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SF PERUSALS

# Audience

A Play

Václav Havel

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

SAMUELFRENCH-LONDON.CO.UK
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## AUDIENCE

Produced by BBC TV for the 1978/79 Play for Today season with the following cast:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Vaněk** | Michael Crawford |
| **Head Maltster** | Freddie Jones |

Producer Innes Lloyd
Director Claude Watham

The action takes place in the Maltster's office
Time: the present

## CHARACTERS

**Ferdinand Vaněk**
**Head Maltster**

Also by Václav Havel published by Samuel French Ltd

Private View

# AUDIENCE

*Maltster's office*

*There is a shabby desk littered with papers, empty bottles, a bottle opener and two glasses. Next to the desk is a crate with bottled beer and two old creaky wooden chairs*

*Maltster is sitting in his chair, his head resting on the desk, snoring loudly*

*There is a knock on the door*

**Maltster** (*instantly waking up*) Come in.

*The simple wooden door opens with a creak*

**Vaněk** (*off*) Good morning—
**Maltster** Ah, Mr Vaněk! Come on in.

*Vaněk enters and closes the door. We can hear his footsteps approaching on the plain wooden floor*

Sit down.

*The chair scrapes the floorboards and creaks. Vaněk, in padded work clothes and gumboots, timidly sits down oppposite Maltster*

Have a lager.
**Vaněk** No thanks—
**Maltster** Go on! Lovely lager! You don't want all this lovely lager to go to waste? Eh?

*He pulls a bottle out of the crate, opens it and pours two glasses*

Pure gold! Here—

*He pushes one glass across the desk towards Vaněk*

Take it!
**Vaněk** Thank you—

*Maltster gulps down his beer and smacks his lips*

**Maltster** Ah! (*He pours the remains of the bottle into his glass. Pause*) Well, how's it going?
**Vaněk** All right, thank you—
**Maltster** It better be, eh?
**Vaněk** Mmnn—
**Maltster** (*after a pause*) What's it for you today, then? Handling casks?
**Vaněk** Just empties—
**Maltster** Handling empties is better than handling fulls, isn't it?
**Vaněk** Yes—
**Maltster** (*after a pause*) Who's handling fulls today, then?
**Vaněk** Sherkezy—
**Maltster** He clocked in, did he?
**Vaněk** Yes. A while ago—
**Maltster** Drunk?
**Vaněk** A bit—
**Maltster** (*after a pause*) Why don't you drink? Go on! Drink up!
**Vaněk** Thanks. I'm not much of a beer drinker—
**Maltster** Get off! Really? We'll see about that, don't worry! You'll get used to it in this place. We're all beer drinkers around here. Sort of local tradition, you know?
**Vaněk** I know—
**Maltster** (*after a pause*) Come on! Cheer up!
**Vaněk** I'm all right—
**Maltster** (*after a pause*) Well, how's everything?
**Vaněk** What do you mean?
**Maltster** I mean, on the whole—
**Vaněk** Not too bad, thank you—
**Maltster** (*after a pause*) How do you like it here, then?
**Vaněk** I like it—
**Maltster** Could be worse, eh?
**Vaněk** Yes—

*Maltster opens another bottle and pours himself a glass*

**Maltster** One gets used to anything, right?
**Vaněk** Yes—
**Maltster** (*after a pause*) Finish your glass!

*Vaněk drinks up and Maltster pours him some more*

**Vaněk** No more, please—

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