

MRS. CLACKETT (Cockney accent): It's no good you going on. I can't open sardines and answer the phone: I've only got one pair of feet. (*she puts the sardines down and picks up the phone.*) Hello.... Yes, but there's no one here, love....No, Mr. Brent's not here....He lives here, yes, but he don't live here now because he lives in Spain.....Mr. Phillip Brent, that's right....The one who writes the plays, that's him, only now he writes them in Spain...No, she's in Spain too, they're all in Spain, there's no one here.....Am I in Spain? No, I'm not in Spain, dear. I look after the house for them, but I go home at one o'clock on Wednesday, only I've got a nice plate of sardines to put my feet up with, because it's the royal what's it called on the telly—the royal you know—Where's the paper, then? (*She picks up the newspaper.*) And if it's to do with letting the house then you'll have to ring the house agents for the house....Squire, Squire, Hackham and who's the other one...? No, they're not in Spain, they're next to the phone in the study. Squire, Squire, Hackham, and hold on, I'll go look. Always the same, isn't it? Soon as you take the weight off your feet, down it all comes on your head.

DOTTY (American accent): And I take the sardines. No, I leave the sardines. No, I take the sardines.

LLOYD: You leave the sardines and you put the receiver back.

DOTTY: Oh, yes, I put the receiver back.

LLOYD: And you leave the sardines.

DOTTY: And I leave the sardines?

LLOYD: You leave the sardines.

DOTTY: I put the receiver back and I leave the sardines.

LLOYD: Right.

DOTTY: Have we changed that?

LLOYD: No, love.

DOTTY: That's what I've always been doing?

LLOYD: I shouldn't say that, Dotty, my precious.

DOTTY: How about the words? Am I getting some of them right?

LLOYD: Some of them have a very familiar ring.

DOTTY: Only it's like a fruit machine in there.

LLOYD: I know that Dotty.

DOTTY: I open my mouth and I never know if it's going to come out three oranges or two lemons and a banana.

LLOYD: Anyway, it's not midnight yet. We don't open till tomorrow. So you're holding the receiver.

DHOTTY: I'm holding the receiver.

PHILLIP/Frederick and ROGER/Garry

PHILLIP: Darling, this stuff that eats through anything. It eats through trousers! Darling, if it eats through trousers, you don't think it goes on and eats through.... Listen, darling, I think I'd better get these trousers off! Darling, quick, this is an emergency. I mean if it eats through absolutely anything....Darling, I think I can feel it! It's eating through....absolutely everything!

ROGER: (*entering*) There's something evil in this house.

PHILLIP: The Inland Revenue!

ROGER: He's back!

PHILLIP: No!

ROGER: No?

PHILLIP: I'm not here.

ROGER: He's not there.

PHILLIP: I'm abroad.

ROGER: He's walking abroad.

PHILLIP: I must go.

ROGER: Stay!

PHILLIP: I won't, thank you.

ROGER: Speak!

PHILLIP: Only in the presence of my lawyer.

ROGER: Only in the presence of your....? Hold on. You're not from the other world?

PHILLIP: Yes, yes—Marbella.

ROGER: You're some kind of intruder!

PHILLIP: Well, nice to meet you. (*He waves goodbye with his right hand, then sees the tax demand on it and puts it behind his back.*) I mean, have a sardine. (*He offers the sardines with his left hand. His trousers fall down.*)

ROGER: No, you're not! You're some kind of sex maniac. You've done something to Vicki! I'm coming straight downstairs.

VICKI/Brooke and ROGER/Garry

VICKI: Now what?

ROGER: A hot water bottle! I didn't put it there!

VICKI: I didn't put it there!

ROGER: Someone's in the bathroom filling hot water bottles.....Wait a minute. What did I do with those sardines? You—wait here.

VICKI: You hear all sorts of funny things about these houses.

ROGER: Yes, but this one has been so extensively modernized throughout I can't see how anything creepy would survive central heating and....*(he stares at the table)*

VICKI: What? What is it? What's happening?

ROGER: The sardines! They've gone.

VICKI: Perhaps there is something funny going on. I'm going to get into bed and put my head under the..... *(She freezes at the sight of the flight bag.)*

ROGER: I put the sardines there. Or was it *there*?

VICKI: Bag.....

ROGER: I suppose Mrs. Sprockett must have taken them away again...What? What is it?

VICKI: Bag!

ROGER: Bag?

VICKI: Bag! Bag!

ROGER: What do you mean, bag, bag?

VICKI: Bag! Bag! Bag!

ROGER: What bag?

VICKI: *(The bag is gone)* No bag!

ROGER: No bag?

VICKI: Your bag! Suddenly! Here! Now—gone!

ROGER: It's in the bedroom. I put it in the bedroom.

VICKI: Don't go in there.

ROGER: The Box!

VICKI: The box!

ROGER: They've both gone!

VICKI: My files!

ROGER: What on earth is happening? Where is Mr's Spratchett? You wait in the bedroom.

VICKI: No! No! No!

ROGER: At least put your dress on. VICKI: I'm not going in there.

BURGLAR/Selsdon and LLOYD

BURGLAR: No bars, no burglar alarm. They ought to be prosecuted for incitement.

LLOYD: All right, Selsdon, hold it. Let's take it again.

BURGLAR: No, but sometimes it makes me want to sit down and weep. When I think I used to do banks. When I remember I used to do bullion vaults.

LLOYD: Hold it Selsdon, hold it.

BURGLER: What am I doing now?

LLOYD: HOLD IT!

BURGLAR: I'm breaking into paper bags.

LLOYD: It's like Myra Hess playing through the air raids. Selsdon, STOP!

SELSDON: Stop?

LLOYD: Stop. Now Selsdon.....

SELSDON: I met Myra Hess once.

LLOYD: I think he can hear better than I can.

SELSDON: I beg your pardon?

LLOYD: From your entrance please, Selsdon.

SELSDON: Well, at a charity show in Sunderland.

LLOYD: Thank you. Poppy!

SELSDON: Oh, not for me. It keeps me from sleeping.

LLOYD: Poppy, put the glass back once more.

SELSDON: Come on again?

LLOYD: Right. Only, Selsdon, A little sooner. A shade earlier, A touch closer to yesterday. Start moving as soon as Freddie says, "I've heard of people getting stuck with a problem but this is ridiculous." And I want your arm through the window. Right?

SELSDON: Say no more. May I make a suggestion, though? Should I perhaps come on a little earlier?

LLOYD: Selsdon....

SELSDON: Only there does seem to be something of a hiatus between Freddie's exit and my entrance.

LLOYD: No, Selsdon. Listen. Don't worry. I've got it.

SELSDON: Yes?

LLOYD: How about coming in a little earlier?

SELSDON: We're obviously thinking along the same lines.

LLOYD: Am I putting him on or is he putting me on?

## POPPY AND TIM

POPPY: Act One places, please. Your calls, Miss Otley, Miss Ashton, Mr. Lejeune, Mr. Fellowes, Miss Blair. Act One places, please.

TIM: And maybe Act One places is what we'll get. What do you think?

POPPY: OH, Dotty'll pull herself together now we've called places. Now she knows she's got to be on stage in five minutes. Won't she?

TIM: Will she?

POPPY: You know what Dotty's like.

TIM: We've been on the road for a month! We've only got to Miami Beach. What's it going to be like by the time we get to Cleveland?

POPPY: If only she'd speak!

TIM: If only she'd unlock her dressing room door! Look, if Dotty won't go on...

POPPY: Won't go on?

TIM: If she won't.

POPPY: She will.

TIM: Of course she will.

POPPY: Won't she?

TIM: I'm sure she will. But if she doesn't.....

POPPY: She must!

TIM: She will, she will. But if she didn't....

POPPY: I'd have five minutes to change. Four minutes.

TIM: If only she'd say something.

POPPY: I'll have another go. Takes your mind off your own problems, anyway.

PHILLIP/Frederick and FLAVIA/Belinda

PHILLIP: It's Mrs. Clackett's afternoon off, remember? We've got the place to ourselves.

FLAVIA: Home!

PHILLIP: Home, sweet home!

FLAVIA: Dear old house!

PHILLIP: Just waiting for us to come back.

FLAVIA: It's rather funny, though, creeping in like this for our wedding anniversary.

PHILLIP: It's damned serious. If inland Revenue finds out we're in the country, even for one night, bang goes to claim to be a resident abroad. Bang goes most of this year's income. I feel like an illegal immigrant.

FLAVIA: I'll tell you what I feel like.

PHILLIP: Champagne?

FLAVIA: I wonder if Mrs. Clackett aired the beds.

PHILLIP: Darling!

FLAVIA: Well, why not? No children. No friends dropping in. We're absolutely on our own.

PHILLIP: True.

FLAVIA: Leave those!

PHILLIP: Sh!

FLAVIA: What?

PHILLIP: (*Humorously*) Inland Revenue may hear us.

FREDERICK and BELINDA

FREDRICK: Garry came rushing out of his dressing room in a great state. I couldn't quite understand what he was saying. I often feel with Garry that I must have missed something somewhere. You know how stupid I am about that kind of thing. But I think he was saying he wanted to kill me.

BELINDA: Oh, my poor dear.

FREDERICK: I thought I'd better leave it to him. I don't want to make things worse. He's all right, is he?

BELINDA: Who, Garry? Anything but, by the sound of it.

FREDERICK: I mean he's going on?

BELINDA: Of course he's going on. Because if Tim has to go on for Garry, Poppy can't go on for Dotty, because if Poppy goes on for Dotty, Tim will have to be on the book!

FREDERICK: This is getting farcical. Dotty's a funny woman. So up and down. She was perfectly all right last night.

BELINDA: Last Night?

FREDERICK: Yes, she took me for a drink after the show.

BELINDA: She was with you? You were with her?

FREDERICK: She was being very sympathetic about all my troubles.

BELINDA: She's not going to sink her teeth into you! I won't let her.

FREDERICK: No, no, she couldn't have been nicer. In fact, she came back to my room afterwards for a cup of coffee and she told me all her troubles. Sat there until three o'clock this morning. I don't know what the guy in room service thought.