Please Enjoy the Following Sample

- This sample is an *excerpt* from a Samuel French title.
- This sample is for **perusal only** and may not be used for performance purposes.
- You may not download, print, or distribute this excerpt.
- We highly recommend purchasing a copy of the title before considering for performance.



For more information about licensing or purchasing a play or musical, please visit our websites

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

ONE MAN TWO GUVNORS

BY **RICHARD BEAN**

BASED ON **CARLO GOLDINI'S**
THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

INCLUDING THE SONG 'TOMORROW LOOKS GOOD FROM HERE'
BY GRANT OLDING

SERVING THEATRE
SF
SINCE 1830

WWW.SAMUELFRENCH.CO.UK
WWW.SAMUELFRENCH.COM

Copyright © 2015 by Richard Bean
All Rights Reserved

ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS is fully protected under the copyright laws of the British Commonwealth, including Canada, the United States of America, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-11102-0

www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk

www.samuelfrench.com

FOR AMATEUR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED KINGDOM AND WORLD
EXCLUDING NORTH AMERICA

plays@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk

020 7255 4302/01

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French,

depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

The professional rights in this play are controlled by United Agents LLP, 12-26 Lexington Street, London, W1F OLE.

No one shall make any changes in this title for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall upload this title, or part of this title, to any social media websites.

The right of Richard Bean to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Additional songs and music composed by Grant Olding are available to license with this title. Please contact Samuel French Ltd.

Author's note

There have been several different 'definitive' scripts of *One Man, Two Guvnors*. The first production in the Lyttleton at the National Theatre in May 2011 ran for about two and a half hours and we took the opportunity of cutting the script when it transferred to the Adelphi in London's West End. There it ran for about two hours ten. When we took it to Broadway we cut even more and it ran at the Music Box at about two hours.

I remember Nick Hytner, the original director, asking me to choose my favourite dialogue to put in the season brochure. He'd chosen his, a duologue between Francis and Dolly. He cut this very dialogue for the West End transfer. I guess my point is that a resourceful director might find jokes he or she likes in earlier published texts, which can be reinstated. I would have no objection to that.

This is a very technical show and respect needs to be given to the set and props. Mousetraps have to be engineered, letters and envelopes have to be created from rice paper, stairs have to transform into crash mats. Care and time has to be put into these physical aspects of the staging or someone will get hurt. I would recommend that the play be rehearsed with the two doors in the room. This will aid timing and blocking, but it will also make sure that the theatre chippy is involved and given due respect in the early stages of the production. One night in the Lyttleton James Corden, playing Francis, could not get one of the doors open and had to call for a carpenter from the audience. Luckily there was one who went up on stage and fixed the door.

Commedia dell'arte, from whose soil this has sprung, cares little for the text, and much for improvisation in

and around stock characters with known motivations. I would counsel the director not to be tempted down this route. The reason why Carlo Goldoni wrote down *A Servant of Two Masters* was that he was tired of actors going off the script and resorting to filth to get a laugh. There's enough filth in the play without needing to make any up.

However improvisation is needed, occasionally, mainly by Francis and this needs to be managed both in tone and in length. There is a danger that the improvisation can render the play irrelevant. Controls and constraints on the actor playing Francis need to be actioned.

The most difficult part to direct is Christine Patterson. It is, of course, important that she is not spotted as a plant. Cast an unknown. In performance she should be a bit useless to Francis, mumbling and giggling, and being embarrassed, rather than speaking whatever lines she has clearly. After the interval she should not return to her seat in the audience, but take a curtain at the end. If the part of Christine is directed and played well you should be getting shocked complaints from members of the audience demanding to know what makes you think you can treat a member of the public so callously. We had just such a complaint at the Haymarket. The punter was taken to Christine's dressing room in the interval and introduced. Only then was he convinced that she was a professional actor. He returned to his seat suitably abashed. That's when you know you've got it right.

The fourth wall is broken early on by Lloyd and Dolly. It should stay broken, and particularly Francis should have a relationship with the audience, in which he enlists them as his accomplice.

Audience participation can be a dangerous folly, but there are rules. Particularly in the trunk-lifting scene, it is important that Francis introduces himself as

Francis and stays in character-ish. It is also vital that the helpers are treated with a degree of respect, even if they behave on stage like witless attention seekers, as often happens. Show respect, and get them off as soon as possible.

Many theatres do not have sufficient understage to cope with the stairs routines in the dinner scene. On tour we often replaced stairs with revolving doors. There is no script for a revolving doors set, suffice to say Alfie is battered coming in and going out.

It's hard, physical work this play, but if you get it right, it can be rewarding.

Richard Bean

CHARACTERS

CHARLIE 'CHARLIE THE DUCK' CLENCH – Brighton based but originally from London, 50s

PAULINE CLENCH – his daughter, 18

HARRY DANGLE – crooked solicitor, 60s

ALAN – the son of Dangle, 20s

DOLLY – an employee of Clench, 30s

LLOYD BOATENG – a friend to Clench, 50s

FRANCIS HENSHALL – minder, 30s

RACHEL CRABBE – sister of Roscoe Crabbe, mid 20s

STANLEY STUBBERS – privately educated, late 20s

ALFIE – waiter, 87

GARETH – head waiter, 40

Others as required

NOTES on text – I'm not using continental scene changes, ie: the scene doesn't change on the entrance of new character, rather scene changes are restricted to time and location changes.

ACT ONE

Scene One

1963, April, mid morning. A room in **CHARLIE***'s house in Brighton. A framed photo of Queen Elizabeth II at coronation upstage.* **CHARLIE***,* **HARRY DANGLE***,* **ALAN DANGLE***,* **PAULINE***,* **LLOYD***,* **DOLLY** *and other friends and family. Hardly anything remains from a buffet of typically English party food. Maybe one lone cheese and pineapple on a stick, and some peanuts. A party can of beer etc. All very lively and jolly, laughter, drinks, dancing. The song finishes.* **PAULINE** *and* **ALAN** *kiss. They toast "***PAULINE** *&* **ALAN***".* **CHARLIE** *taps a glass for quiet.*

DANGLE Happy engagement! Pauline and Alan!

ALL Pauline and Alan!

DOLLY Come on Charlie! Give us a speech!

ALL Speech!

CHARLIE I've only ever spoken three times, formally, in public, in my life, and each time I've been banged up by the judge straight afterwards! For twenty years, me and Pauline's mother were happy, and then, unfortunately, just by chance, we met each other. I done me best bringing up Pauline, on me own, after her muvver… *(chokes)* … sorry…

LLOYD – doin' well Charlie.

CHARLIE – I've had to be her dad and her mum after her muvver… *(chokes)*

PAULINE – It's all right dad.

CHARLIE – …after her muvver left me and went to live in Spain. It's a disappointment that Jean can't be here in Brighton at her daughter's engagement party, and a shame she can't even afford a stamp for a card neither. But I'm not gonna go on about it. I'd like to thank Alan's father, my solicitor.

DANGLE *(coming forward)* Ecce homo!

CHARLIE No Latin! Please! I have enough difficulty understanding you when you're speaking English. But, seriously, without Harry, I wouldn't be here today, I'd be behind bars, where, let's face it, by rights, I oughta be. Over to you Alan.

CHARLIE *steps back. Applause for* **CHARLIE**. **ALAN** *kneels, with a flourish, before* **PAULINE**.

ALAN Pauline, I give you my hand. *(***ALAN** *holds out an upturned, closed, cupped hand towards* **PAULINE***)*

DOLLY *(aside)* He wants to be an actor.

ALAN Captive within my hand, is a bird. This bird is my heart.

PAULINE *(to* **DOLLY***)* Is it a real bird?

DOLLY No. It's a metaphor.

PAULINE *(excited)* Oh! Lovely!

ALAN I offer you the whole of my life, as your husband.

DOLLY *(aside)* Ooh! I could do with a bit of this myself.

PAULINE *opens his hand and takes out the imaginary bird, and presses it to her heart.*

PAULINE I accept your bird heart thing, and I promise to look after it properly *(***PAULINE** *kneels, and offers her hand to* **ALAN***)* I got a bird in my hand an'all.

CHARLIE – That's two birds now, I'm gonna have to get in a box of Trill!

PAULINE – This bird is my heart, the only one I've ever had.

They kiss passionately. Silence. A bit embarrassing. It is broken by the pop of a champagne cork.

DANGLE May I propose a toast. To love! In Latin –

CHARLIE – Oh no!

DANGLE Ars amandi!

PAULINE No! Pauline.

ALAN *(to* **PAULINE***)* "Ars amandi", is the art of love.

PAULINE I don't understand.

ALAN *(aside)* This is why I love her. She is pure, innocent, unspoiled by education, like a new bucket.

LLOYD To love!

ALL To love!

They toast. The door bell rings.

CHARLIE Dolly, get the door.

DOLLY Book keeper? Or butler? Make your mind up.

CHARLIE And if it's carol singers tell them to piss of. It's only April.

DOLLY *exits.*

LLOYD You're Charlie's solicitor then?

They shake hands.

DANGLE Harry Dangle. Dangle, Berry and Bush. My card.

LLOYD *(reading)* No win, same fee?

DANGLE That's us.

LLOYD Charlie tells me you're brilliant!

DANGLE Put it this way, I got the Mau Mau off. Are you family Lloyd?

LLOYD No, no! An old friend. Me and Charlie go way back.

(aside) Parkhurst.

PAULINE Dad! Me and Alan, we're gonna go up to my room, to play some records.

CHARLIE Do I look like I just came down in the last shower? No! Mingle!

LLOYD *takes* **CHARLIE** *to one side. Gets out invitation.*

LLOYD Man! What's going on! Last week I gets this invitation to an engagement party –

CHARLIE – put that away.

LLOYD – of Pauline Clench and Roscoe Crabbe, which was a shock because I always thought Roscoe was ginger.

CHARLIE He was ginger! He was as queer as a whisky and Babycham. That was the whole point, it was gonna be a marriage of convenience wannit.

LLOYD But today and it's a different groom man!

CHARLIE Because Roscoe's dead. Pauline and this Alan wanted to get engaged, so I thought –

LLOYD – I've paid for the sausage rolls so why waste them?!

CHARLIE Exactly!

LLOYD Man! They don't call you Charlie the Duck for nothing! Tight Man! Tight as!

Enter **DOLLY**, *looking serious.*

DOLLY Some geezer from London. Says he's Roscoe Crabbe's Minder.

LLOYD Can't be much of a Minder, Roscoe's dead.

CHARLIE Is he a face? Does he look handy?

DOLLY To be honest, he looks a bit overweight.

CHARLIE Check him out Lloydie, see if he's tooled up.

LLOYD Charlie, I don't work for you no more.

DOLLY Leave it to me, boys. *(***DOLLY** *exits)*

DANGLE More guests?

CHARLIE Roscoe Crabbe's Minder.

DANGLE But I understand there was a knife fight and Roscoe Crabbe was mortally wounded?

CHARLIE No! He was killed.

LLOYD Good riddens!

CHARLIE The Old Bill are looking for his twin sister, Rachel, and her boyfriend.

DANGLE Because?

LLOYD Revenge! The boyfriend testified against Roscoe in court. Put him away for four years. Man! It's obvious! Who is Roscoe gonna get into a fight with on his first day of freedom?

CHARLIE *(to* **DANGLE**, *unnecessarily)* Rachel's boyfriend.

Enter **DOLLY**.

DOLLY He's clean. Shall I let him in?

CHARLIE *(nods)* Yeah. *(exit* **DOLLY***)* What can I do?

LLOYD She's a smashing girl is Rachel! Notin' like that vicious little toerag of a brother!

CHARLIE I think Roscoe was a bit whatsaname – you know, what's that word for someone who likes inflicting pain?

LLOYD Police officer.

CHARLIE No!

DANGLE Sadist.

CHARLIE That's Roscoe.

LLOYD Unusual for twins to have such different personalities.

CHARLIE *(to* **DANGLE***)* They was identical twins, you see, Roscoe and Rachel.

LLOYD They were not identical twins! Roscoe was a boy, and Rachel is a girl!

CHARLIE So?

DANGLE Identical means identical.

CHARLIE What I want to know is, if Roscoe's dead, what's his Minder doing on my doorstep.

Enter **DOLLY**. *Followed by* **FRANCIS**. **FRANCIS** *is suited and booted, but the suit is too tight, too short. The room freezes.* **FRANCIS** *is acting tough.* **FRANCIS** *checks the room as if looking for hidden dangers. He's playing the role of hard man Minder. Everyone else is still, frozen in fear, waiting for a cue from* **CHARLIE**. **FRANCIS** *stops under the picture of the Queen. Points to it.*

FRANCIS Who's that?

PAULINE That's the Queen.

FRANCIS What a beautiful woman. Someone should write a song about her.

PAULINE God Save the Queen?

FRANCIS It's a good title.

FRANCIS *picks a peanut from a bowl on the side and throws one in the air, catches it in his mouth.*

PAULINE This is my engagement party.

FRANCIS Your engagement party. Phew!

(to **DOLLY***)* Phew 'cause I'm glad it ain't yours – "beautiful eyes".

DOLLY Thank you.

FRANCIS Don't ever wear glasses. Even if you need to, you know, for reading.

DOLLY *(aside)* I know exactly what he's after, and if carries on like this he's gonna get it. *(***FRANCIS** *throws a second peanut and catches that too) (To* **FRANCIS***)* What about glasses for driving?

FRANCIS Are you one of them women's libbers?

DOLLY Would that be a problem?

FRANCIS I like a woman who can drive. That way I can go out, have a skinful, and get home without killing anyone. Are you married to er –

DOLLY – I'm single, I'm the book keeper here.

FRANCIS So you're a single, working, driving, book keeping woman. That's my type. Do want to go to Majorca for a couple of weeks? Think about it. *(***FRANCIS** *throws a third peanut in the air which forces him to run backwards to catch it. He hits the sofa, goes over with it, and pops up the other side)* Got it.

DANGLE *(to* **CHARLIE***)* This man is a clown.

FRANCIS *turns on* **DANGLE** *grabbing his balls a la Vinnie Jones.*

FRANCIS Everybody at the circus loves the clowns. So, when you say "this man is a clown", what you're really saying is "I love you". Are you Charlie the Duck?

DANGLE No.

FRANCIS No?

DANGLE No.

FRANCIS *lets all the role playing drop, and becomes low status apologetic.*

FRANCIS Oh shit, have I got the wrong house? The invitation –

Gets his invitation out.

CHARLIE – I'm Charlie the Duck.

FRANCIS Right. OK. You don't look like a duck.

CHARLIE Who are you?

FRANCIS Good idea! Let's do the big questions. Who am I? Why am I here?

LLOYD What do you want?

FRANCIS Is there a God? Is He loving or judgmental? Let's hope He's loving, 'cause if He's judgmental, trust me, we're all in the shit.

CHARLIE You're Roscoe Crabbe's Minder.

FRANCIS I am. And I have an invitation to his engagement party. This party.

CHARLIE Roscoe's dead.

FRANCIS If Roscoe's dead, who's that sitting outside in the motor, listening to the Shipping Forecast?

PAULINE *rushes to the window.*

PAULINE Oh my God! No!

CHARLIE He's risen from the dead has he?

FRANCIS Yeah. It only took him two days. That's one day quicker than the previous world record. So?! Can he come in? To his own engagement party?

CHARLIE I guess.

FRANCIS I'll go and get him.

FRANCIS *exits, with a wink to* **DOLLY**. *Voices are now raised…*

PAULINE Dad! No! Don't let him in! I love Alan, I don't love Roscoe, I never did.

CHARLIE You was perfectly happy with Roscoe six month back.

DANGLE He's missed the boat.

CHARLIE Roscoe Crabbe can be as late as he likes. And we have an arrangement.

ALAN An arranged marriage worthy of a Molière farce, contemptible even in the seventeenth century.

PAULINE Yeah, dad, this is the nineteenth century now!

CHARLIE Yeah, well, what do you offer my daughter Alan? *I wanna be an actor.* You can't get more flakey!

ALAN All I offer is love! My love for your daughter eclipses poetry. My love is ethereal, pure – like…like the kind of water you're supposed to put in a car battery.

Enter **RACHEL**, *followed by* **FRANCIS**. **RACHEL** *is dressed as a fashionable young man, looking not unlike a short Ringo Starr.*

RACHEL Long time no see, Charlie.

They shake hands.

CHARLIE Yeah. You look well Roscoe. All things considered. This is Lloyd, good friend of mine, Dolly, my book keeper, my solicitor, Harry Dangle, he's good.

RACHEL Are you the guy who got the Mau Mau off?

DANGLE It wasn't easy.

CHARLIE – and, 'course, you remember Pauline.

RACHEL You look fantastic Pauline. *(***ALAN** *walks in front of her, placing himself between her and* **RACHEL***)*

Who are you?

ALAN Whole nations will be slain before you if you take my love from me.

RACHEL *(to* **CHARLIE***)* Why's he talking like an actor?

DOLLY He wants to be an actor.

RACHEL Oh all right. Who are you then?

ALAN I am your nemesis.

RACHEL Francis! What's a nemesis?

FRANCIS Dunno. Definitely foreign. I think it might be a Toyota.

RACHEL *(***RACHEL** *goes over to* **CHARLIE***, takes him down stage)* What's going on Charlie?

CHARLIE We thought you was dead.

RACHEL If you thought I was dead, why would you go ahead with my engagement party?

CHARLIE You know, I'd already paid for the sausage rolls and –

RACHEL – IF YOU THOUGHT I WAS DEAD!?

CHARLIE – The word was, you were murdered. Pauline's met someone else.

RACHEL *(indicating* **ALAN***)* Horror bollocks, over there?

CHARLIE Yeah.

RACHEL *approaches* **ALAN**.

RACHEL So, let's have another go. What's your name?

ALAN Alan.

RACHEL I have a prior arrangement with Charlie and Pauline, Alan. It's not love, no, it can't be love. This is good news for you, Alan, because the deal guarantees Pauline complete freedom in affairs of the heart, as long as she is discrete.

ALAN My love for Pauline is not discrete; it shouts from the roof tops "look at me, look at me, I am love!"

DANGLE It shall be my son who marries Pauline. Come on Alan! We're going.

PAULINE Don't leave me here Alan!

DANGLE *(to* **CHARLIE***)* Mr Charles Clench, you will be hearing from me.

CHARLIE I can explain.

ALAN I shall return. Like a storm. And everybody will get wet.

ALAN *exits. Door closed.*

CHARLIE Pauline. Over here. *(***PAULINE** *is now crying. She goes downstage with* **CHARLIE***)*

Behave!

PAULINE It's 1963 dad! You can't force me to marry a dead homosexual.

CHARLIE He's not dead is he.

PAULINE He is a homosexual though.

CHARLIE We've only got his word for that. *(***PAULINE** *runs of into another room.* **CHARLIE** *follows)* Come back here!

(to **ROSCOE***)* Gimme a minute Roscoe.

CHARLIE, *following* **PAULINE**. *He closes the door. During the next scene* **FRANCIS** *mimes taking out his pulsing heart and offering it to* **DOLLY**.

RACHEL Lloyd Boateng. My sister worked the bar for you at the *The Palm Tree.*

LLOYD Rachel, yeah. What's she doing?

RACHEL She's runs this nightclub now. It's her boyfriend's. The Stiletto, Mile End.

LLOYD I've heard it's rough. Criminals, gangster, Princess Margaret. I like your sister.

RACHEL And, she likes you. A lot. She said you could be trusted.

CHARLIE *re-enters.*

CHARLIE The kid's upset. She thought you was dead. D'yer wanna sandwich?

FRANCIS Yes! Yes please. We had to skip breakfast you see.

RACHEL We're going to eat later. What's your understanding of the deal Charlie?

CHARLIE I settle the debt I owed your father, paid to you on the day of your engagement –

RACHEL – Six thousand two hundred today.

CHARLIE Pauline, as your public wife, gets two grand a year, for attending functions on your arm –

RACHEL – and she gets the house in Debden.

CHARLIE And Debden –

RACHEL Have you got the money Charlie?

CHARLIE I can give you a cheque. Six thousand two hundred.

RACHEL Banker's draft. And I'll take the two hundred in cash.

CHARLIE Dolly, phone the bank, get 'em to knock up a banker's draft for six grand.

DOLLY *(incredulous)* For six thousand?

CHARLIE That's what I said, yeah. *(incredulous,* **DOLLY** *leaves. On the way she is aware of* **FRANCIS** *goosing her)* Are you boys staying in Brighton?

RACHEL Can you recommend somewhere?

LLOYD I certainly can. *The Cricketers' Arms.*

FRANCIS Do they do sandwiches?

CHARLIE Wash your mouth out! It's a pub, that does food. Lloyd is the landlord. He's had a three year training as a chef.

LLOYD *(aside)* Parkhurst.

FRANCIS That has got to be the most beautiful sentence in the English language. A pub that does food.

RACHEL Francis, go ahead in the motor.

FRANCIS *makes to leave.*

Hang on mate, you don't know where the pub is?!

FRANCIS Guv! For a pub that does food there will be a star in the sky!

FRANCIS *leaves.* **DOLLY** *re-enters.*

DOLLY I've got the bank on the phone.

CHARLIE *(to* **RACHEL***)* I don't know why they want to talk to me. What's the problem. *(***CHARLIE** *exits)*

LLOYD Rachel?

RACHEL You're looking pretty good Lloydie!

LLOYD Girl!? What all dis wid de rude boy disguise!

RACHEL The Old Bill are looking for me. Can I trust you?

LLOYD You're like a daughter to me!

RACHEL My brother, Roscoe is dead. My boyfriend killed my twin brother, yeah. I should hate Stanley for that. But I love him. Have you ever been in love Lloyd?

LLOYD True love? Yes, once.

(aside) Parkhurst.

Enter **CHARLIE**, *in coat, and hat.*

CHARLIE I'm gonna go raise that two hundred folding.

CHARLIE *'s gone.*

RACHEL Me and Stanley are going to have to go to Australia.

LLOYD Australia! No Man! Oh my God, no, not Australia?! That's really terrible. Australia!? You poor thing girl! Why Australia? Do you like Opera?

RACHEL Not especially. But we've no choice. We sail from Southampton on Monday. The morning tide. The police will be watching the ports so –

LLOYD – Brighton's near enough but safer?

RACHEL And Charlie the Duck lives here, and we need money.

LLOYD I guess. Where is your Stanley now?

RACHEL Brighton, somewhere. I've left a letter for him at the post office with instructions for a rendezvous. I pray to God he's all right.

End of Scene One

Scene Two

Outside The Cricketers' Arms. *Pub tables, and a dustbin. Enter* **FRANCIS** *from the pub entrance.*

On a pub table are some unfinished drinks. Some dregs of Guinness, white wine, red wine in a bottle, orange juice etc.

FRANCIS My Father, Tommy Henshall, God rest his soul, he woulda been proud of me, what I done with my life, until today. I used to play washboard in a skiffle band, but they went to see the Beatles last Tuesday night, and sacked me Wednesday morning. Ironic, because I started the Beatles. I saw them in Hamburg. Rubbish. I said to that John Lennon, I said "John, you're going nowhere mate, it's embarrassing, have you ever considered writing your own songs". So I'm skint, I'm busking, guitar, mouth organ on a rack, bass drum tied to me foot, and the definition of mental illness, cymbals between my knees. So there I am, middle of Victoria Station, I've only been playing ten minutes, this lairy bloke comes over, he says – "do you do requests?" I say "yes" he says "I'd like you to play a song for my mother". I said "no problem, where is she?" He said "Tazmania." So I nutted him. This little bloke Roscoe Crabbe seen all this and offers me a weeks work in Brighton, says he needs a bit of muscle. I tell him this is all fat. But I need a wage, I haven't eaten since last night. But I don't get paid until the end of the week, and I can't stop thinking about CHIPS. I'm staying in a pub, and I don't even have enough shrapnel for a PINT.

He empties all the dregs into one pint and downs it in one.

There might be a discarded bag of chips in here. No! I can't go through the bins! Must stop thinking about

CHIPS. Come on Francis! Think about something boring, like… Canada.

He gives up. Lifts the lid and starts searching in the bin. Enter **STANLEY STUBBERS**. *He is followed by a cab driver carrying one big trunk.*

DRIVER That's as far as I'm going with this mate. *(the* **DRIVER** *puts the trunk down unceremoniously)* The fare is five and six.

STANLEY Oh focaccia. Don't be a bad egg about it!

STANLEY *gives him the money.*

DRIVER I drive a taxi mate, I ain't Heracles.

STANLEY It's a trunk. No one's asking you to hold up the sky for all eternity!

DRIVER Atlas held up the sky. Heracles took over for five minutes so Atlas could go and get the golden apples from the Hesperides' garden.

The cab **DRIVER** *leaves.* **STANLEY** *spots* **FRANCIS**.

STANLEY What's this pub like?

FRANCIS Ground breaking. It does food.

STANLEY A pub? That does food?! Buzz-wam, whoever thought of that? Wrap his nuts in bacon and send him to the nurse! What are the rooms like?

FRANCIS World class.

STANLEY Not that I care. I'm boarding school trained. I'm happy if I've got a bed, a chair, and no-one pissing on my face. Could you do me a favour and keep a fag's eye on the trunk, whilst I see if they have any vacancies?

FRANCIS How much?

STANLEY Half a crown?

FRANCIS *(aside)* HADDOCK AND CHIPS AND MUSHY PEAS!

Yeah, all right.

STANLEY *goes in to the pub.* **FRANCIS** *considers the trunk, and the task in hand. Enter an old lady pulling a shopping trolley, she looks* en passant*, at the trunk.*

Don't even think about it.

The pensioner heads off towards stage right, and then stops, turns and looks. **FRANCIS** *lets out a war cry, and charges her off stage. A vicar/priest walks on and inspects the trunk.* **FRANCIS***'s charge takes him off stage left. Further up stage* **FRANCIS** *is seen to chase the lady pensioner from stage right to stage left. Immediately* **FRANCIS** *chases the vicar/priest from stage left to stage right. Immediately* **FRANCIS** *returns further up stage chasing the lady, with a full salto somersault or cartwheel.* **FRANCIS** *returns adjusting his tie. As he does this the athlete double walks across the stage.* **FRANCIS** *reacts angrily at the double's stupidity. Enter* **STANLEY**.

STANLEY *(loud whisper)* I need, what they call in the guards, a batman.

What's a decent drink for a geezer like you, for a day's graft?

FRANCIS My current guvnor, that is my previous guvnor, used to pay me twenty pounds a week, at the end of the week, which is no use to me.

STANLEY Why not?

FRANCIS I have to EAT EVERY DAY!

STANLEY I shall pay you five pounds per day, but for today that remuneration would incorporate the trunk guarding retrospectively.

FRANCIS *(aside)* Bloody toffs eh? Why do we let them get away with it?

(to **STANLEY***)* All right guv, you're on.

STANLEY Do you know where the main Post Office is in Brighton?

FRANCIS *(aside)* I have absolutely no idea.

Oh yeah, it's next door to my Nan's. My uncle Terry lost a leg in there once.

STANLEY There should be some post for me. You'll need this letter of authorisation.

STANLEY *gives* **FRANCIS** *a letter.*

FRANCIS *(reading)* To whom it may concern, the bearer is an authorised agent of Stanley Stubbers.

STANLEY Shhh!

FRANCIS Who's Stanley Stubbers?

STANLEY *(whisper)* Me! But don't call me Stanley Stubbers. I'm going to have to make up a new name for the pub.

FRANCIS *(whisper)* What's wrong with "*The Cricketers' Arms*?"

STANLEY *(whisper)* You're not exactly a Swiss watch are you? A false name for me, because I'm lying low. What do I call you? I don't do first names. First names are for girls and Norwegians.

FRANCIS *(whisper)* Henshall.

STANLEY Like it! *(whisper)* Get my trunk indoors, Henshall, collect my letters Henshall. I'll be in my room.

Exit **STANLEY** *into the pub.* **FRANCIS** *attempts to move the trunk, it is too heavy. He requests help from the audience. Two volunteers are brought up onto the stage and are taught correct trunk lifting technique. Under instruction from* **FRANCIS** *they carry the trunk of into the pub. These are not plants/actors, but genuine punters.*

FRANCIS Post Office.

RACHEL Francis! Where are you going?

FRANCIS I'm walking round and round in circles to ward off the hunger pangs.

LLOYD I will cook you the lunch of a lifetime.

FRANCIS Lunch!? I haven't had breakfast yet.

RACHEL Have you got my trunk out of the car?

FRANCIS I've just done the trunk.

(aside) Ah! – Concentrate Francis!

(to **RACHEL***)* Don't worry Roscoe, I'll get your trunk from the motor, now.

LLOYD I'll get one of the bar staff to give you a hand. *(exit* **LLOYD** *into the pub. He sees the two volunteers standing offstage)* What! You two again! I've told you before, it's not that kind of pub. You're barred. Off you go! *(the volunteers return to their seats)*

RACHEL I need you to go to the Post Office, and –

FRANCIS – all right guv, stop going on about it. You only have to tell me once.

RACHEL I haven't asked you to go to the Post Office at all, yet.

FRANCIS *(aside)* Oh shit!

RACHEL Lloyd tells me it is just around the corner.

FRANCIS *(aside)* That's handy.

RACHEL Collect any letters for me or my sister, Rachel Crabbe. This is a letter of authorisation.

FRANCIS I've got one of those already. I don't need two do I?

RACHEL How come you already have a letter of authorisation?

FRANCIS *(aside)* This is trickier than I thought. *(***FRANCIS** *takes the letter)* You're right. I'm gonna need that.

RACHEL And any letters you collect are private. Is that clear?

FRANCIS Don't worry guv, I won't even read them myself.

RACHEL I'm gonna sink a couple of beers then have a lie down in my room.

RACHEL *goes in.*

FRANCIS *(aside)* You got to concentrate ain't ya, with two jobs. Kaw! I can do it, long as I don't get confused. But I get confused easily. I don't get confused that easily. Yes I do. I'm my own worst enemy. Stop being negative. I'm not being negative. I'm being realistic. I'll screw it up. I always do. Who screws it up? You, you're the role model for village idiots everywhere. Me?! You're nothing without me. You're the cock up! Don't call me a cock up, you cock up! *(he slaps himself)* You slapped me!? Yeah, I did. And I'm glad I did. *(he punches himself back)* That hurt. Good. You started it. *(a fight breaks out, where he ends up on the floor. Enter* **ALAN***)*

ALAN What is my life? Am I to eat, drink, sleep, get a good job, marry, honeymoon, have kids, watch them grow up and have kids of their own, divorce, meet someone else, get old, and die happy in my sleep like every other inhabitant of Brighton and Hove? What kind of a life is that? No. I am an artist. Character is action. I cannot allow this twice late suitor, who is both dead and late to come along and end my beautiful dream, like a dead, discarded Russian astronaut dog landing on my head. *(he notices* **FRANCIS***)* My rival's lackey. This will be the beginning of the end.

(to **FRANCIS***)* Where is the dog, your guvnor? He will die today. *(***ALAN** *takes his jacket of, rolls his sleeves up, takes his watch off as if preparing for a fist fight)*

Hungry for More?

This is a Sample of the Script

Buy the **full script** and explore other titles

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench.co.uk



[Breaking Character]
An Online Resource for Theatre Makers

Follow Us On twitter

Find us on Facebook

Titles are subject to availability depending on your territory.