough to go down to the basement and find me the old file on the Marcus Brothers. I believe they closed their account in the late eighties.

FRANK

*(Wearily)* Yes Mr. Humphries, right away Mr. Humphries, *(Under his breath)* three bags full, Mr. Humphries.

HUMPHRIES

What was that?

FRANK

Just closing my till, Mr. Humphries.

*(Mr. HUMPHRIES watches FRANK disappear into the basement and then turns to SHEILA. HE paces nervously for a few moments, trying to find the right words to say to SHEILA. SHE is well aware of his presence.)*

HUMPHRIES

Err, ... Miss Smith.

SHEILA

*(Coming to attention, in eager anticipation)* Yes...Mr. Humphries?

HUMPHRIES

Err... Miss Smith... err Sheila... About the weekend, err... our weekend... You haven't changed your mind, have you? I was a little concerned that you might have considered me ... a little ... err, well, forward, perhaps?

SHEILA

Oh no, Mr Humphries. You don't know how long I've dreamt of this happening. I'm so excited, Mr. Humphries. When you suggested it I was so surprised... I didn't think you had noticed my feelings for you. After all these years of working side by side, I thought that they were not reciprocated.

HUMPHRIES

Ah, well. I've been considering our, err, relationship for some time now, and it seemed to be the right time to show my hand.

SHEILA

Oh Mr Humphries, a weekend alone together. Me and you... you and me... A man of the world and little old me. Where are we headed? The country maybe? Have you found us somewhere nice?

HUMPHRIES

Aah...

SHEILA

Somewhere romantic?

HUMPHRIES

Err... romantic?

SHEILA

Somewhere we can be ... alone... together...

HUMPHRIES

Errrrr.... alone...err, yes.

SHEILA

Somewhere, where we can loose our inhibitions.

HUMPHRIES

Inhibitions, err yes.

SHEILA

Somewhere, where we can loose ourselves...where nobody knows us... Where is our little "Shangri-la", Mr. Humphries? Is it far?

HUMPHRIES

Err... not too far, no. You see...

SHEILA

Will we be driving there or will I need my passport?

HUMPHRIES

Passport? Good grief, we're not going that far!

SHEILA

How far exactly are we going?

HUMPHRIES

Well, not far.

SHEILA

How far?

HUMPHRIES

Err, well err... *(He mumbles)*... Upstairs.

SHEILA

Where?

HUMPHRIES

Err... Upstairs

SHEILA

*Upstairs!* What do you mean, upstairs?

HUMPHRIES

Ah! Yes! Well... You see you know you said you didn't want to be recognised anywhere... and you were, err... concerned that someone might know you if we went somewhere ... public.

SHEILA

Yes?

HUMPHRIES

Well I was very concerned that you would feel uncomfortable in a country... err... luxury ... err, in case anyone saw... or you saw any one who... Well I thought... I can't make her do that. And then I thought, Frank's going away this weekend... I thought. The flat's going to be empty so why don't we... why ... should I... make you suffer just because I'm ... used to ... five star treatment?

*(SHEILA is stunned momentarily, but quickly makes the best of it.)*

SHEILA

That's very thoughtful of you, Mr. Humphries. *(Dejectedly)* You think of everything. But we can't use Frank's flat. What if he finds out?

HUMPHRIES

How will he find out if he's away all weekend? And you can tidy everything up before we leave.

SHEILA

Yes, but Frank's flat...

HUMPHRIES

It's the Bank's flat and I'm the manager. Besides, what the lad doesn't know can't hurt him, can it? Or us, for that matter.

SHEILA

Oh... I'm not sure...

HUMPHRIES

Just the two of us Miss Smith...

SHEILA

Yes but... Oh well, I suppose if you say it's all right...

HUMPHRIES

*(Relieved)* Good! Well, that's settled. Now, Johnson will be off as soon as we close and the place will be ours. Oh, and by the way, I took it upon myself to bring along a little libation to help relax us and get us in the mood.

SHEILA

Ooh, Mr. Humphries...

*(The door to the basement opens and FRANK returns with the files. HE looks at Mr. HUMPHRIES and SHEILA together. THEY both half turn to him.)*

FRANK

I don't know what's going on next door in the undertakers, but they're making a hell of a din. Perhaps the corpses are revolting? Corpses... revolting... *(HE laughs at his own joke and looks at Mr. HUMPHRIES and SHEILA who seem furtive.)* Oh well... Have I missed something?

HUMPHRIES & SHEILA, Together

No!

*(HUMPHRIES goes quickly back to his office; SHEILA sits at her desk. FRANK shrugs.)*

FRANK

*(As himself)* Your files on the Marcos Brothers, Mr. Humphries, from the basement. *(As HUMPHRIES)* Why thank you Mr. Johnson. How kind of you to fetch them for me. *(As himself)* Miserable old...

*(FRANK crosses to HUMPHRIES office and knocks on the door. HUMPHRIES wrenches the door open.)*

HUMPHRIES

What?

FRANK

Your files on the Marcos Brothers Mr. Humphries, from the basement?

HUMPHRIES

Well file them then.

*(HUMPHRIES retreats and slams the door,)*

FRANK

What? But you... Charming! What's got into him? He's been in a funny mood all day. Anyone would think he was up to something. *(SHEILA keeps her head down and says nothing.)* Hasn't said anything to you, has he? *(SHE types even more intently.)* It can't be my fault, I haven't done anything.... I think he needs to find himself a good woman, that's his trouble. *(SHEILA types all the more furiously.)* In fact, what he really needs is a bad one... that would sort him out, silly old... Actually, just so long as it was a live one....

SHEILA

*(Interrupting)* Mr. Johnson, really. I think you're being most unkind.

FRANK

Well...*(Not seriously)* Perhaps you could sort him out, Sheila. Take him away somewhere nice and romantic. A quiet country hotel somewhere. Five star ... Anyone can see that's your style, isn't it?

SHEILA

*(Embarrassed)* Mr. Johnson... Frank... Why ever would you say something like that?

*(With this the door to the street opens and in comes a wealthy looking gentleman of Russian origin. FRANK goes back to the counter.)*

FRANK

Good Morning sir, may I help you?

HAMOODSKI

Good Mornings young man. My name is Hamoodski and I am here to make the meeting with the manager of this most impressive capitalist establishment. I wish to be opening the account. If it would be convenient, I can come back at around four of the clocks.

FRANK

Certainly sir, I'll just check for you. Miss Smith... is old ... is Mr. Humphries free to see Mr. Hamoodski... around four of the clocks?

SHEILA

Four of the ... (*Looking in the appointment book*) Let me see. If Mr. Hamoodski could make half past four, that would be fine.

FRANK

There you are, sir, would half past four suit you?

HAMOODSKI

Da! Is good! I shall be in his presence at half past the fours. (*Exits*)

FRANK

Half past the fours? I can't wait.

(*FRANK and SHEILA look at each other and laugh. LIGHTS DOWN.*)

## END SCENE ONE

## ACT I, SCENE TWO

(*AT RISE: The scene opens at closing time at the bank. FRANK is in the process of locking the door behind the last member of the public. SHEILA is cashing up her till.*)

FRANK

(*Singing*) Hooray, hooray, it's a jolly holiday! La la lala la...

SHEILA

Whatever has got into you, Frank Johnson? I've never known such a transformation. Earlier on you were really down in the dumps. I thought you were ready to slit your wrists.

FRANK

Ah well, you see Sheila, I suddenly realised the sense in what you said about advancing my career and reaching the dizzy heights of senior management.

(*Mr. HUMPHRIES comes out of his office with Mr. HAMOODSKI.*)

HUMPHRIES

So you see, Mr Hamoodski, you can rest assured that your valuables would be safe and sound with us should you decide to entrust them to our care, and we would be more than happy to open an account for you.

HAMOODSKI

Da! Is good Humpie Man. I am being most grateful. You have taken away the worryings after I am looking at your lockings and securings. You can be happy that I shall be saying to my associates that we can definitely be doing the business with you. I am looking forward to be seeing you Monday in the morning at half past the tens to crossing the eyes and dotting the teas. Please allow me to wish you a pleasant weekend. I am hoping that you are not being too conscious and don't be too hard with the workings?

HUMPHRIES

Conscious and hard wo...? Oh, conscientious and hard working? Ah, well, we shall all try and enjoy ourselves in our own quiet way, shan't we, Miss Smith?

SHEILA

*(Looking up, smiling)* Yes Mr. Humphries, we'll try.

HUMPHRIES

Yes, we'll certainly try. Except for Mr. Johnson, of course. He will be working very hard this weekend, won't you Mr. Johnson?

FRANK

*(Smiling slyly)* Yes Mr. Humpies. I hope I shall be conscious and doing the hard workings all of the weekends.

HUMPHRIES

Yeesss!... Mr. Johnson has the good fortune to be going on a course this weekend to see if he's suitable for promotion. A difficult task, no doubt. Wouldn't you agree?

FRANK

Yes Mr. Humphries.

HUMPHRIES

So, Mr. Johnson will be far away this weekend, and busy, busy, busy, won't you, Mr. Johnson?

FRANK

Yes Mr. Humphries. *(Under his breath)* Certainly busy.

HAMOODSKI

Vell I don't want to be keeping you goods people from your destinations a moment longer, so I will be saying Das Vidanya to all of you.

HUMPHRIES

*(Slightly flustered by the funny English)* Right. Perestroika till Monday, Mr. Hamoodski, and I hope that your weekend is also a good one. Johnson, show Mr. Hamoodski out, will you?

FRANK

*(Showing HAMOODSKI to the door)* Certainly! Cheerio Mr. Hamoodski. Dos down with Vanya.

*(HAMOODSKI exits.)*

HUMPHRIES

Right then Johnson, are you all ready to go? You mustn't be late... that would never do.

FRANK

No Mr. Humphries, I mean yes Mr. Humphries. I've cashed up, balanced the till and I'm just about to lock the safe.

HUMPHRIES

Well I'll see to that. *(Reflecting)* You know, Mr. Hamoodski is such a nice man. A credit to his culture. Why can't all our customers have such standards? If his account turns out to be as large as I think it might, I could score some serious brownie points with Head Office. *(Attention back to FRANK)* Now, I want you to make a big effort on this course, Johnson. The future of the Bank is in the hands of our young assistant managers, so I want you to make a good impression.

FRANK

Oh, I intend to spend the whole weekend making a good impression, Mr. Humphries.

HUMPHRIES

Well I hope so. Now, you had better get going.

FRANK

Yes Mr. Humphries. I'm all packed. Just got to set all the alarms.

HUMPHRIES

Oh don't worry about that. Miss. Smith and I are quite capable of doing that. Aren't we Shelia?

SHEILA

Yes Mr. Humphries. *(Smirking)* I expect we can manage that.

HUMPHRIES

Right. You get along now.

FRANK

OK. I'll just get my bag from the flat.

HUMPHRIES

The flat is going to be empty this weekend isn't it Johnson? You know how Head Office takes a dim view of unauthorized personnel being on Bank premises. After all, our watchword is Security, Security, Security!

FRANK

That's three words, Mr. Humphries.

HUMPHRIES

Don't be facetious, Johnson.

FRANK

No, Mr. Humphries. I'll get my bag.

*(FRANK exits to his flat.)*

SHEILA

*(Sidling up to Mr. HUMPHRIES)* Oh, I love it when you become all authoritative, Mr. Humphries.

HUMPHRIES

Well so you should. I'm looking forward to our weekend together. I shall try to be as authoritative as possible! Oh, and I think that in view of our planned sojourn together, it would be acceptable for you to call me Arthur.... out of office hours, of course.

SHEILA

Oh, of course... Arthur.

HUMPHRIES

By the way, what have you told your mother you are doing this weekend?

SHEILA

Why I told her the truth Mr. Humphries!

HUMPHRIES

You did what?

SHEILA

Yes, I told her I was working under you all weekend!

*(SHEILA turns and walks away).*

HUMPHRIES

Miss Smith!

SHEILA

Don't worry about her. She's gone on a trip with the people from the Chapel till Monday. What did you tell your mother?

HUMPHRIES

Well, I'm slightly ashamed of myself. I'm afraid I had to tell her a slight fib. I told her I had to work closely all weekend with the staff and so I got in Mrs. Pritchett from round the corner to keep an eye on her.

SHEILA

*(Slightly overcome)* Oh Mr. Humphries, I hope that's not going to be too far from the truth.

*(SHEILA puts a hand on HUMPHRIES' shoulder and looks longingly into his eyes. THEY Separate quickly as FRANK enters from the flat with his overnight bag.)*

FRANK

Right Mr. Humphries I'm just off. Are you sure you don't mind locking the safe and setting the alarms for me?

HUMPHRIES

Not at all dear boy. Off you go and we'll see you Monday.

FRANK

Righty-ho! Bye Mr. Humphries. Bye Sheila, have a lovely weekend. *(Facetiously)* Don't do anything I wouldn't do. *(Laughing)*

*(HUMPHRIES unlocks the front door and lets FRANK out. HE watches FRANK go down the street then shuts the door and turns to SHEILA.)*

HUMPHRIES

*(Masterfully)* Right Miss Smith. Time for some dictation I think.

SHEILA

Oh Mr. Humphries!

*(With this, SHEILA removes her spectacles and undoes her hair, completely transforming her appearance, but also greatly diminishing her clarity of sight.)*

HUMPHRIES

My word, Miss Smith... err Sheila.

SHEILA

I hope you approve, Mr... Arthur.

HUMPHRIES

Oh my. You look quite... transformed, Miss... Sheila. Can you manage without your glasses?

SHEILA

Oh yes. I only need them for close work.

*(With this, SHEILA steps forward and falls over the chair.)*

HUMPHRIES

Yes. *(Unsure as HE picks her up and turns her into the direction of the flat.)* Well, shall we go and inspect our little “pied a terre”? Our little... love nest!

SHEILA

Oohh, Mr. Humphries.

*(HE takes her hand and THEY both head briskly to the door to the flat. THEY are about to enter the flat and close the door. However, just then the doorbell rings. SHEILA stays by the flat entrance while HUMPHRIES returns to open the front door. It is FRANK.)*

FRANK

Sorry Mr. Humphries I forgot my coat. *(HE reaches in and takes his coat from the coat stand by the door.)* Sorry! Bye! *(Exits)*

*(HUMPHRIES closes the door, relocks it, and turns towards SHEILA. HE rubs his hands together and runs over to her. SHE squeals quietly in anticipation and THEY both enter the flat. The front door bell rings again. The flat door opens and HUMPHRIES and SHEILA return to the bank. As before, SHEILA remains by the flat entrance while HUMPHRIES opens the front door. It is FRANK again.)*

FRANK

Scarf! Sorry! Bye! *(HE reaches in again and grabs his scarf from the coat stand then exits.)*

*(HUMPHRIES slams the front door shut. Relocks it, turns purposefully towards SHEILA. HE runs towards her emitting Tarzan like screams whilst beating his chest. SHE again squeals in delight and holds the door open for HUMPHRIES who charges through. The doorbell rings again. As if in one movement, HUMPHRIES turns on his heel and exits the flat and charges across to the door, which HE unlocks and wrenches open. HE picks up the coat stand and passes it straight through the front door to whoever is outside then slams the door, locks it. As HE turns away HE stops dead as HE realizes that it was not FRANK outside the door. HE sheepishly turns around, unlocks the door, opens it slowly, revealing A MAN standing outside holding the coat stand. THE MAN enters with the coat stand, which HE hands to HUMPHRIES.)*

DOG

Yours I believe Sir?

HUMPHRIES

Err... Yes. Thank you. Sorry about that. Can I help you?

DOG

Yes Sir. Chief Inspector DOG. Robbery division. Am I addressing Mr. Humphries, the manager of this establishment? *(HE holds open a wallet in which is an official I.D.)*

HUMPHRIES

Yes Inspector. What can I do for you? Is there something wrong?

*(DOG puts his ID away whilst brushing past HUMPHRIES and entering the bank proper, through the counter hatch. HUMPHRIES shuts the door, replaces the coat stand and follows DOG into the bank.)*

DOG

*Chief* Inspector Sir! I don't know sir. Is there? *(HE turns sharply and faces SHEILA, who peers myopically at him.)* And who might you be Miss?

HUMPHRIES

She's Miss Smith. One of my tellers. We were just, err, locking up for the weekend. Look, what can we do for you officer...Dog?

DOG

Chief Inspector Dog if you don't mind Sir. Well sir, we've had a tip off at the yard that a bank in this area...possibly this bank, might be turned over, this weekend.

HUMPHRIES

Turned over?

DOG

Clobbered, sir.

HUMPHRIES

Clobbered?

DOG

Robbed, sir.

HUMPHRIES

Robbed? Well why didn't you say so, man? My goodness, what are we going to do? Quick, phone the police...oh, you are the police. How many of you are there? I'd better phone Head Office at once so that they can send for extra security staff. Miss Smith, lock all the doors.

DOG

Now just a minute, please, both of you. The tipster only said that it might be one of the banks in this area. It need not necessarily be this one. In any case, we've got our best man onto it.

HUMPHRIES

And who might that be?

DOG

Me sir! So, there's no need to panic. Just finish up for the night, as usual, and go off about your business in the knowledge that I've got everything covered. I shall maintain a beady eye on the whole area as I have been trained so to do. Nothing shall evade my vigilance. Where does that door lead?

*(HE indicates the door that SHEILA is still holding on to.)*

SHEILA

Oh! Oh this is the door to the staff ...err...Mr. Johnson's flat. He's our assistant manager, but he's away for the weekend.

DOG

I see. *(Walking over to the basement door)* And this one?

SHEILA

That's the door to the basement storeroom.

DOG

And those two?

HUMPHRIES

They're my office and the broom closet. Look, err Inspector...

DOG

Chief Inspector

HUMPHRIES

Look, Chief Inspector, do you seriously expect me to go home as if nothing was happening, and leave my bank to your.... vigilance?

DOG

Yes sir, that's exactly what I expect you to do.

HUMPHRIES

But that's...

DOG

You see sir, we've been after this Boyo for some time now and because this tip comes from a grade one source, we've got a really good chance of catching him. We've flooded the area with our finest. Have no fear, nothing and nobody gets in or out without our knowledge. The super has been in touch with each of the Head Offices of the banks in question, and they've all agreed to co-operate fully. This is just a courtesy call on my part.

HUMPHRIES

Well, I suppose you know what you're doing. What does this Bonzo look like?

DOG

Ah well now, that's just it, you see sir. Laddo is a master of disguise. What you might call a modern day Pimpnel. They seek him here, they seek him there, what?

HUMPHRIES

Are they his gang?

DOG

Who's his gang?

HUMPHRIES

Pimplydell and Laddio. Are they in Bonzo's gang?

DOG

What? Never mind about that, as I said, this is just a courtesy call. It might come to nothing, especially at this bank. In the past, Tiddlywink has always struck at the poshest branches, and this bank is particularly second division, so you probably have nothing to worry about. *(At this HUMPHRIES doesn't know whether to be pleased or insulted. SHEILA giggles.)* So, you two don't need to change any of your plans for the weekend. I'm on the job, all right?

HUMPHRIES

But we can't just go home and pretend nothing's happening. You can't expect us to ignore all of this?

DOG

That's exactly what I expect you to do, sir. We shall take a very dim view of things if our efforts are thwarted by some jumped up... by over zealous officials. *(HUMPHRIES starts to object.)* Please sir, old Bill knows best.

HUMPHRIES

*(Reluctantly)* Well, if you're sure there's no danger... No doubt you or Bill will let us know when you apprehend...err, Tiddles. Ooh, I say, I suppose he must be a cat burglar, eh? Tiddles? **Cat** burglar. Caught by a Dog? *(DOG is uncomprehendingly stony faced.)* I'll see you out, Chief Inspector. *(HUMPHRIES lets DOG out of the front door.)*

DOG

*(As HE leaves)* Evening all!

HUMPHRIES

How did I know he would say that? Oh well, I suppose he knows best. Well, well what a turn up. Now where were we?

SHEILA

Dictation, I believe, Mr... Arthur. (*SHE is squinting and addressing the coat stand.*)

HUMPHRIES

What? ... Ah yes, dictation! (*SHEILA turns and walks into the door.*) Just a minute, you might need these. (*He retrieves her glasses from the desk.*)

(*HUMPHRIES retrieves her glasses from the desk. SHEILA giggles and THEY both exit into the flat. Almost simultaneously the front door opens and in comes FRANK and MANDY.*)

FRANK

(*Looking around*) All clear. (*HE is carrying their weekend bags which HE places on the floor by the door and then hangs his coat on the stand. FRANK turns and locks the door.*) Welcome to my parlour said the spider...

MANDY

Hey, that makes me the fly!

FRANK

Exactly!

(*THEY rush at each other and kiss passionately. Eventually THEY come up for air.*)

MANDY

This is much better than some stuffy old bank course, isn't it?

FRANK

Rather. Wasn't it lucky that it was cancelled at the last minute? All I have to do is put the letter in the post tray on Monday morning and blame the postman for not delivering on time. Old man Humphries is none the wiser and that gives us an undisturbed weekend alone.

MANDY

(*Coyly*) So, how do you intend to entertain me?

FRANK

Oh, I expect we'll think of something. (*THEY clinch again until FRANK breathlessly pulls away.*) Mind you, you are not supposed to be here. You are "unauthorized personnel".

MANDY

Yes, but aren't you prepared to risk some "unauthorized activity"? (*THEY go back into the clinch.*)

FRANK

Hey! Why don't we get a Chinese feast from the Dragon's Den across the road; a bottle of wine from the off licence, and we won't have to move all weekend?

MANDY

What a good idea. Come on, I'll race you. Last one there's a prawn ball.

*(FRANK and MANDY exit to the street, slamming the door behind them. The door to the flat opens, and HUMPHRIES and SHEILA appear. His jacket has been removed revealing suspenders, and his tie loosened. Still not wearing glasses, SHEILA has taken off her jacket and shoes.)*

SHEILA

Why are you so jumpy? I told you it was your imagination. You've got burglars on the brain.

HUMPHRIES

I'm sorry, but I was sure I heard something. *(HE moves around checking. SHEILA remains stage left of the flat door. HE sees nothing out of place.)* Oh well, back to the salt mines.

*(HUMPHRIES turns abruptly and exits into the flat and SHEILA walks into the wall behind the door. HUMPHRIES re -appears and collects her.)*

HUMPHRIES

Maybe we should try those glasses again. *(THEY exit)*

*(All is Quiet. Slowly the door to the basement opens, and in creep GERRY LITTLE and TOM EASTON. THEY leave a bag of tools on the top step and the door self-closes behind them.)*

GERRY

We're in! We've made it! I've never worked so hard in all my life. If I'd known bank robbery was this hard I'd have been a miner. Those last eight inches from the undertakers was like solid concrete...well it was solid concrete so I suppose that's why we started...

TOM

Shh! Shhhhhhhhh! Enough! Check out the surroundings whilst I get my bearings. Why did they have to have an undertakers next door? Why couldn't it have been a flower shop or summate? When you knocked over that coffin and Granny fell out...err. And she fell on our sandwiches...horrible!

GERRY

Don't go on about food, will you? I'm starving. Let's get on with the job shall we? The boss will be back soon and we can go get some proper grub...Let's make sure the place is empty as he says and we don't have any unnecessary complications.

TOM

Right *(Looking around)* but you don't have to worry; when has the boss ever made a mistake? If he says it's empty it'll be empty. Here, why did we have to fill in the hole and cover it all up behind us? Those bodies weren't going to follow us, you know?

GERRY

Oh give it a rest, will you? You're always moaning 'bout somethin'. We don't know who might stumble onto it, do we? Better to be safe than sorry. Now, come on; let's get on with it.

TOM

O.K. Which door leads to the hidden treasure?

GERRY

Hidden treasure? Anyone would think you were a pirate. Come on, let's find the safe. *(TOM opens the door to what turns out to be the broom closet. Mops, brushes and buckets fall out.)* For goodness sake, don't make such a racket, will you. They'll hear you in Threadneedle Street. Thank gawd there's no one around.

*(With this they hear VOICES OFF of Mr. HUMPHRIES and SHEILA.)*

GERRY & TOM, *Together*

Aahh...

*(GERRY and TOM quickly pick up all the items and pile them into the closet and go in after them, closing the door behind themselves just as the door to the flat opens. In comes HUMPHRIES followed by SHEILA, both slightly more dishevelled. HE is leading her by the hand; SHE is squinting.)*

HUMPHRIES

I tell you this time I definitely heard a noise.

SHEILA

Well I didn't hear anything, and if you did then it could only have been mice or something. This isn't turning out to be much of a romantic weekend, I must say. When you said you'd brought a little libation, I was expecting champagne, caviar and mad passion. But so far all you've done is take off your tie, make a cup of the most disgusting herbal tea that I've ever tasted.....

HUMPHRIES

Oh, I thought you'd like it. It's mother's favourite... I brought it specially...

SHEILA

It was disgusting! And after all that, all you can talk about is bank robbers. I might just as well be home watching "The Bill".... Come along Arthur, you must learn to relax. *(Cozying up to him)* let... Sheila ...help... you... unwind.

*(HUMPHRIES stops looking around, and starts getting flustered at her attentions.)*

HUMPHRIES

But I tell you...Didn't you hear...I could have sworn I...perhaps it was my.....Oh Miss Smith, I err, Sheila, I...

*(Just at this moment, we hear the front door being unlocked as FRANK and MANDY return; chatting, flirting etc.)*

FRANK

*(Off stage)* Come on, we're wasting quality time.

MANDY

*(Off)* Will you behave yourself in public, Frank Johnson?

HUMPHRIES & SHEILA, *Together*

Aahh.....

HUMPHRIES

It's Johnson, what's he doing back? And he's got someone with him.

SHEILA

Who cares; they mustn't see us like this.

HUMPHRIES

What are we going to do?

SHEILA

Hide! Quick! Into your office. *(And with that SHE pulls him into the office— only she misses and picks the closet instead. SHEILA opens the door revealing TOM and GERRY. SHE cannot see them. HUMPHRIES shuts the door before he himself sees them and pulls her into the office. HE shuts the door behind them just as the front door opens.)*

FRANK

*(As HE and MANDY enter carrying their takeaway and two bottles of wine)* Alone at last! *(HE puts the food down on the bank counter and then locks the door behind them.)* Come here you! *(THE go into a clinch.)* Fancy keeping me waiting while they cooked Crispy Duck!

MANDY

*(Giggling)* Well I like Crispy Duck...it's my favourite.

FRANK

I thought I was your favourite?

MANDY

Mmm., I'll tell you later. Come on, which way is it?

FRANK

Which way is what?

MANDY

The way to your boudoir, Mr. Spider.

FRANK

This way, Miss Fly. *(THEY exit to the flat, laughing.)*

*(The stage remains silent and empty for a few seconds. Then the door to the broom closet silently inches open and TOM and GERRY stick out their heads. At that moment the door to the office opens. Immediately THE THEIVES' heads disappear and the closet door closes as HUMPHRIES and SHEILA stick their heads out the office door. Seeing nothing, THEY tiptoe out, whispering.)*

HUMPHRIES

It was Johnson. What's **he** doing here?

SHEILA

He lives here.

HUMPHRIES

Yes, but what's he **doing** here?

SHEILA

I think I can guess what he's doing here. *(Looking up, wistfully)*

HUMPHRIES

Yes, thank you. But what's he doing **here?**

SHEILA

Probably by now, he's.... *(Again, looking up enviously)*

HUMPHRIES

Look, will you stop that. You know what I mean. Why isn't he on his course?

SHEILA

I would reckon he's on course for a lot more than we are this weekend.

HUMPHRIES

Well he'd better have a jolly good explanation, that's all I can say. And he knows it's against the rules to have unauthorized personnel on the premises, out of hours. Oh yes, he's got a lot of explaining to do.

SHEILA

If you need an explanation, then I don't know what I was doing here in the first place. Anyway, how are we going to explain our presence here at this time on a Friday night? And don't say "dictation"! And what about the rest of my clothes— He can't see me like this.

HUMPHRIES

You're right, our clothes. (*Horried and panicking*) Our clothes are upstairs! They're upstairs! They're in his sitting room! (*Suddenly calming down a bit*) Why hasn't he seen them yet?

SHEILA

I'll tell you why he hasn't seen them yet. He hasn't seen them yet because they're in the sitting room. He, quite obviously, is not. (*Peevishly*) **He**, quite obviously, did not have to stop on his way to fulfilment, to have his feet rubbed and a nice cup of tea! And apart from that, **he** probably wouldn't have noticed if the entire stock of Harvey Nichols outwear department had been dumped on them!

HUMPHRIES

We all have our little idiosyncrasies. But you're right; they must be in the bedroom. We'll have to sneak up there and retrieve them.

SHEILA

What do you mean "we"?

HUMPHRIES

Well you can hardly expect a respected bank manager to sneak around with ladies apparel, can you?

SHEILA

I suspect, this respected bank manager, expects too much in this respect! That's what I expect! (*By this time their voices have risen.*)

HUMPHRIES

Sshh! (*Again whispering*) He's coming! Back in the office and down behind the desk.

SHEILA

Oh, Mr. Humphries, that's more like it.

HUMPHRIES

Sshh! And will you behave yourself. (*THY return to the office.*)

FRANK

(*Off stage*) I tell you I definitely heard voices... (*HE enters. His shirt, tie, jacket and shoes have been removed. HE is carrying a ladies high-heeled shoe as a weapon.*) I tell you I definitely heard voices. I thought Mr. Humphries had come back, but his light's not on. (*Starting towards the office*)

MANDY

(*Off*) Maybe the voices were in the street? (*Entering wearing FRANK's dressing gown*) There's no one here is there? Come on back, and this time I would like your full attention please!

*(As MANDY is saying this, FRNK goes to check that the front door is securely locked—noisily rattling the locks — but then is distracted by her playfulness. THEY clinch again and retreat upstairs. The stage is empty once again for a few seconds. Silence. The closet door slowly inches open again and GERRY and TOM'S heads appear. Seeing nothing, THEY fall out as "stealthily" as THEY can, stiff from the awkward positions THEY have been forced to hold in the closet.)*

GERRY

Sshh! Don't make a sound.

TOM

Ooo! My arms and legs have gone dead. I can't move.

GERRY

Sshh! Someone's here! Oh good grief, we're going to get caught. There's not supposed to be anybody here.

TOM

Don't panic! Whoever it was has gone! I heard the front door locks.

GERRY

*(Moving across the room)* Well there shouldn't have been anyone, should there? I mean, bankers don't work at this time of night, do they? Have you ever tried cashing a cheque at a minute past...

*(Suddenly the light comes on in the office.)*

TOM & GERRY, *Together*

Aahh ..... *(THEY freeze.)*

HUMPHRIES

*(Off)* I told you to behave yourself.

SHEILA

*(Off)* I'm sorry; I thought it was something else.

*(At this GERRY jumps over the counter. TOM bolts back into the cupboard. SHEILA and HUMPHRIES enter from the office. SHE is playful; HE is fretful and flustered and has lots of lipstick across his cheek.)*

SHEILA

Ooh Arthur, I'm very impressed with your office manners. Or should I call you "Hot Lips"? And I didn't think we could both get into one pedestal desk.

HUMPHRIES

I was trying to keep you quiet..... my hands were trapped. My lips were all I had at my disposal.

SHEILA

Well you don't have to stop; you can put them at my disposal anytime.

HUMPHRIES

Miss Smith...Sheila, will you stop that and get down to the thing in hand. (*SHE reacts wrongly to this.*) No, no, no. Somehow we have to retrieve our clothes and get out of here. I shall have to think of something... and before you say anything at all, don't! Back into the office and keep quiet.

*(SHEILA and HUMPHRIES exit back into the office and the light goes out. GERRY's head rises over the counter top. HE slowly emerges, rubbing his legs and arms, which HE hurt diving over the counter. His attention is taken by the aroma of the Chinese food. GERRY takes the Crispy Duck – with appropriate licking of lips, etc.)*

GERRY

Phew, that was a close one; what on earth is going on in this place? Oh! What's that gorgeous smell? Oh my, food! Oh yes.

*(GERRY takes a container out of the bag, but before HE can eat, NOISES OFF.)*

HUMPHRIES

*(Off)* Just stay there and keep quiet! (*GERRY rushes for the nearest door, the Basement, and exits, still holding the food. He trips over the bag of tools and falls down the stairs, screaming. Mr. HUMPHRIES enters from the office, backing out with a reminder to SHEILA.*) Don't argue just stay there. I'll get them somehow.

*(As HE enters, FRANK re-appears from the flat, once more armed with MANDY's stiletto.)*

HUMPHRIES & SHEILA, *Together*

Aahh...

FRANK

Mr. Humphries? What are you doing here?

HUMPHRIES

Johnson... Well I...err, I, err... I've been working on...err. Never mind that, what are you doing here? Why aren't you on your course?

FRANK

It was cancelled and so I came back. Have you been here all the time? Where were you? Are you on your own? I thought I could hear someone talking. (*HE makes as if to look around but notices the lipstick on Mr. HUMPHRIES face*)

HUMPHRIES

Never mind all that, what err, is more to the point is, are you alone?

FRANK

*(Realizing he is still holding the ladies shoe, and hiding it behind his back)* Ah! Well you see *(Improvising)* ... When I discovered that the course had been cancelled, I didn't know what to do with my weekend ... and ... so ... I thought that maybe I should put the time to good use ... by, err, improving my banking skills ...

HUMPHRIES

Oh yes, this should be good.

FRANK

So I thought, ... "What would Mr. Humphries appreciate me improving my skills at? What would please him? What would impress him?"

HUMPHRIES

And what impressive deed did you come up with?

FRANK

Well ... I... went... to the library and found a textbook all about err, customer relations ... yes that's right, customer relations. And I decided to buckle down and spend the whole weekend improving my technique with regards to relations... *(At this point the door to the flat opens and there stands MANDY in FRANK's dressing gown, holding a stool. FRANK and HUMPHRIES stare at her, whilst FRANK tries to come up with something good.)*... Have you met MANDY... my *sister*?

MANDY

*(With HUMPHRIES)* You're si.....?

HUMPHRIES

You're sister? You can't possibly expect me to believe...

*(At this moment the door to the office opens and out comes SHEILA still in her stocking feet wearing Mr. HUMPHRIES raincoat, which is far too big for her.)*

SHEILA

*(Putting on her glasses)* Hello Frank, fancy seeing you here.

FRANK

Sheila? What are you doing here? *(The penny drops. To HUMPHRIES)* Why you sly old...

HUMPHRIES

Err... Miss Smith was just err, taking down...some *(trailing off)* dictation.

FRANK

At this time of night? You cannot be.... (*THE TWO MEN square up to each other, as obviously neither believes the other, but FRANK trails off as HE sees MANDY holding the stool.*) What are you doing with that stool?

MANDY

I thought there were robbers down here.

FRANK

So what? You were going to offer them a seat?

MANDY

I couldn't think of any other weapon, could I? Don't you think you should introduce me to everyone? (*He turns to see the others staring*)

FRANK

(*Turning to see THE OTHERS staring*) Ah, yes. Mandy this is Miss Smith, err Sheila; and this is Mr. Humphries, my manager. This... (*Pointing unnecessarily*)... is Mandy.

HUMPHRIES

Your sister.

(*FRANK just grins stupidly at this.*)

MANDY

Well.... Isn't this....

SHEILA

Cozy?

FRANK

Yes...ha...ha.... cozy... (*Trailing off again*)

HUMPHRIES

Yes. (*Glowering at FRANK*)

FRANK

Well...err, I suppose you will want to get off home, then?

HUMPHRIES

And leave you here with your *sister*, I suppose?

FRANK

Well you and Sheila aren't planning any more *dictation*, surely?

HUMPHRIES

Now look here.... *(THE TWO have squared up again)*

SHEILA

*(Breaking in)* Anyway, there's more to it than that, isn't there Mr. Humphries?

HUMPHRIES

Yes! *(Not knowing what SHE is on about)* Is there?

SHEILA

Yes! We can't leave now, can we?

HUMPHRIES

No, of course not!

FRANK

Why can't you?

HUMPHRIES

Why can't we? *(Struggling to answer)* Why can't we? Tell him, Miss Smith.

SHEILA

We can't leave till the morning because of Dog.

MANDY

You've got a Dog here?

HUMPHRIES

Yes... No! Dogs are not allowed on the premises. *(To FRANK, pointedly)* Just as unauthorized personnel are not allowed on the premises after hours!

FRANK

Then what....

SHEILA

It was just after you left, Frank... tell him Mr. Humphries. We were just locking up and we had this caller, you see. Go on, Mr. Humphries, you spoke to him. Well, it turns out he was a policeman, Chief Inspector Dog, and he'd had this tip off that Bozo's gang were going try a raid, but only if we were top class but he didn't think that we were, really... that's Dog not Bozo, and he was just being courteous, so he didn't think we had anything to worry about. But, nevertheless, he was going to be vigilant and saturate the area with the Yard's finest, and if he got in... that's Bozo not Dog, then he certainly wouldn't get out again. But he... that's Mr. Humphries not Bozo or Dog, being such a conscientious manager, decided that we had better stay here as well, just in case he... that's Bozo, got past him... that's Dog. Isn't that right, Mr. Humphries? Go on, you tell him.

*(Throughout the above, HUMPHRIES has been trying unsuccessfully to get a word in.)*

HUMPHRIES

Well I will if you ever come up for air!

FRANK

Good lord! So that's why you two are still here?

HUMPHRIES

Of course it is. And therefore...

SHEILA

And therefore, as the bank is surrounded by police and robbers, we don't want to make anyone suspicious by leaving in the middle of the night...Do we, Mr. Humphries?

HUMPHRIES

*(Rescued)* Of course we don't. Thank you Miss Smith. So you see, Johnson, that err Sheila... err Miss Smith and I have been pursuing the bank's interests throughout the whole of our vigil. *(SHEILA tries to draw his attention surreptitiously to the lipstick on his face. MANDY and FRANK look on, amused)* What? .... What's the matter with you? *(SHE finally succeeds in getting through to him and HE hastily wipes his face.)* Anyway, like it or not, we do not want to do anything that would contravene the forces of the law, or would draw attention to ourselves. So, we are all trapped here until morning.

FRANK

Oh... I see... Right then! Well, see you in the morning then. *(To MANDY)* Come on. *(HE starts to exit to his flat)*

HUMPHRIES

Just a minute! Where do you think you're going?

FRANK

Back to... up to... where err.... *(Regarding his sister)* I thought...

HUMPHRIES

Thoughts like that can put a very swift end to an assistant bank manager's career, believe me.

FRANK

*(Looking at MANDY and sighing)* Ah.

MANDY

*(SHE shrugs and smiles faintly.)* Well, there's always the crispy duck. *(Going to the food)* Hey it's not here! Which one of you has had my duck? *(Looking for it)* Come on, own up.

HUMPHRIES

(*To FRANK*) What's she on about? Look, never mind about food. As Sheila... As Miss Smith has said, we have to stay here until morning and so I suggest we put our minds to the question of sleeping arrangements. It now transpires that there are four of us to share the facilities, which puts a different slant on things.

MANDY

I know it was here, I saw him pack it.

FRANK

Well there's only one bedroom and only one bed. (*Pointedly*) Mine!

MANDY

Extra plum sauce, just like I asked for. (*No-one is listening to her.*)

HUMPHRIES

Tough! Don't even think about it! I suppose we ought to give that to your *sister*. (*Looking dejectedly at SHEILA*)

MANDY

(*Looking suspiciously at each of the others regarding the missing food*) You can't trust anyone, these days.

FRANK

Right. Yes I suppose we should. (*His hopes rising again*) Well, I'd better make do with the sofa in the sitting room.

MANDY

You go to all the trouble to get your favourite... (*Trailing off*)

HUMPHRIES

Not a chance. Miss Smith will have to have that. (*Smiling faintly at SHEILA*) It's only fair. (*To MANDY*) Will you tell your *sister*, what's her name – Mandy – to stop going on about her pet?

FRANK

That just leaves your office armchair.

HUMPHRIES

Exactly. **My** office armchair.

FRANK

But where am I going to sleep?

HUMPHRIES

I shall be in my office, so you can sleep in your office.

FRANK

But I don't have an office. I work out....here. (*Looking around the bank and realizing*)

HUMPHRIES

Right! And seeing just how late it is, I suggest that we make the most of the time we have left till morning, and repair to our makeshift sleeping quarters. (*Taking SHEILA aside*) I'm so sorry about what's transpired, Miss...err Sheila. It would seem that events have conspired against us. I do assure you, however that I will leave no stone unturned in making it up to you, and let me say here and now, what a brick you have...

SHEILA

(*Interrupting resignedly*) Goodnight Mr. Humphries. Goodnight Frank. Goodnight Mandy, better luck next time. (*SHE crosses towards the door to the flat and turns and waits.*)

FRANK

Sorry about this, Mandy. I'll make it up to you, promise. (*HE escorts her to the door of the flat where HE stops. SHE turns and looks suspiciously around one last time, and collects the rest of the Chinese food.*)

MANDY

Quack quack!

(*MANDY picks up one bottle of wine, has a second thought and gives it to SHEILA. SHE then picks up the second bottle and THEY both exit*)

HUMPHRIES

Goodnight Johnson! ... *Sister* indeed. (*Muttering to himself as HE exits to the office*)

(*FRANK is left alone on stage. HE puts down the light a little, and looks around to see where HE can sleep. HE retrieves his overcoat from the coat stand to cover himself then selects one of the swivel chairs and tries to get comfortable. No good. HE tries two with his feet up on one. As HE fidgets to get settled, the lights dim to BLACKOUT.*)

**END OF ACT I**

## ACT II, SCENE ONE

*(AT RISE: The scene is as before, sometime later. The lights are dimmed. FRANK is asleep on the bank counter with the overcoat over him. The door to the basement opens slowly and out comes a very dishevelled-looking GERRY who has fallen down the stairs and is covered in crispy duck. HE tiptoes to the closet door and opens it. Nothing happens. HE looks in and pulls out a very cramped TOM who had fallen asleep inside in a very awkward position.)*

TOM

Aagh...aagh! Ow....ow.....ow. *(Still bent, HE sniffs around)* I can't move... I'm dead all over. Ow... What's that smell? What is it?

GERRY

What are you talking about?

TOM

It's food! I can smell food! I must be halloominating.

GERRY

What?

TOM

Haloo... Haloomi... Smelling things.

GERRY

What is the matter with you? Stand up straight, for gawd's sake; you look like Quasimodo's brother.

TOM

I can't. I'm paralyzed. My whole body has gone dead on me. All except my nose ...what is that smell? *(HE sniffs)* It's coming from you. You smell of... What's that all over you? It looks like... it smells like.... *(Tasting a bit)* it tastes like.....You're a number 47...Crispy Duck. I must be hallucinating. What the hell is happening? Where have you been? How come you left me stuck in that cupboard all that time? I'm in agony.

GERRY

You, you, you. It's always about you, isn't? Don't worry about the fact that you left your tools so that I could fall down those stairs and break every bone in my body, will you? Oh no! You, you, you, that's all we get. You, you, you. You this! You that! You the other! Nothing but you. You...

TOM

Will you shut up? I... Is that plum sauce on your shoulder? It's a bit cold, but it's great with that duck. That is duck, isn't it? How come you're covered in Chinese food? Where have you been? Don't tell me you went out for a take-away duck, and left me in that closet?

GERRY

Stuff the duck! That was brought in by those peo.....

TOM & GERRY, *Together*

Those people! Aagh! SSH!

*(With this, FRANK snorts gently and turns over. THEY stare at him in horror.)*

GERRY

*(Whispering)* That's what I've been trying to tell you. The place is crawling with them. So much for the boss planning everything to perfection. What's he gonna say about this lot? Hey, what time is it? We've got to let him in at 11 o'clock.

TOM

Where's my watch? Someone's nicked it. Some good for nothing tea leaf has had it away with my... *(Looking at Gerry)* You really can't trust anyone these days. It was a good one too, it was in the glove box of that Jag we pinched last week.

GERRY

Never mind all that, if you haven't got a watch and I haven't got a watch, how will we know when it's time to let him in?

TOM

I dunno.

GERRY

I've got it. *(Referring to FRANK)* Quick, see if he's got a watch.

*(TOM crosses to FRANK, and picks up his wrist and reads the time from FRANK's watch.)*

TOM

It's ten toooooo... *(Just as HE speaks, FRANK turns over in his sleep and traps TOM's arm under him.)*

GERRY

*(Whispering)* What are you doing now? For god's sake stop messing about you'll wake everyone up. Are you trying to nick his watch? I don't believe it. We're about to rob a bank and all you can think about is a two penny watch.

TOM

I'm not trying to steal his watch, what do you take me for, a thief... Actually it's quite a good one.... I'm trying to release myself. So if you're not too busy, perhaps you could help me out?

GERRY

Certainly. You only had to ask. What do you think friends are for?

*(With this the door to the flat opens marginally, and MANDY calls from offstage.)*

MANDY

Psst., Frank.... Oh Fraannk. Frank...

*(At this, GERRY turns on his heels and races for the basement door, remembers the last time, and changes route for the closet, leaving TOM still struggling to release himself. The door opens and MANDY enters still dressed in FRANK's dressing gown. SHE has obviously been drinking. SHE approaches the sleeping FRANK from the customer side of the counter. TOM, still trapped by his hand, drops to the floor behind the counter.)*

MANDY, *Continues*

Frank, wake up. Oh don't you look sweet. I could eat you all up. *(She kisses him passionately. FRANK murmurs in his sleep.)* Frank, come on, it's me, Mandy. You can't possibly be asleep. *(SHE climbs on top of FRANK and kisses him again.)* Frank? *(TOM raises himself to their level and has a good look at what is going on! As MANDY sits up, HE quickly drops back down.)* Oh Frank! Well, I bet I know how to wake you. Feel my heart, Frank, it's racing with desire *(With that, SHE grabs TOM's hand and places it against her heart whilst moaning in delight. TOM looks out at the audience whilst mouthing "help".)* Oh, yes, Frank. Yes. Yes. *(TOM yanks his hand away and is free.)*

FRANK

*(Waking up)* Good Lord, I just had the most wonderful dream. Mandy? It is you. What are you doing? Mr Humphries could come in at any minute.

MANDY

Come on. The others are asleep. There's nothing to stop you coming back upstairs. Come on, *(Playfully)* I'll race you. There's still some wine left.

*(THEY get up – both customer side – and exit to the flat as the coat falls onto TOM's side of the counter. Hearing the door to the flat shut, TOM rises slowly, massaging his hand as GERRY emerges from the closet.)*

GERRY

There's more activity in this place after hours than there is in my branch during opening hours.

TOM

That was a close one. What was that you said about helping a friend? You abandoned me. You just left me there. I thought we were partners. *(HE sits on the counter rubbing his hand.)*

GERRY

Stop moaning and let's let the boss in. It must be about time.

*(GERRY crosses towards the main door, just as SHEILA is heard OFFSTAGE.)*

SHEILA

*(Off)* Arthur? Are you there? Arthur?

*(TOM immediately lies down on the counter, as if he was FRANK, Pulling the coat over him. GERRY darts swiftly to the basement, opens the door, falls over the toolbox once again, cries out, and falls down the stairs as the door swings shut. SHEILA enters carrying her glasses. SHE is wearing her petticoat and clutching the bottle of wine. Arthur? ... Oops, sorry Frank. Don't you look sweet? Let's make you nice and cozy. (SHE fusses over him as HUMPHRIES comes rushing out of his office. SHE puts on her glasses) Arth ...*

HUMPHRIES

What on earth is all the...Sheila...Miss Smith? What are you doing down here?

SHEILA

Looking for you. *(Whispering, referring to the bottle)* Look what I've got. Why don't you come up and we'll share it? The others are fast asleep... come on before we wake up Frank *(Indicating TOM)*.

HUMPHRIES

Wake up Frank? I'm not sure a bomb would wake him up. Look at him— Rip Van Winkle's uncle. I bet he wouldn't wake up if you climbed up and jumped on him. Do you think we should go up? What if Mandy should hear us?

SHEILA

Don't worry about her, she's in the bedroom. We won't disturb her. Come on Romeo, let's see if a little drinkie can get us back in the mood... or we can go back to your office and play house under the desk again if you prefer.

HUMPHRIES

Ah! ...Err ... no. Perhaps not! Upstairs would be better, I think. Lead on, err, Juliet. *(THEY exit upstairs.)*

*(All is quiet again. Slowly the coat moves and TOM appears from under it. HE gets down and looks around leaving the coat on the counter. TOM goes to the closet and opens the door looking for GERRY. Behind him the basement door opens slowly and there GERRY stands, very much the worse for his fall. TOM looks at him.)*

TOM

What happened to you? Don't tell me – the toolbox?

GERRY

Oooww...owww! I can't take any more of this. Come on; let's get out of here while we've got the chance.

TOM

That's the first sensible thing I've heard since we got here.

*(TOM and GERRY cross to the main door and unlock it. THEY have one last look around.)*

GERRY

Come on... *(As he says this, the door opens slowly and in comes GEOGE NAYLOR, "THE BOSS". He is also HAMOODSKI & DOG. TOM and GERRY take a step back in surprise and then realize who it is.)* Oh Boss, it's you! You gave us a shock.

TOM

Yeah Boss, we'd forgotten all about you. Is it time already?

NAYLOR

Is it time? I've been freezing my socks off out there for ages. Did you two fall asleep or were you keeping me waiting for a joke? We're well behind schedule and I've told you a thousand times that a perfect plan has no room for deviation. *(Closing the doors)*

*(TOM and GERRY, speaking in unison)*

TOM

Ah. Well. You see there's just a slight hiccup...

GERRY

That's the thing you see, Boss. This perfect plan of yours just got a little deviated...

NAYLOR

What are you two rabbitting on about? And why are we whispering? There's no one around to hear us, is there? *(During the following, HE inspects the premises at speed, opening doors etc., leaving the basement till last)* Now come on and let's get a move on, or the night will be gone and there will be people around. Let's have some more lights on for goodness sake, or else we'll be tripping over each other. *(HE puts up the lights.)*

TOM

You shouldn't do that Boss.

GERRY

Yeah Boss. You see...

NAYLOR

Look you two. Who's the brains behind this caper? Who's calling the shots? The bank regularly leaves its lights on as a security measure. See, that's the sort of thing you need to know if you're going to be a criminal mastermind. To plan the perfect crime one needs to assimilate every little titbit of information no matter how paltry, and make sure that no stone is left unturned. I didn't get where I am today by being unprepared. Oh no! Not George C. NAYLOR. I'm not going to be tripped up by the unexpected. Now, where are the tools?

*(NAYLOR opens the basement door, trips over the toolbox, and falls down the stairs. TOM and GERRY have been standing open-mouthed trying to draw the boss's attention to the fact that the premises are occupied etc. In panic THEY exit after him. A few moments later THEY appear at the top of the stairs supporting him, one on either side. Holding the door open, TOM and GERRY check to see that no one has been disturbed.)*

TOM

*(Holding the self-closing door open as HE speaks)* I don't think he expected that.

GERRY

Some mastermind.

NAYLOR

What the..... Oh my... What on earth...

TOM

I see you found the tools, Boss!

GERRY

And Boss, we've got a little titbit to add to your extensive knowledge. To put under those stones, if you like. A paltry little item to help with the perfect crime. **The staff is still here!** The place is crawling with 'em.

NAYLOR

What do you mean? Do you mean the bloke who lives in the flat? I distinctly heard him tell his mate he was going to be away on a course this weekend.

GERRY

Not just him ... all of them. They're all here.

NAYLOR

Don't be daft, why would they all still be here? Do you know what time it is?

TOM

Ah, well, you see Boss, actually I had this really nice watch but I lost it when....

NAYLOR

Will you shut up! What are they doing here? Where are they anyway?

GERRY

We think they're all upstairs at the moment although the situation could change at any minute. You wouldn't believe it ..... It's been like Clapham Junction in here. I think they might be having their Christmas party or something.

NAYLOR

Christmas par...it's only October for goodness sake. Anyway, this is going to make things a bit tricky...

TOM

That's just what we thought, Boss, so now that you're here, we can scarper. (*GERRY nods and moves towards the door.*)

NAYLOR

Nonsense. Where are you going? Come back here. We can use this to our advantage. They will have some explaining to do when this is over. As I said, this is going to make things a bit tricky but we shall just have to be very, very quiet, that's all, and think this through. A successful team wins by thinking on its feet. (*With this HE makes to lean back against the open doorway, trips over the toolbox, and — in slow motion — starts to fall backwards down the stairs facing the front with his arms out straight front trying to get his balance.*) Help!

TOM

We'll save you boss.

(*TOM and GERRY reach towards NAYLOR who pulls them both through the doorway and ALL THREE disappear to the basement, screaming. The door swings closed behind them. BLACKOUT*)

## END ACT II, SCENE ONE

## ACT II, SCENE TWO

(*AT RISE: The same scene a few minutes later. The door to the flat opens and SHEILA enters looking for her glasses, which are on her desk where SHE had left them.*)

SHEILA

(*Semi-whispering to Arthur offstage*) Its no good, Arthur, I need them. (*Entering and searching*) Now where did I leave them? It may be true that boys don't make passes at girls who wear glasses, but if I don't wear mine then I can't find the boys in the first place. Mind you, I couldn't call Arthur a boy even without them. Now, where could they be? Ah, Office! (*SHE feels her way into the office.*)

(*The flat door opens and MANDY enters looking for her overnight bag, which was left by the front door.*)

MANDY

(*Semi-whispering to FRANK offstage*) Don't move an inch; I'll be right back. (*Entering*) Now, where is it? Ah yes. (*SHE moves to the other side of the counter to retrieve it.*)

*(MANDY bends to retrieve her bag and is momentarily out of sight as SHEILA re-enters still searching for her glasses. MANDY gets up with her bag and watches, amused, as SHEILA searches and finds them on her desk.)*

SHEILA

Ah! *(Puts them on and sees MANDY)* Aahh! Mandy... you gave me a fright. What are you up to... and where's your brother?

MANDY

Just fetching my bag... and you know perfectly well that he's not my brother. He's my boyfriend, but please don't tell Mr. Humphries or Frank'll get into trouble. Come to think of it, what were you doing in Mr. Humphries' office in the middle of the night, dressed like that? More dictation?

SHEILA

Certainly not! Anyway, Mr. Humphries isn't in the office he's up...

MANDY

Yes?

SHEILA

*(Resigned)* Oh well, I'm sure you've guessed. Arthur is not just my boss; he's also ... well its just possible that he might be... given time and the right encouragement... be... *my boyfriend* too. This was to be our first weekend together.

MANDY

What? Here in the bank? Your boyfriend certainly knows how to show you a good time, doesn't he.

*(FRANK enters looking for MANDY.)*

FRANK

What's keeping you? Oh, hello Sheila... err, I was just looking for my sister.

MANDY

It's all right, Frank, I'm coming; and don't worry, Sheila knows about us.

FRANK

Ah!

SHEILA

“Ah” indeed, Frank Johnson! ... See you in the morning, Mandy. *(SHE exits to the flat)*

FRANK

*(As SHE leaves)* You won't say anything to old Humpy, will you Sheila?

MANDY

No she won't, Frank. Now come on up. *(SHE follows SHEILA upstairs.)*

*(FRANK lowers the lights again and is just about to follow when there is a knock on the street door. HE puts the lights back to full and goes to the door.)*

FRANK

Hello? Who's there?

PC GRAY

Police! May I have a word, please sir?

*(FRANK unlocks the door and opens it a tiny crack to assure himself it is O.K.)*

FRANK

Hello Constable. What can I do for you? *(Opening the door fully, GRAY steps in)* Everything's quite all right, you know.

PC GRAY

Well I'm glad to hear it. I was just ...

FRANK

Checking up on Bozo for Dog? Or was it Dog for Bozo? Anyway, there are no Dogs or clowns here, so that's good isn't it?

PC GRAY

Is it sir?

FRANK

Well I would have thought so. I think it's quite a relief.

PC GRAY

Yes I suppose it can't be good to have them in a bank. Both likely to make a mess everywhere.

FRANK

What? Who do? Never mind. So then, what can I do for you, Officer? It's late to be knocking on doors.

PC GRAY

Who exactly are you, sir, and what are you doing here at this time of night?

FRANK

I live here.

PC GRAY

In the bank?

FRANK

In the staff flat.

PC GRAY

Ah! Well I was just passing and I couldn't help noticing all the lights going up and down. I thought the Bank would be empty at this time of night.

FRANK

Oh right... not expecting me to be here, eh? Part of the surveillance team with the big boys, are you? With Dog?

PC GRAY

We all like to think of ourselves as part of the team, sir, no matter what our rank, whether we're on the Dog patrol or not.

FRANK

Of course. I didn't mean to imply that you had to have a Dog.

PC GRAY

You don't seem to like our canine friends, do you sir. Anyway, if all is well, I'll be going. Oh one last thing, that's not your blue estate car parked over the road, is it?

FRANK

No. Why?

PC GRAY

It's been clamped, that's all. But if it's not yours ... well it doesn't matter, does it? Good night sir. *(HE exits. FRANK locks up and goes back to the flat)*

FRANK

*(To himself as HE exits)* Where would I get the money for a car?

*(Silence on stage. The basement door swings open and THE THREE BATTERED THEIVES appear. THEY try to get their breath back and pull themselves together.)*

TOM

Well! That was a bit of luck!

*(GERRY and NAYLOR look at him incredulously.)*

GERRY

A bit of luck? We nearly killed ourselves. How the hell was that a bit of luck?

TOM

I found my watch. Look.

GERRY

He's found his watch. I don't believe you sometimes.

NAYLOR

Sshh! Sshh! (*THEY look around and listen to see if they've disturbed anyone. All is quiet.*) For God's sake keep it down. Just remember where we are. We can still do this. Tom, get the toolbox. Gerry, get over there by the door and keep your eyes peeled. (*HE does*) TOM, put the tools by the safe, and then go and listen by the door to the flat. (*HE does*) Leave the safe to the maestro. I am about to perform miracles. (*NAYLOR exits*)

GERRY

(*To TOM*) Leave it to the maestro. Who's he kidding? I don't like this, you know. I'm not happy. This is just asking for it. We should have been out of here hours ago.

NAYLOR

(*Re-entering*) Will you two please Keep Quiet! I am trying to perform an extremely sensitive operation in here, and I need absolute silence. (*Exits back into the office*)

(*Silence on stage for a few seconds. Then from the office we hear TAPPING SOUNDS. Then more TAPPING FOLLOWING A SET RHYTHM. TOM and GERRY in their boredom pick up the rhythm and join in. Soon there is a lively percussion number being played. NAYLOR appears in the office doorway, hammer in hand. HE taps on the door frame watching the other two. Eventually HE taps 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; THEY finish 6, 7, and look up startled.*)

GERRY

Sorry Boss.

TOM

Yeah, sorry Boss.

NAYLOR

Just shut it, will you? (*HE exits back into the office and THE TAPPING RESUMES.*)

(*TOM and GERRY look at each other and shrug but keep quiet for a few seconds.*)

GERRY

(*Then*) What's the time, anyway?

TOM

(*Looking at his watch*) It's.... it's-uh- (*HE takes it off and shakes it*)

NAYLOR

*(Re-entering)* What did I just say? Eh? Shhhhh! *(Exits)*

*(THEY look at each other and make funny faces. Silence for a few seconds)*

GERRY

So, *(Whispering)* what exactly is the time, then? Now that you've found your wonderful, super duper all dancing all singing state of the art timepiece...

TOM

It's...

GERRY

Has Noddy passed Big Ears yet? Is the little hand approaching the big one? What, oh keeper of the sands, is the bloody time?

TOM

It's...stopped! I don't believe it. It's stopped. Can you believe that? It's stopped. It's stopped. I wonder if it's still under guarantee? Maybe I can get it fixed?

*(At this, NAYLOR appears out of the office. HE has a stethoscope around his neck and hammer in his hand. HE marches straight across the stage to TOM. HE snatches the watch from TOM, puts it on the counter, and hits it with the hammer, gives it back to him, threatens him with the hammer, then starts to exit back to the office.)*

GERRY

Nah! I 'm not convinced ...Err, Boss, as you've stopped for a minute, maybe we could have a word.

TOM

Yeah, Boss. We think it's time to get out of here Boss. While we still can.

NAYLOR

Look, you lily-livered morons. If you just give me two minutes peace and quiet, I'll have this tin can open and we can have it away on our toes— And a great deal richer. Now, for the last time, will you two SHUT UP! *(HE exits back into the office wearing the stethoscope.)*

*(There is silence. TOM and GERRY look at each other.)*

GERRY

He's a bit touchy, isn't he?

*(Silence and then INTERMITTENT TAPPING RESUMES. After a few moments NAYLOR returns exasperated. HE places the toolbox back in the basement. GERRY goes to him.)*

NAYLOR

I don't understand it! 25 years I've been opening these things like they were paper bags. I can't have lost my touch. Foley and Bray safes are easy-peasy, especially for me. I'm the best there is – even I know that. If I was hiring someone for this job, I'd get me. What is wrong? It doesn't make sense.

*(During the above, TOM has wandered into the office and returns holding a large wad of notes.)*

TOM

Well Boss, I've got to hand it to you. You've done it. Now I can get that watch repaired.

*(NAYLOR and GERRY do a double take at the sight of the money.)*

GERRY & NAYLOR, *Speaking at once*

How the hell....Where the.... Where did you get that?

TOM

It was in the safe.

NAYLOR

But how did you get at it?

TOM

I opened the door.

GERRY

So how did you open the door?

TOM

I turned the handle and pulled it open. Wasn't I supposed to?

NAYLOR

I don't ruddy well believe it. It must have been unlocked all the time. What sort of Mickey Mouse bank is this? I can unlock a locked safe with my eyes closed. But this lot don't even bother to lock the safe in the first place. No wonder I couldn't get it open— It was already open. Right! Let's get organized and get out of here. TOM, put that bundle back with the rest (*HE does and re-enters*) and get the bags and start emptying the safe. GERRY, fetch the motor. It's the blue estate across the road, bring it over to the front door, keep the engine running and we'll bring the cash out to you.

*(Just then the door to the flat opens and we hear HUMPHRIES. THE ROBBERS freeze and then duck down behind the counter, audience side. When HE appears HE is dressed in singlet and large spotted shorts, and sock suspenders.)*

## HUMPHRIES

*(To SHEILA, Off)* I'm sorry....I really am.... I know it's off-putting.... I know I'm mucking you about, but we can ... err, pick up the rhythm again when I get back. *(HE enters and stays by the door)* I've just realized that in all the confusion last night, we never locked the safe. I'm sorry Sheila, but how can I err... relax... until I do it. *(HE crosses to the office during)* My duty to the bank must take precedence over... err... well...err...personal ambitions, shall we say. *(HE enters the office, locks the safe and crosses back toward the flat.)* That's better. Frank would lose all credibility in me if he was to find out I hadn't locked up properly, to say nothing of our customers. *(HE exits to the flat.)*

*(THE ROBBERS slowly come up from hiding.)*

## NAYLOR

I just don't belie...I can't ruddy well.... Words fail me. What is happening in this place? Is this place cursed...or is it me?

## TOM

I think it's 'cos we disturbed that corpse next door. They don't like being disturbed.

## NAYLOR

I'll disturb you in a minute.

## GERRY

Don't worry Boss. It's lucky really. You can open them when they're locked.... remember?

## NAYLOR

Right! *(To GERRY)* Fetch the motor and wait outside for my signal. *(GERRY exits the front door)* Come on you. *(To TOM)* Let's open that damned safe and get out of here. *(HE exits to the office with the stethoscope and hammer).* Get the bag for the money.

*(TOM gets a zip-up holdall from the toolbox that is identical to FRANK's weekend bag which is still on the floor by the counter from when he came in. TOM takes it into the office. We hear some TAPPING and then a satisfied "yes" from NAYLOR. NAYLOR returns and crosses the stage to the front door and looks out.)*

NAYLOR, *Continuing*

Now where the hell is he with the car? Good grief, if you want a job done you've got to do it yourself. *(HE crosses back to the office doorway and addresses TOM.)* I'm going to see what's happened to Gerry and the motor. You finish up there, close the safe behind you and wait by the front door. I'll knock three times for you to open up. Got that?

## TOM

*(Re-appearing)* Got it Boss. Pack all the money, close the safe and you'll knock three times. *(Exits to the office)*

**NAYLOR**

Yes, well. Even he can't get that wrong. *(Exits through the front door)*

*(From the office is heard TOM SINGING: "Knock Three Times". The door to the flat opens and we hear HUMPHRIES speaking to SHEILA Off.)*

**HUMPHRIES**

I'm sorry Shelia, but I just can't concentrate, what with all the interruptions and having Mandy next door and everything. This is turning out to be very unsatisfactory, *(Apologetically)* for, err, for both of us. I should never have deceived Mother. This is.... what is all that singing? Johnson? ...Johnson? ...What are you making that racket for? *(HUMPHRIES enters)* Johnson...why are you in my office? *(HUMPHRIES crosses into the office, speaking from Off.)* You're not Johnson...who are you? My God, you're Laddo! We were warned about you and your gang. *(Backing out of the office with his hands in the air.)* Aagh! Don't shoot! I'm unarmed.

*(HUMPHRIES turns and runs for the nearest door—the basement—trips over the toolbox and falls down the stairs, leaving TOM in the office doorway holding a reversed hammer, pistol-style, in one hand and the bag of money in the other. HE drops the bag of money by the door, and goes to the basement door and opens it. HE looks in and then shuts the door.)*

**TOM**

What the hell was... and why did he do that? I'm not armed. I've got to get out of here. *(HE goes to the front door and peeps out).* Where the hell are they? *(Behind him through the open flat door we hear...)*

**SHEILA**

*(Offstage)* Arthur? Arthur? You don't have to be embarrassed.... *(TOM turns and runs for cover to the office. HE closes the door behind him, and then remembers the money. The door re-opens and we see his arm come out at floor level searching for the bag, but unsuccessfully. Meanwhile, Shelia enters. SHE is wearing Humphries' coat over her petticoat. SHE is not wearing her glasses but sees the light on in the office and approaches.)* Arthur. I know tonight hasn't worked out as we planned but you don't have to be embarrassed. *(The hand finds her leg and explores)* Ooh, Arthur, are you getting playful at last? Ooh you have such soft hands; you make me shiver all over. *(SHE kneels, grabs the hand and starts kissing the fingers.)* Is that nice Arthur? Shall Sheila kiss her little Humpty Dumpty all over? Are you going to let me in so we can play Bankers and Secretaries? Come on Arthur. Let your little Sheely Weely in to play with her little Humpty Dumpty. *(The hand suddenly pulls free and the door slams shut. SHEILA tries it but it won't open.)* Arthur, please open the door, we can just have a cuddle if you wish... Arthur this is just silly. Don't go all sulky on me. Arthur! Come out so we can talk about it...Arthur...Now I'm getting cross, Arthur. If you don't come out this minute, I'm going back upstairs on my own and if you don't join me in the next five minutes I promise you that I shall never speak to you again. Right...that's it! *(SHE turns, almost tripping over the bag of money, which SHE picks up with an exasperated motion.)* Oh! Frank! That lad's always leaving his things in everyone's way? *(SHE picks up the bag, walks over to the basement door, opens it and without looking,*

*throws the bag inside. What SHE does not see is HUMPHRIES just getting to the top of the basement stairs. HE gets the bag full in the chest and topples back down the stairs into the basement. On hearing his descending scream, SHEILA looks at the office door.) Oh it's no good you crying for sympathy now, Arthur. I told you, you've got five minutes! (SHE haughtily exits to the flat, shutting the door behind her.)*

*(After a few seconds the office door opens and TOM peeps out.)*

TOM

Phew! That was close. Right, I'm out of here! Now, where's that bag? ... Ah! There it is. *(HE sees Frank's bag by the counter and picks it up.)* Can't leave all this lovely lolly. *(Just then there is a TAPPING ON THE FRONT DOOR.)* At last. Hang on, how many knocks was that? The boss said three times. *(There is more FRANTIC KNOCKING.)* Oh Lord, what should I do? Perhaps he wants me to knock three times? *(HE does this. There are THREE LOUD KNOCKS in reply. HE opens the door a crack cautiously to be sure and the door is forced open and in comes GERRY.)*

GERRY

About bloody time.

TOM

Oh, it's you. Thank ...

GERRY

Well who were you expecting, Moby Dick?

TOM

Who?

GERRY

Never mind. Where's the Boss?

TOM

He went out to look for you. What took you so long?

GERRY

The silly sod didn't give me the car keys, did he?

TOM

Well that's never stopped you before.

GERRY

Yeah, well it wouldn't have stopped me this time either, but when I got there I found it had been clamped! So I've been all this time looking for another motor, haven't I? Talk about a jinxed job, this one is one night I don't want to remember. Where's the money? Don't tell me we've lost that as well!

TOM

I got it here.

GERRY

Well at least that's something. All's well that ends well, etcetera. Come on let's get out of here before anything else goes wrong.

TOM

What about the boss?

GERRY

What about him?

TOM

Well, he won't know where we are if we just go. He's expecting me to be here.

GERRY

Look! We've been chancing our arm here all night on the basis of duff info. This place was supposed to be deserted, instead of which it's been busier than the bunny ranch on a Saturday night. Let's get out now, with the money. We can catch up with the boss later.

TOM

I don't know. He told me to wait here for his signal. Knock three times he said.

GERRY

We stay any longer we'll be knocked off; I don't know about three times! Give me the bag. I'm off. You can stay if you want.

TOM

I'll come along, thanks all the same. Besides, that bloke will be up out of the cellar in a minute, and then what would I do?

GERRY

What bloke?

TOM

Never mind. I'll tell you on the way home. *(HE exits with Frank's bag.)*

GERRY

I'll just fetch the tools.

*(GERRY crosses to the basement door, opens it to get the tools and comes face to face with a very shaken and concussed HUMPHRIES, who is about to step out.)*

HUMPHRIES

Mother, please don't lock me in the dark any longer. I promise I won't lie to you again.

GERRY

Aagh! (*HE quickly slams the door on HUMPHRIES.*)

HUMPHRIES

Aagh! (*As HE falls down the steps*)

(*GERRY re-opens the door to collect his toolbox as SHEILA enters from the flat.*)

GERRY

Aagh! (*HE conceals himself behind the open basement door, but his fingers are showing*)

SHEILA

I'm sorry Arthur. I had no right to bully you like that. After all, this hasn't been the most relaxing of evenings, has it? (*SHE moves to her side of the door and takes GERRY's hand in her own*)

GERRY

Mmmmmnm!

SHEILA

Come on. You don't have to be shy with me, do you, you big softy.

GERRY

Mmmmmnm!

SHEILA

Well say something.

GERRY

Mmmmmnm!

SHEILA

Gosh, I was wrong about you, wasn't I? Your hands are not soft at all, but strong and hard and very manly.

GERRY

Mmmmmnm!

SHEILA

I'm glad we've had this little chat, Arthur. I'm going upstairs now and I shall expect you when you see fit to come to me.

(*SHEILA exits into the flat. GERRY picks up the tools and runs out the front door. The door to the flat opens and FRANK enters followed by MANDY. HE is wearing a suit jacket over his boxer shorts; SHE is sporting a baseball cap and Frank's shirt. She waits in the doorway, arms folded, watching FRANK look for his bag.*)

MANDY

I just can't understand why you need a cigarette now. *(Pause)* I didn't even think you were a smoker.

FRANK

I'm not... except after strenuous exercise. It helps me...relax. *(HE joins her again and THEY clinch passionately.)*

MANDY

Well don't take too long. *(Coyly)* We might want to exercise some more! *(THEY clinch again.)*

FRANK

That's why I need to find my bag. I've got a fresh carton of 200 duty free cigarettes in there.

MANDY

Ooh saucy. You're not going to get that much exercise. *(THEY clinch again. During this the basement door opens and the bag is thrown onstage.)*

FRANK

Will you just give it a rest for a few seconds? We don't want to disturb Mr Humphries, now do we? I'll just find my bag.

MANDY

Well hurry up then. *(Sexily)* You've been up and down all night.

FRANK

SShh! Please just keep it down or my "sister" will be spending what's left of the night on her own, whereas I'll be relegated to counter duty again. *(THEY break their clinch and quietly enter the bank.)* Now where is that bag? I left it down here somewhere.

*(As HE looks by the counter for it, the door to the basement opens and a very dishevelled HUMPHRIES enters. HE is concussed.)*

HUMPHRIES

Oh my... Oh mother... Oh I'm in pain... Where am I? What happened to me? Who am I? Oh God that hurt!

FRANK

Mr. Humphries! ... What on earth! What were you doing down there?

*(HUMPHRIES looks around blankly, saying nothing. HE is obviously the worse for wear. HE staggers and is about to collapse. FRANK and MANDY rush to support him. SHEILA enters from the flat.)*

SHEILA

What on earth is happening down here? What's all the commotion? Is that you Arthur?  
(*Finally putting on her glasses*) Arthur, what's the matter? Speak to me?

(*HUMPHRIES blankly stares around him not knowing what to say.*)

HUMPHRIES

(*Finally blurting out*) Robbers!

OTHERS

What?

HUMPHRIES

Robbers! We've been robbed!

OTHERS

What?

HUMPHRIES

He had a gun.

FRANK

Who had a gun?

HUMPHRIES

He had a gun.

OTHERS

What?

HUMPHRIES

Robbers!

SHEILA

O.K. This is where we came in. Now take a deep breath, Arthur and try to tell us what's wrong.

MANDY

Get him a chair, Frank. He's not well.

(*FRANK pulls a chair over to HUMPHRIES.*)

SHEILA

Now sit down Arthur. (*THEY help him sit.*) Deep breaths. After me... in out.... In out. Better? (*He nods.*) Now, calmly and quietly, tell us what's wrong.

*(HUMPHRIES nods again, looks at each of them, and calmly exhales. HE then leaps to his feet and screams.)*

HUMPHRIES

**Robbers!**

FRANK

Well that worked a treat, didn't it?

HUMPHRIES

**Robbers!**

*(As HUMPHRIES stands there screaming, SHEILA slaps him across the face. HE immediately freezes.)*

FRANK

Oh yes, that works every time.

HUMPHRIES

*(Calmly and deliberately)* Robbers! *We have been robbed!* There was a man with a gun. He was cleaning out the safe when I surprised him. He tried to shoot me but I was too quick for him, and managed to escape to the basement. I was just coming up to raise the alarm when some idiot threw this bag at me and knocked me down the stairs. The fall must have knocked me out.

*(The OTHERS stare in disbelief as FRANK rushes off to check the safe.)*

FRANK

*(Retuning)* He's right you know. The safe's empty!

MANDY

We must phone the Police.

SHEILA

Get Sergeant Wolf.

HUMPHRIES

Who?

SHEILA

Officer Hound.

HUMPHRIES

What?

SHEILA

Detective.... Mut.

HUMPHRIES

What? Yes! That's right. Chief Inspector Dog. Quick! Call for Chief Inspector Dog.

*(Immediately, there are THREE LOUD KNOCKS on the front door. ALL react then freeze, staring at the door. Then THREE MORE KNOCKS. THEY shuffle positions ending up facing the door, FRANK first then HUMPHRIES, SHEILA and MANDY. ANOTHER THREE KNOCKS come slowly and loudly.)*

SHEILA

What shall we do?

HUMPHRIES

Johnson, you'd better answer that.

FRANK

*(Protesting)* What? Why me?

HUMPHRIES

Just do as you're told.

*(There is now CONTINUOUS KNOCKING. FRANK rushes to the front door and wrenches it open. NAYLOR falls in.)*

NAYLOR

Three knocks you moron. How difficult is it to understand a simple .... *(HE freezes as HE becomes aware of his audience .i.e. FRANK & MANDY dressed as described and HUMPHRIES and SHEILA similarly undressed.)* Who the hell are you? *(To FRANK)* What the hell are you lot up to?

HUMPHRIES

Inspector! I'm amazed! How did you know? You said you were good, but this is uncanny!

NAYLOR

What?

HUMPHRIES

How did you know we'd been robbed? Have you caught them?

NAYLOR

What?

HUMPHRIES

Are they in custody? Come on man, speak up. Tell us what's what. Johnson, this is Chief Inspector Dog.

NAYLOR

What? Who? Oh yes. ... Evening all!

SHEILA

We were just about to phone you, Inspector, but obviously you've got it all in hand.

MANDY

Tell us. What's been happening?

FRANK

Yes, what the hell's been going on? (*Peering at NAYLOR who HE previously met as HAMOODSKI*) Have we met somewhere before?

HUMPHRIES

Johnson, I told you, this is Chief Inspector Dog of the robbery squad.

NAYLOR

Ah! Yes! Well, I'm err... As you can see I'm err, ...on the job, and my err, finger is firmly on the pulse, err... and I can safely say without fear or err, ...trepidation that, err ... without doubt and err... hand on err, heart, that I have every confidence that err ... matters appertaining to the aforesaid err, criminal activities, will, err... to a satisfactory conclusion. (*Gaining in confidence as the OTHERS are totally lost*) Furthermore, I, single-handed...

(*The front door opens and in rush TOM and GERRY. THEY are carrying FRANK's bag.*)

GERRY

Ah! There you are Boss. We've been looking for you everywh...

TOM

(*HE stops on seeing the others.*) Oops!

NAYLOR

Err, virtually single-handed, ... have. Ah! Ah! There you are men. Well done. Well done. Err... I was just explaining to these good people how well our little operation has, err... Hasn't it?

TOM & GERRY, *Together*

What?

NAYLOR

Would you excuse me ladies and gentlemen, whilst I just confer with my colleagues? (*HE goes into a huddle with TOM and GERRY*) Where have you been?... Why have you come back? Well at least we've still got the money. (*HE takes the bag from TOM, and carries on without letting them speak*) Now we can still do this. Just follow my lead. (*HE turns to the OTHERS.*) Good news. My officers here... from the robbery division, have recovered the loo... the money. Alas, the perpetrators of this despicable crime have legged... err avoided capture at this time. However, we have several leads to follow and expect to make an arrest at the earliest opportunity. We must leave you now as we must get back to the station to proceed with our investigation. We will be in touch for statements and the like very shortly. (*HE turns to go to the horror of TOM and GERRY who, during the above, have been trying to tell him of the contents of the bag.*)

FRANK

Inspector? Why are you taking my bag to the police station?

NAYLOR

Your bag?

FRANK

Yes. My overnight bag. Why are you taking it away? I've got my duty frees in it. I need those.

SHEILA

I didn't know you smoked, Frank.

FRANK

Only after strenuous exercise. Anyway, why are you taking my bag?

NAYLOR

I think you must be mistaken, sir. This is police evidence. We need this for our investigation.

FRANK

(*Squaring up to NAYLOR*) How can taking my weekend things possibly help your investigation?

NAYLOR

(*Getting equally heated*) I can assure you sir that my sergeant would hardly be walking around with your washing and fags whilst deadly deeds are being perpetrated. Isn't that so, sergeant?

GERRY

Well actually, Inspector, I think the gentleman may have a point.

NAYLOR

Exactly! Quite correct Sarge...What did you say?

GERRY

I said the gentleman might have a point, sir.

NAYLOR

*(Sarcastically)* Really Sergeant. And exactly what point would that be then?

MANDY

*(Interrupting, on seeing the bag of money by the cupboard where it has been unnoticed)* Hang on a minute Frank. I think the Inspector's right. Here's your bag, over here. *(Going to it and picking it up)*

*(FRANK and NAYLOR each look searchingly from one bag to the other. NAYLOR is obviously taken aback.)*

NAYLOR

Where the hell did that come from?

GERRY

Right here, sir. The robbers must have left it behind when they made their getaway.

TOM

It's what we've been trying to tell you, Boss, there's two bags!

GERRY

*(To TOM, and putting on an official police voice)* Thank you, Constable. A neat bit of observation if ever I saw one. *(To NAYLOR, as if to a child)* Well sir. If this one is the gentleman's overnight bag, then that one must be the "evidence".

NAYLOR

*(Looking suspiciously at both bags)* Are you positive about this Sergeant?

GERRY

Oh yes sir. Positive.

MANDY

Hang on a minute. If that bag contains Frank's clothes, then what's in this bag?

NAYLOR

Err... Police evidence.

HUMPHRIES

What police evidence?

NAYLOR

Err... *Evidence*, evidence.

HUMPHRIES

What?

FRANK

Yes, Officer, we'd like to see this so called "evidence". There's something fishy about all this, if you ask me.

SHEILA

Yes, I agree with Frank, let's see what's in the bag.

NAYLOR

It's a technical thing madam. What we call "forensics". Now, we must be getting along. Constable. *(To TOM)* Kindly proceed in a northerly direction and relieve that young lady of her burden.

TOM

What?

NAYLOR

Get the bag, man! Right then, *(Throwing the bag of clothes to Frank)*, let's be off.

FRANK

Don't give it to him, Mandy!

*(TOM crosses the OTHERS to get the bag from MANDY.)*

HUMPHRIES

*(As TOM approaches)* Just a minute. I know you, don't I? Where have we met? ...Why it's you, isn't it? You're the one who tried to shoot me? Help, police! Help!

FRANK

Don't let him have it, Mandy!

NAYLOR

Let him have it, Miss.

FRANK

Right, let him have it, Mandy!

*(MANDY hits TOM with the bag. HUMPHRIES is shouting, the robbers turn and try to make for the door, but FRANK downs NAYLOR with his bag; MANDY downs TOM with hers and SHEILA jumps on GERRY's back and spins him around. There are lots of grunts)*

*and groans and ad-libs as the fight continues. During the struggle, the front door opens and in walks the policeman, PC GRAY. HE blows his whistle for calm.)*

This is Not the End of the Play  
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes