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SF PERUSALS

A BEDFULL OF FOREIGNERS

A Comedy

by

DAVE FREEMAN

Samuel French — London
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A BEDFULL OF FOREIGNERS

First presented by Paul Elliott and Duncan C. Weldon for Triumph Theatre Productions on February 19th, 1974, at the Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon, with the following cast of characters:

Karak	Richard Marner
Heinz	Colin Jeavons
Stanley Parker	Terry Scott
Brenda Parker	Carole Turner
Helga Philby	Anna Dawson
Claude Philby	Tim Barrett
Simone	Lynda Baron

The Play was directed by Roger Redfarn
Designed by Terry Parsons

Subsequently presented at The Victoria Palace, London, on April 8th, 1976, by Duncan C. Weldon, Louis I. Michaels, Brian Rix and Peter Toerien, with the following cast:

Karak	Peter Bland
Heinz	Colin Jeavons
Stanley Parker	Terry Scott
Brenda Parker	Julia Sutton
Helga Philby	June Whitfield
Claude Philby	Dennis Ramsden
Simone	Lynda Baron

The Play directed by Roger Redfarn
Setting by Terry Parsons

The action takes place in a bedroom in a French Hotel near the German border

ACT I After 9 p.m. on an evening in late October
ACT II Five minutes later

Time—the present

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(See also page ii)

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ACT I*

A bedroom in a French hotel in a village near the German frontier. Just after 9 p.m. on an evening in late October

The room is very old, but most of its period charm, together with its period defects, have been hidden by generations of enthusiastic paper-hangers. A few period features remain. The entrance is in the back wall. There are two other doors to the room. One leads to the bathroom; the other has been heavily disguised with wallpaper and leads to the adjoining hotel room. Above the bathroom door is a built-in wardrobe. There is also a dressing-table with a telephone on it. There are two double beds. Bed One is against the back wall, and to one side of it is the second period feature: a bay window —and across the top of the bay an elaborate old carved beam with wooden brackets. On the other side of the window is Bed Two, set against an angled wall which has a window in it above the bed. The area around Bed Two can form a separate bedroom when a folding partition is pulled out from the wall. The partition has a door in it. During Act I this remains folded up against the wall. By the side of Bed One, under the window, is an old-fashioned radiator. (*See the plan of the set and Furniture and Property List on page* 82)

The CURTAIN *rises on an empty stage. After a few moments Karak, the Head Porter, enters from the hallway. He is a tough, craggy man in his mid-fifties and speaks with a Slav accent. He has a dead-pan mocking sense of humour. He has a tool-bag with him, and goes to the bed lamp which is fixed to the wall above Bed One. He unplugs it and then goes to the foot of the bed and examines the lamp fitting. He takes a screwdriver from his tool-bag, looks at it, then throws it over his shoulder. He takes a second screwdriver from the bag, looks at it, and throws it over his shoulder. Finally, he takes a can of beer from the bag, looks at it, and throws the lamp fitting over his shoulder. He opens the beer can and takes a long swig*

The telephone rings. Karak goes to answer it, taking his beer can with him

Karak (*on the phone*) Hotel Heinz. . . . Oui, monsieur, we have one room left. . . . Ja, is room mit bath. . . . Ja, bathroom is working. . . . No, is not bunged up. . . . Look, why are you asking? . . . Oh, you have stayed here before. . . . No, bath is O.K. now. . . . Bath is working. Listen. (*He takes a swig from the beer and gurgles with it*) Is water going down plug-hole. . . . You are happy? Good. I am saving room for you. . . . Au revoir, monsieur. (*He hangs up and goes to the bed*) Englishman—is always worrying about bathroom—then is washing his feet in der bidet. (*He sits on the end of the bed again and takes a swig of beer*)

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*N.B. Paragraph 3 on page ii of this Acting Edition regarding photocopying and video-recording should be carefully read.

The door opens and Heinz, the Hotel Manager, enters. He is in his thirties. Slim, good looking and inept. He has a slight German accent. He carries a small poster advertising the village festival. He stands for a moment watching Karak swilling beer with an expression of disgust

Heinz (*sarcastically*) Oh, that's marvellous.

Karak chooses to misunderstand him and looks at the beer can

Karak Ja. Is not bad.

Heinz The hotel full the village festival, an important guest arriving, the entire staff run off their feet, but not you, Karak. Oh no. You are upstairs drinking.

Karak (*reasonably*) You want me *downstairs* drinking?

Heinz I don't want you drinking anywhere. (*He goes to the partition*) I want you working.

Karak So I am working. I am mending bed light.

Heinz Then hurry up and finish it. (*He hangs the poster on the wardrobe door*) I have just received a telegram. Mrs Hoffmeyer is arriving.

Karak Mrs Hoffmeyer?

Heinz Yes, Karak, Mrs Hoffmeyer.

Karak So who in hell is Mrs Hoffmeyer?

Heinz The President of the Bulgarian Ladies' Cycling Club.

Karak Oh? Is good, ja?

Heinz I am trying to get the hotel placed on their approved list. It's very, very important for us. Their standards are extremely high. The least thing wrong, the tiniest complaint—and you are struck off their list for ever.

Karak continues to swig beer

Karak So where are you sticking her?

Heinz I am *accommodating* her in that room next door, and, Karak, I want everything in that room working properly. I want everything perfect.

Karak So how can room be perfect when hotel is falling to bits?

Heinz Oh, don't talk rubbish.

Karak Is falling to bits I'm telling you. Is all rotting and full of woodworm.

A cuckoo clock on the wall cuckoos. Heinz looks at his watch

Heinz (*accusingly*) That clock is slow.

Karak Ja. Woodworm is attacking cuckoo.

Heinz Impossible.

Karak Why is impossible?

Heinz Because, Karak, that cuckoo is plastic, and woodworm do not eat plastic.

The radiator gives three sharp bangs

What's that?

Karak (*sepulchrally*) Is death watch beetle.

The radiator bangs again

Heinz It's that radiator. I thought the plumber came to look at it?

Karak Oh ja, plumber is looking at it, and plumber is recommending you buy new one.

Heina (*shocked*) A new *radiator*?

Karak A new hotel.

Heinz Oh, very funny. Well I am not concerned with what the plumber thinks, but I am concerned with Mrs Hoffmeyer, and it's very important *she* finds nothing wrong.

Karak Ja.

Heinz Furthermore, I mentioned in my letter, that *here* we speak Bulgarian.

Karak Oh, is good. I didn't know you are speaking Bulgarian.

Heinz Not me, you idiot. *You!*

Karak *Me?*

Heinz You told me once you were Bulgarian.

Karak No—I told you I was Hungarian.

Heinz Oh, so *now* you are a Hungarian?

Karak No, is just what I am telling you.

Heinz Then where the hell *are* you from?

Karak I am coming here from Foreign Legion. Legion is giving me pension, and making me French citizen.

Heinz Yes, but what were you before you *joined*?

Karak Oh, before that I was a foreigner. You see to get in legion you *have* to be a foreigner. If you are not foreigner, they don't bloody want you.

Heinz Well *I* don't want you, either.

Karak Ah, but you are inheriting me along mit hotel. Your aunt said I was to be kept in job as concierge as long as I am wishing.

Heinz Well don't push me too far, Karak. I can take it to court. I can fight the will.

Karak Oh, you can fight, but you are not winning. You see here you are foreigner. You are some sort of Swiss-Austrian. (*With mock, humorous grandeur*) Whereas *I* am former soldier of France.

Heinz Look, I have no time to argue with you. The moment you have finished up here go down and relieve Marcel at reception.

Karak Marcel is not down there.

Heinz Well he should be down there. Where is he?

Karak He is up in his room being sick.

Heinz Sick?

Karak Ja. Is something he is eating in restaurant.

Heinz (*in alarm*) Our restaurant?

Karak Ja.

Heinz What did he eat?

Karak Chef's special. Same as guests.

Heinz Same as guests . . . Oh my God. Who's down at reception? (*He runs to the phone*)

Karak Nobody. I am putting outside calls to telephone up here.

Heinz starts dialling

What are you doing?

Heinz Phoning for an ambulance. Don't you realize, Karak. Everybody who ate the Chef's special could be sick. The entire hotel .

As Heinz is speaking on the phone Karak stands nearby talking over him

(*Into the phone*) Allo? Ici Hotel Heinz. . . . Nous avons empoissonment dans l'hôtel. . . .

Karak In that case you are needing more than one ambulance. You are needing perhaps four ambulances. Maybe six ambulances.

Heinz (*to Karak*) Will you shut up? (*Into the phone*) Ah pas vous, monsieur. . . . Non. . . . Ah bon. . . . Merci, monsieur. Au revoir. (*He hangs up and turns to Karak*) Nobody must know about this. If Mrs Hoffmeyer finds out, we are finished.

Karak O.K. (*Moving to the wallpapered door*) So I am going now to her room to check lights.

Heinz Well make sure you lock that door behind you.

Heinz moves towards the main door

And, Karak, see she has everything she wants.

Karak Ja. Everything she wants . . . excepting Chef's special.

Heinz now has the door open

Heinz *Quiet*, you idiot.

Heinz puts a warning finger to his mouth and exits

Karak (*shouting after him*) Don't worry—I am putting big bucket by her bed.

Karak picks up his tool-bag, goes to the wallpapered door and switches on the light at the door. There is a shower of sparks from the bed light

Ah good. Is working.

The lights go dim and then come up bright again, then go out altogether

Karak exits through the wallpapered door

The lights remain out and the room is lit from outside the window, dimly

A short pause and then we see the main door open as Brenda enters. She is an attractive girl in her early thirties. She is on a motoring holiday with her husband who has not yet appeared

Brenda has a plastic shopping-bag and a torch and we see her examine again the number on the room door. She calls back along the darkened passage

Brenda I've found the room, Stanley . . . (*She now holds the torch casually so that it illuminates her features*) Stanley . . . It's on the second floor. . . . Well, come back *down* a flight.

As Brenda comes into the room we hear the sound of Stanley and two suitcases falling down a flight of stairs. The lights come on. Brenda reacts

(*Calling*) Was that you, Stanley?

Stanley enters, limping and rubbing his leg

Are you all right?

Stanley Oh, I'm fine—I've only broken my leg. A couple of months in bed I'll be right as rain.

Brenda Any decent hotel and they'd *show* you up to your room.

Stanley Yes. Well perhaps the guide dog is having its dinner.

Brenda It's the last time *we* go motoring on the Continent.

Stanley (*wearily*) All right, love, we've been through all that. Don't start again.

Brenda (*moving to Bed One*) Well, honestly, it's been one thing after another. (*Pulling back the covers*) And I don't like the look of *this* place either.

Stanley What are you doing?

Brenda I'm seeing the sheets are clean. (*She looks puzzled*) And why's it got *two* double beds?

Stanley It's what they call a family room.

Brenda But we don't need *two* double beds.

Stanley All right, give me a hand and we'll sling one out the window. Look, Brenda, love. Just relax. We've got a *room*. Every hotel for twenty miles around is full, and *we've* got a room.

Brenda But, Stanley, there's something very odd going on here.

Stanley Odd?

Brenda Yes, odd. All that whispering and muttering downstairs, and then the lights all go out—and where's our luggage?

Stanley Ah—I'm afraid I let go of that when I fell downstairs.

Heinz appears at the main door with two suitcases

Heinz (*brightly*) Don't worry, sir. I have it.

Heinz takes the suitcases to the wardrobe

I must apologize for what happened. You see some idiot blew the fuses.

Brenda So we gathered.

Heinz You know you are very lucky in finding this room.

Stanley Well, the wife had a torch in her handbag.

Heinz No, I mean it's the last room we have left. Actually it was already booked by an Englishman but they haven't taken up their reservations.

Heinz opens one of the sliding doors of the wardrobe and puts the two suitcases into it

Stanley Why is everywhere full up? I mean it's the end of October.
Heinz Ah, you see in France it's a public holiday and in this village we have the Festival of Saint Wolfgang.

Heinz points to the poster and Stanley goes to look at it

Stanley Oh, Saint Wolfgang?
Heinz Yes, it's quite a local occasion. Yes, there will be parades and fireworks and—all kinds of celebrations.

Heinz tries to shut the wardrobe door, but it has jammed. He gives a nervous laugh to Stanley

We have a little bother with this door—but it's nothing.

The siren of a French ambulance is heard approaching. Heinz panics

Oh my God—they are here. (*With a sudden burst of energy he closes the sliding-door and gets his jacket trapped in it*)
Stanley Who is?
Heinz Nobody. I seem to be trapped. I wonder could you help me?

Stanley tries to open the wardrobe door and free him. Brenda goes to the window, opens it and looks out

Brenda There's an ambulance stopped outside.
Heinz Yes, I must go.

Heinz gets out of his jacket and leaves it trapped in the wardrobe door as the sound of a second ambulance is heard

Brenda Here's another one. (*She leans out of the window*)
Stanley Is somebody ill?
Heinz Ill? Oh, good heavens no. No, it's all part of the festival. We have a—a Grand Parade—and the ambulances take part. (*He goes to the main door*)
Stanley Oh, I see.
Heinz By the way, have you had your dinner?
Stanley Yes, we ate on the way.
Heinz Thank God for that.

Heinz exits

Stanley takes off his car coat and throws it over the bed. Then he picks up the carrier-bag, goes to the pouffe and sits on it. As he speaks he takes a pair of slippers from the bag and removing his shoes puts on the slippers

Stanley You know, if it's a public holiday, we might have a job getting a room tomorrow night as well.

Brenda turns from the window

Brenda Not in here we won't.
Stanley Why?
Brenda They've just carried six people out on stretchers.
Stanley Have they?
Brenda And *that's* only the one ambulance. (*She leans out again*)
Stanley Well I never. I wonder how many they hold?
Brenda Stanley. They've just filled up two ambulances. They have taken ten people out of here on *stretchers.*
Stanley Is that the lot then?
Brenda Yes.
Stanley Well shut the bloody window. It's freezing.

The ambulances' sirens start up again as Brenda slams the window shut

Brenda Well, I'm glad you're not worried.
Stanley No. I'm not worried.
Brenda Hordes of people struck down with some unknown disease, and you are not in the least bit concerned. No, you just sit there.
Stanley You don't listen, do you?
Brenda *I* don't listen?
Stanley It's all part of the festival. Had you listened you would have heard that those two ambulances are taking part in the Grand Parade. Those people are just pretending to be ill.
Brenda Pretending? They weren't pretending. You didn't see them, did you . . . ?
Stanley Well no, but . . .
Brenda One man was yelling his head off and two of the others were groaning. Those people aren't pretending. Those people are *ill.*

Stanley looks slightly worried

Stanley Well, what's wrong with them?

Brenda starts taking things out of the carrier-bag

Brenda How would I know. It could be something dreadful. It could be infectious.

Brenda takes out an aerosol can

Stanley Well, the Manager told me . . .
Brenda Oh, they can tell you anything, can't they? Anyway, they'd hardly tell you the hotel was infested with bubonic plague.

Stanley digests this for a moment.

Stanley Bubonic plague?
Brenda Yes. Bubonic plague. (*And, holding the aerosol can, she starts spraying it round the room*)
Stanley Why bubonic plague?
Brenda (*spraying under the bed*) Why *not* bubonic plague?
Stanley Well—because they don't have bubonic plague in France.
Brenda (*still spraying*) How do you know?

Stanley Well, I mean—you'd hear about it.
Brenda Why should we hear about it? We've never even *been* here before.

She exits to the bathroom, to spray it

Stanley (*shouting after her*) Well, no, but—I mean—your father was French, wasn't he?

She returns from the bathroom

Brenda What's that got to do with it?
Stanley Well, I mean—surely he would have mentioned it, wouldn't he?
Brenda If he did I don't remember. Anyway, I was only six months' old when he left us.
Stanley (*reassuring himself*) No, it can't be, I mean, you'd read about it in the newspapers.
Brenda Unless of course they tried to hush it up.
Stanley Why would they want to hush it up?
Brenda Isn't it obvious? Bubonic plague at the height of the tourist season.
Stanley (*roused*) Height of the tourist season? This is *October*. I mean next week is November. In eight weeks it's going to be Christmas.
Brenda (*tight-lipped*) Well, I just hope that we're here to see it, that's all.
Stanley You were the one who wanted to come abroad, I wanted to go to Skegness, Remember?
Brenda (*attacking*) Oh yes—and whose idea was it that we came over here in October? Who said the weather would be nice and we'd have no bother getting rooms?
Stanley (*mildly*) Well we didn't, did we? Until tonight.
Brenda No, and look where we are tonight. In a refrigerated dormitory with the Black Death raging all around.
Stanley Oh, it's the Black Death now, is it?
Brenda I think we should leave.
Stanley Don't worry, any time from now the man'll be round with his horse and cart shouting "Bring out your dead". He can give us a lift.
Brenda Are we going or aren't we?
Stanley No we are not. It took us four hours to find an hotel with a vacancy, and now we've found one we're filling it. (*He picks up a magazine, goes over to Bed Two, and sits down on it*)
Brenda Germany's only a couple of miles away, there's bound to be hotels there.
Stanley The car is not insured for Germany.
Brenda Why didn't you insure it for Germany?
Stanley For the same reason I didn't insure it for Tahiti, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia and the Solomon Islands. I had no idea we were going there.
Brenda Does it matter if we're not insured?

Stanley Does it matter? With the sort of luck we've had so far on this trip. It matters.

Brenda (*sighing*) Well, if you will go driving into ponds.

Stanley (*incensed*) I drove into that pond to avoid being rammed by a lunatic in a Mercedes, doing ninety miles an hour on the wrong side of the road.

Brenda Oh no he wasn't. You were on the wrong side of the road.

Stanley (*quietening*) Well, maybe I was. But I'm British. It takes a time to get used to right-hand driving. I mean, they should show some consideration for tourists—not mow 'em down like cattle.

Brenda He stopped and came back. He even offered to tow you out.

Stanley That was a fat lot of good. He didn't have a tow-rope, did he?

Brenda No. And neither did you.

Brenda takes a new hank of rope from the carrier-bag and throws it at him

Stanley No, but I've got one now. If we go in again, I'll tow myself out.

Brenda (*looking around*) Where's our suitcases?

Stanley He put 'em in the wardrobe.

Brenda goes to the wardrobe and looks at Heinz's coat

Brenda What's his jacket doing here?

Stanley He jammed it in, while you were hanging out the window, ambulance-spotting.

Brenda pushes the sliding-door and it opens perversely at her merest touch. The jacket falls out and she puts in on a chair

Brenda Well, just as long as you remember it was your idea we stayed here. (*She takes out a suitcase and puts it on Bed One, then she suddenly notices the wallpapered door. She points to it in horror*) Oh my God!

Stanley What's the matter now? (*He pats his chest*) Oh. My heart.

Brenda That door. (*She goes to the wallpapered door*)

Stanley What about it? It's locked.

Brenda It's covered in wallpaper.

Stanley Well, so what?

Brenda It's reminded me of something.

Stanley (*sighing*) Oh that. Don't worry, as soon as we get back I'll do the bloody bathroom out.

Brenda (*dramatically*) "So Long at the Fair."

Stanley I beg your pardon?

Brenda A film I saw. It was about a couple who stayed at an hotel in Paris. She went out for a walk and when she came back—he'd vanished.

Stanley Vanished?

Brenda And everybody in the hotel pretended they'd never even seen her before. They said she'd never even stayed there.

Stanley And had she?

Brenda Well of course she had. She even tried to show them the room that they'd had—but the door wasn't there.

Stanley Where was it?
Brenda Wallpapered over.
Stanley Well I expect they did it to save paint.
Brenda They didn't do it to save paint.
Stanley Well, why did they do it then?
Brenda Bubonic plague.
Stanley Oh, don't start that again.

Brenda walks back to her case, casually

Brenda Well, if you're not worried. I merely thought I'd mention it.
Stanley Now listen, we are not leaving this hotel and we're not going to have an argument. I'm going to have a shower and then we'll go downstairs and have a nice quiet drink.

Stanley goes to the wardrobe, opens his case on the rack and takes out a toilet case and towel

Brenda The bar's shut.
Stanley Well there's bound to be somewhere open, after all it's festival time. (*He takes off his jacket. Underneath he is wearing a polo-necked sweater*) It's none too warm in here, is it?

Brenda feels the radiator

Brenda The radiator's off.
Stanley Well I'll tell him about it when he comes back for his jacket.
Brenda Yes, and what was he doing? Going off like that in his shirt sleeves.
Stanley (*acidly*) Oh, it's obvious, isn't it? He's gone wallpapering. He's probably outside now with a bucket of paste. (*He jerks a thumb at the door as he does an impression of a sinister German*) Don't worry, Professor, the vorld shall never hear of our secret—ve shall vallpaper them in.

Heinz is standing at the main door in his shirt sleeves

Heinz (*surprised*) Wallpaper who in?
Stanley (*embarrassed*) Ah—er—we were talking about an old film we'd seen on television. She'll tell you about it.

Stanley exits to the bathroom

Brenda is left to face Heinz. He picks up his jacket

Heinz Ah yes, we are also getting some old films on television.
Brenda This one was about an English couple who stayed in Paris during the Great Exhibition.
Heinz Oh yes? (*He starts to put on his jacket*)
Brenda And the hotel had bubonic plague.
Heinz (*taken aback*) Plague?
Brenda And they covered the door with wallpaper.

Heinz Wallpaper?
Brenda The same as that door over there. And what were those ambulances?
Heinz (*embarrassed*) Yes. Well, from the cinema one gets a very false impression of life in other countries.
Brenda (*unconvinced*) Does one?
Heinz Oh yes. For example last night on television I was watching an old German musical about life in England. It was called "Rosen Von Soho".
Brenda Yes, but . . .
Heinz It was about a German fellow in London who falls in love with a beautiful flower girl—called Soho Rosie. Only she is really an English Duchess who is hiding.
Brenda Who from?
Heinz Oh, she is hiding from some millionaire who wishes to marry her.
Brenda Oh well, she would do.
Heinz (*dramatically acting out his words*) Well, the German fellow and Rosie are doing a tap-dance over the rooftops of Buckingham Palace, when the millionaire appears, maddened with jealousy, he tries to shoot them.
Brenda And does he?
Heinz (*continuing to act*) No. They fight on the top of Big Ben—and the mad millionaire falls to his death in Piccadilly Circus.
Brenda It sounds exciting.
Heinz It was rubbish.
Brenda Getting back to what we were saying . . .
Heinz On the other hand. It had some rather nice songs in it.
Brenda What was wrong with those people downstairs?
Heinz I am trying to remember how they went . . .
Brenda Oh, they went in two ambulances.
Heinz No, no. The songs in the picture. Ah yes, one of them is coming back to me. It was partly in English. (*He starts singing to Brenda with great feeling, leading her to the pouffe and seating her*)

Von ganzen die blumen in Soho
Von ganzen die Rosen on view
Of all the flowers we see on display
The Rose I love best is you . . .

Brenda (*stunned*) Oh, it's quite nice—yes.

Heinz has not finished, however, and kneels beside her

Heinz (*singing*) Rosie my Rosie
Ich lieber dich Viel zu Viel.
(*He sits beside her*)
Brenda Yes, well—er . . .
Heinz Yes?
Brenda Yes. You have an—er—unusual voice.
Heinz At medical school, I was in the Amateur Operatic Society.
Brenda (*surprised*) Are you a doctor?
Heinz Not—exactly. But I was a medical student for nine years.

Brenda It's a long course, isn't it?
Heinz *Not* if you can pass the exams. Of course, my aunt was supporting me, until she passed away.
Brenda Oh, I am sorry.
Heinz So am I. It means I have to run this hotel.
Brenda Yes well, of course, medical knowledge must come in very handy—especially when you have an epidemic. (*She rises*)
Heinz (*emphatically*) We do not have an epidemic. (*He leaps up*)
Brenda But those ambulances . . .
Heinz Merely a minor case of food poisoning.
Brenda Then why did you . . .
Heinz Merely a precaution. (*He leads her back to the pouffe and seats her*) You see with Mrs Hoffmeyer arriving, I thought if those people *are* going to be ill, it's much better they are ill in hospital—where she can't see them. (*He sits beside her*)

Brenda now relaxes, completely relieved

Brenda Oh, you know for a moment I was very worried.
Heinz (*ardently*) I could see you were. (*He takes her hand and gazes at her*) You know you are very lovely.
Brenda (*uneasily*) Thank you.
Heinz You remind me so much of someone I once loved.
Brenda Do I? (*She rises and moves away*) Well I'm married.
Heinz So was she. (*He follows her and takes her hand*)
Brenda My husband's with me.
Heinz So was hers.
Brenda He's right there—in the bathroom.
Heinz You are radiant, you are adorable. You are the loveliest woman I I have ever met. Am I offending you by saying all this?
Brenda No . . . Well yes, I'm married, and he could come out any second.
Heinz Then order me to leave. The moment I offend you, order me to leave. (*And he sweeps her into a passionate embrace, kissing her ardently*)

Brenda puts up a token struggle and then submits, being partly stunned by the turn of events. Heinz flings her on Bed Two and finally releases her. He turns away with a gesture of intense remorse

I am sorry. Forgive me. Such a thing will never happen again while you are under my roof. I swear it. You will never forgive me. I know this. You will never ever forgive me.
Brenda (*confused*) I'm not sure.
Heinz (*cheering up*) Well, if you should I am in room thirty-seven—along the corridor, up one flight. (*He blows her a kiss*) Auf wiedersehen—my English Rose.

Heinz exits, throwing her a rose from his buttonhole. The bathroom door opens and Stanley enters in his vest, wiping his head with a towel. He has his pullover tied round his waist, and bangs an ear with the flat of his hand

Stanley I've got water in my ears.

Brenda does not answer, she looks straight ahead still in a trance, holding the rose. Stanley bangs his ears again, and then slips his pullover on hastily

Stanley Blimey, it's freezing in here. Absolutely freezing. I've never known anything like it. It's arctic. Did you ask him?
Brenda (*absently*) Eh?
Stanley Did you ask him why the radiators weren't working?
Brenda No, I forgot.
Stanley Well that's a fat lot of good, isn't it.

Stanley goes to the radiator and turns the tap. The radiator emits a series of banging noises

That wants looking at, that does: what about those people?
Brenda People?
Stanley In the ambulances.
Brenda Oh that—that was nothing.
Stanley Nothing?
Brenda They'd just eaten something.
Stanley Oh, is that what it was. Judging by this room, I thought it might have been frostbite.
Brenda No, just a minor case of food poisoning.
Stanley Why are you using your telephone voice?
Brenda He made a pass at me.
Stanley Who did?
Brenda The Manager—well he didn't exactly make a pass at me.
Stanley Well, did he or didn't he?
Brenda He said I looked radiant. He said I was the loveliest woman they'd ever had staying here.
Stanley Did he?
Brenda Yes.
Stanley You know why he said that, don't you?
Brenda Why?
Stanley So you wouldn't ask him about that bloody radiator.
Brenda (*hurt*) Well, if that's all you think of me.
Stanley They're all the same, these foreigners. Full of chat. I mean you don't want to let it worry you.
Brenda Oh, I wasn't worried.
Stanley He didn't pinch your behind, did he?
Brenda No, he did not.
Stanley Well, that's all right then. He was just laying on the old chat . . . Ooh. (*He suddenly clasps his ear*) Oh dear, oh dear.
Brenda What's wrong?
Stanley It's this water in my ears, it keeps making whoom-whoom noises.
Brenda Well it's wax, you ought to get them syringed.
Stanley I know that, but where?
Brenda (*thoughtfully*) I suppose *he* could do it for you.
Stanley Who?

Brenda The Manager.
Stanley The Manager?!
Brenda Well he's the owner actually. His aunt left it to him.
Stanley I don't care who left it to him. I'm not having my ears messed about by hotel managers.
Brenda He's a sort of doctor—well, nearly
Stanley Nearly?
Brenda He was a medical student, I don't think he's actually practised.
Stanley Well he's not practising on me. Is there anything else he does?
Brenda Well he—sings.
Stanley Sings?
Brenda He was singing a song—out of an old silent film.
Stanley Was he? Well that couldn't have been easy for a start.

Stanley goes to the bathroom, leaves the towel, and returns

Brenda Perhaps it wasn't silent—perhaps it was an early talkie. Anyway, I am sure he *would* look at your ear.
Stanley Oh I'm quite sure he would if he got the chance, but he's not damn well going to.
Brenda How is it?
Stanley Oh, it's all right—if it goes again we'll send for him—the hotel doctor—chats up the ladies and sings while he syringes, and fleets of ambulances carry off his successful cases.

Brenda looks at her hand in horror

Brenda (*rising*) Oh no.
Stanley What?
Brenda It's gone.
Stanley What has? What?
Brenda That ring my mother gave me—I've lost it.
Stanley Well it's him. He's had it.
Brenda Who?
Stanley The Manager.
Brenda Oh, don't be so stupid.
Stanley Well of course it's him. He's had it.
Brenda Wait a minute. I'm trying to think—it was that filling station—I went to the ladies—I had a quick wash to freshen up. It took it off and put it on the shelf over the wash-basin.
Stanley But that was miles away—before we stopped for tea.
Brenda Yes but we got lost after that and went round and round in circles.
Stanley It's still about four hours away. I don't even know where it was.
Brenda Oh, I can remember—at least I think I can. (*Contritely*) Oh, I am sorry, darling. I'm such an idiot. (*She is on the verge of tears*)
Stanley Well, don't get upset. It could have happened to anybody, love.
Brenda I feel so awful.
Stanley Just don't get upset about it, love.

Brenda puts her arms round him

Brenda Oh darling, you are sweet, you really are. Most men would scream and shout, but you're taking it all so calmly.

Stanley Well, what's done is done.

Brenda Yes, but you're taking it so well, darling. I mean, just think, you've driven all this way today—and now you've got to drive all that way back. Don't worry. I'll drive part of the way.

Stanley Oh no, you won't.

Brenda Oh yes I will.

Stanley Oh no, you won't.

Brenda Why?

Stanley Because we're not bloody well going back. That's why.

Brenda Not going back?

Stanley Do you think a diamond ring left in a ladies' lavatory is still going to be there?

Brenda Yes—well it might be—anyway, we must go and *see*.

Stanley But I don't even know what route it was on. We'll get lost again.

Brenda No we won't.

Stanley Gor blimey. We got lost in broad daylight. What chance do you think we've got at night, and even if we did find it they'll be shut.

Brenda It might be an all-night garage.

Stanley Look—I'll buy you another one for Christmas.

Brenda I don't want another one—I want that one—and what is my mother going to say when I tell her I've lost it. My father gave it to her.

Stanley Don't tell her. It wasn't all that valuable, was it?

Brenda (*angrily*) You just don't care, do you?

Stanley Of course I care . . .

Brenda You don't care.

Stanley Of course I . . .

Brenda You don't care about anything.

Stanley I care . . .

Brenda (*in full flood*) You don't care that they're carrying people out on stretchers—you don't care that that Manager tried to rape me.

Stanley (*taken aback*) Tried to *what*?

Brenda (*wishing she had not said it*) You don't care that our bathroom's like a pig-sty, you won't do it up.

Stanley (*astounded*) He tried to *what*?

Brenda (*hoping frantically to get off the subject*) Well he tried to kiss me. But you don't care—You don't care about my mother's signet ring—Well I care and I'm going back for it. Even if it takes me all night.

Stanley But you just said he tried to rape you.

Brenda If you won't go back then I'll go on my own.

Stanley You said he tried to rape you.

Brenda Yes, and I wish he had. I'd probably have let him, you're mean and you're rotten and you just don't care.

Stanley Never mind about me, what did that bloody singing manager do to you?

Brenda Nothing.
Stanley You just now said he tried to rape you.
Brenda Anyway, it's none of your business.
Stanley None of my business? . . . You're my wife!
Brenda You don't own me. (*She opens her suitcase on the bed and throws in the few articles she took out earlier*)
Stanley Well of course I don't own you. You don't own me. But if I went around hotels singing and raping women, you'd want to know what *I* was up to.
Brenda (*coldly*) I have not the least interest in anything you care to do. Are you driving me back to that garage or not?
Stanley No, I want a full confession of your affair with that disqualified medical sex maniac.
Brenda Then I'm off. (*She picks up the suitcase and moves to the door*)

Stanley goes after her

Stanley Brenda. Put that case down.
Brenda No.
Stanley Brenda, this is more important than losing some cheap, tatty rolled-gold ring.
Brenda (*in cold fury*) Oh no—I haven't lost that. I've still got the engagement ring you bought me—And you can have that back.

She puts down her suitcase, pulls off her engagement ring and hurls it at him. He picks it up

Stanley Don't be ridiculous—you can't break off our *engagement.*

Brenda exits

We've been married for nine years. (*He goes to the open door and shouts after her*) You can't take the car. I've got the car keys. (*With a look of triumph he feels in his trouser pockets and the look of triumph fades. He feels in both his jacket pockets, then shouts*) Brenda! Come back! Brenda!

Stanley runs to the main door and exits, closing it after him. There is a moment's pause, then Helga Philby enters, followed by Karak carrying her suitcase and a vanity case. Helga is in her late twenties, slim, tall and attractive, cool and self-possessed. A former nursing sister, she speaks excellent English with a slight German accent

Karak This way, madame.
Helga Thank you.

Karak opens the end of the wardrobe which is empty and puts Helga's case on the rack at the end. Helga meanwhile looks around the room, slightly puzzled

Are you sure my husband hasn't arrived yet?
Karak Oh oui, madame. He is asking me on telephone to hold reservations

Helga But the room is so large.
Karak Ja. It's the only one we have left.
Helga Oh, I see.
Karak Anyway, you are two peoples. You are needing large room.
Helga Yes, I know, but my husband isn't expecting me.
Karak You mean you are surprising him?
Helga Well, in a way, you see I was visiting my sister in Heidelberg and my husband rang to say he was coming here on business. And this evening I suddenly thought, it's his birthday, and he will be here all on his own. So . . .
Karak You are driving up from Heidelberg.
Helga Yes. I tried to ring my husband to tell him I was coming, but it seems he had left.

Helga looks into the bathroom

Karak So, it will be a nice surprise for him, ja? And is good job we are saving you such a big room.
Helga Yes. Mind you, I'd be happier if it was not so big and slightly warmer.
Karak Wait. (*He goes over and feels the radiator*) Ach—radiators is not switched on.
Helga Oh? Why is that?
Karak Who is knowing. Whole hotel is in state of panic.

Karak feels behind the radiator and to his slight surprise finds a spanner on the windowsill

Helga So it seems. Who was that man who rushed out as I came in?

Karak is still looking at the spanner

Karak Ah, plumber is leaving.
Helga Well if he was a plumber, why was he in such a hurry? I thought the hotel was on fire.

Karak has not been listening to her properly until now. He is putting the spanner around a turncock at the base of the radiator

Karak Not yet. All we are having at moment is food poisoning.
Helga (*severely*) Food poisoning?
Karak Is nothink.
Helga On the contrary that could be extremely serious. How many people are ill in the hotel?
Karak Is nobody ill in hotel.
Helga Oh good.
Karak Is all goink to hospital.
Helga What?
Karak But is nothink wrong with them. Manager is gettink wind up. He is sendink everybody who is eatink dinner off in ambulance. He is idiot.
Helga Oh no, he's very sensible. I remember when I was nursing in England.

Karak You were nursink in England?
Helga Oh yes. I was a staff nurse.
Karak I was in hospital there durink war. And staff nurses was always bullying me.
Helga (*sternly*) That was probably for your own good. Is that radiator working?
Karak Ja, is workink now. Is only little water squirtink out hole but is not worrying you.
Helga Do you mean it's leaking?
Karak Is nothink, in one half hour room will be warm. You wait.
Helga I think I shall take a hot bath.

Karak puts the spanner on the sill

Karak You are wanting breakfast in room?
Helga Oh. No, thank you.
Karak We are doink English breakfast. Eggs, bacon, bankers.
Helga Bankers?
Karak Ja, bankers—you are English, no?
Helga No. I am German. My husband is English.
Karak Bankers is worse.
Helga Worse than what?
Karak I am speaking German now—is worse.
Helga You mean it's worse than your English?
Karak Bankers is worse in German . . .
Helga (*enlightened*) Oh, you mean *Wurst* sausage . . .
Karak Ja, sausage.
Helga Oh, *bangers*. Yes, of course, I had forgotten.
Karak You are not eating them in England now?
Helga I don't live in England now. My husband works over here.
Karak Ja, whole of Europe is full of foreigners. All livink in wronk countries.
Helga Where did you learn your English?
Karak In Foreign Legion.
Helga Really? Where were you?
Karak Stoke-on-Trent.
Helga (*surprised*) With the Foreign Legion?
Karak Ja. You know it?
Helga Not very well.
Karak Peoples is friendly but town is dirty—full of crookery.
Helga You mean criminals?
Karak No, crookery—cups and saucers . . .
Helga Oh, *crockery*. (*She goes to her suitcase and takes out a dressing-gown and toilet bag*)
Karak Is what I am sayink. But you being German you are speakink with German accent.
Helga (*drily*) Whereas you of course speak perfect English.
Karak Ja. Although I am not actually Englishman.
Helga You surprise me. What are you?

Karak Laplander.
Helga (*astonished*) A Laplander?
Karak Ja, but reindeer is all dyink, so I am going to Foreign Legion.
Helga (*believing him*) Oh—that's very sad.
Karak Ja. Is anythink else you are wantink?
Helga No thank you. And, here's something for you.

Helga takes a coin from her handbag and gives it to him. Karak shakes her hand and salutes

Karak Merci bien, madame, danke schoen, tusand tack tack so mycket.

Karak exits

Helga You're welcome. Let's hope the water is hot.

Helga hangs her top coat, which is of a distinctive colour, in the wardrobe. Taking the dressing-gown and toilet bag, she closes the wardrobe door

Helga exits to the bathroom, slamming the door. On the slam, Heinz enters through the main door at a rush, followed by a furious Stanley

Stanley (*grimly*) A full explanation. That's what I want.
Heinz And you shall have one, sir—but not in the corridor if you please. Mrs Hoffmeyer has just arrived.
Stanley Never mind Mrs Hoffmeyer, what about my wife?
Heinz A complete misunderstanding, sir, on her part I assure you.
Stanley I hope so, for your sake.
Heinz Oh, but it was, we were discussing films, you see, especially "Rosen Von Soho".
Stanley (*puzzled*) "Rosen Von Soho?"
Heinz Also a rather unusual film your wife saw—about an exhibition in Paris.
Stanley (*shocked*) My wife doesn't watch films like that.
Heinz Oh no no. You were watching it, too. On television. You were discussing it when I came in. About wallpapering a door.
Stanley (*slightly guiltily*) Oh, that one. Yes.

Stanley moves to the armchair and sits

Heinz And then I went on to discuss an old German film, where the German man falls in love with the English girl.
Stanley And she thought you were making love to her?
Heinz (*enthusiastically*) Exactly, that is absolutely correct—that is precisely what happened.
Stanley Is that the best explanation you have?
Heinz For the moment—yes.
Stanley I see. (*He rises and goes to the window*)
Heinz You are satisfied?
Stanley Not completely, no. (*He feels the radiator*)

Heinz Well, I am sorry. If you are unhappy all I can suggest is—you leave the hotel.
Stanley I should very much like to I assure you.
Heinz There will be absolutely no charge.
Stanley What for? (*He turns from the window and faces Heinz*)
Heinz For anything.
Stanley I haven't had anything. (*Darkly*) I am not sure about you, though.
Heinz But I am not *charging* you anything.
Stanley I should bloody well hope not.
Heinz So you wish to leave?
Stanley No, I can't, my wife has driven off and left me here.
Heinz Where has she gone?
Stanley To a ladies' lavatory four hours away.
Heinz But that's ridiculous. We have plenty in the hotel.
Stanley To find a ring.
Heinz Well I'm quite happy to drop the matter if you are.
Stanley For the moment, yes. We may well take it up again when she returns. *If* she returns.

Stanley sits on Bed One by the radiator

Heinz Is there anything else I can do for you?

Stanley gets up off the bed and feels the seat of his trousers

Stanley My trousers are wet.
Heinz Your *trousers* are wet?
Stanley Soaking. (*He feels the bed*) The bed's wet, too.
Heinz (*after a pause*) What have you done?
Stanley Feel that bed.

Heinz feels the bed

Heinz Oh ja, ja—somebody is wetting it. Maybe it was Karak, the Head Porter.
Stanley You mean he's been sleeping up here?
Heinz No, no. No, but he is a lunatic. He might have been throwing water over it—or something.
Stanley Well let's hope it was water.
Heinz (*going to the phone*) Don't worry, I'll call the chambermaid, oh lieber gott, I forgot she went to bed early . . . Never mind, I will get her up. (*On the phone*) Give me Madelaine. (*Without waiting for a reply he takes the earpiece away and speaks to Stanley*) We are so short of staff you see, and I have to get changed for my part in the festival. (*Into the phone*) Allo? . . . Madelaine, venez a la chambre douze, vit s'il vous plait. Le couverture est mouille—le lit est mouille. . . . Toute suite. . . . Bon. (*He hangs up*) She is half asleep I think, but don't worry, the chambermaid will be down instantly—in five seconds.

Heinz exits

Stanley meanwhile tries to find the source of the damp bed. He looks around and sees the radiator; he feels it and discovers the leak. Then he picks the spanner up and turns off the cock at the bottom. As he does so the radiator emits a series of loud bangs and a rush of steam. Stanley looks at it and shakes his head, and then, still carrying the spanner, he goes to the main door, opens it and shouts down the corridor after Heinz

Stanley The radiator is leaking—the radiator is leaking.

Obviously Stanley has just missed Heinz so he exits after him. After a moment Helga comes out of the bathroom carrying her clothes and wearing her dressing-gown

She goes to the wardrobe and hangs up her clothes. The door gives no trouble. She shuts the wardrobe, which now contains all her clothes except the dressing-gown she is wearing. She goes over to the radiator and fiddles with the top. Then she holds her hand a little way away, obviously feeling a fine jet of water coming out. She looks at the bed and feels it

Helga Oh. What an hotel. (*She pulls back the cover and feels the mattress*)

Stanley enters with the spanner. He calls back down the passage as he enters

Stanley And don't forget the chambermaid.

Stanley sees Helga. He thinks she is the chambermaid. She thinks he is the plumber

Stanley Ah, good evening.
Helga Oh, good evening. It's the radiator.

Stanley goes to the radiator

Stanley Yes, I know. Yes, I'm sorry if we've got you out of bed.
Helga No, I wasn't in bed. I was taking a shower.
Stanley Oh, were you?
Helga Yes. Mind you I could have taken one standing here, from the radiator.
Stanley Well there's no point in you standing there getting wet. Move out of the way, perhaps I can do something.
Helga I certainly hope so.

She goes over and sits on Bed Two and watches him, as he tries to shut off the water at the bottom cock. Stanley feels somewhat guilty about bringing the chambermaid out of her shower and his manner is slightly apologetic. He takes her somewhat reproving attitude to be a natural resentment at being brought down. Helga wants him to hurry up and leave

Stanley Yes, well it's a very old radiator.
Helga Yes, like everything else in this place.
Stanley Yes.

Helga Where were you running to earlier on?
Stanley Running to?
Helga Yes. You nearly knocked me over.
Stanley Did I? I'm sorry, I didn't see you. I was in a bit of a hurry.
Helga Yes, you were. (*She sits sprawled out on the bed*)

Stanley makes the radiator bang a couple of times and then stands up

Stanley If you turn it one way it leaks, if you turn it the other way it bangs.
Helga Well, we can't have banging all night, can we?
Stanley No . . . (*He gives her a puzzled look*) It'll just have to leak, then.
Helga All right, so let it.
Stanley Well there's not much point in changing the sheets, then.
Helga No, not really.
Stanley So that's it, then.

He expects Helga to get up and go. She is waiting for him to leave. They look at each other slightly puzzled

Helga Yes.
Stanley Yes.

Helga lies on the bed, looking at him, and Stanley starts to feel uneasy. She seems extremely forward for a chambermaid

Helga Well, it doesn't matter. We can use this one.

This remark confirms Stanley's growing suspicions. He still can't quite believe his ears, however

Stanley I beg your pardon?
Helga I said we can use this bed.
Stanley That's what I thought you said. Yes.
Helga Don't you understand what I'm saying?
Stanley (*cautiously*) I think so—yes.
Helga Good. Then what are you waiting for?
Stanley I don't know. Really.
Helga What do you mean you don't know. Have you finished fiddling with the radiator?
Stanley Well, yes, I think so—I mean there's not a lot I can do. (*He turns to the radiator again to give himself time to think*)

Helga now leans on one elbow; she looks at him and sighs. He seems to her a typical incompetent workman

Helga Oh, now look, if you can't do anything, say so.

Stanley turns from the radiator at her tone of contempt. He is stung by it

Stanley (*coldly*) Oh, I wouldn't say that.
Helga Well, I would.
Stanley No, I am quite sure I could if I wanted to.
Helga But you don't *want* to? Is that what you are saying?

Stanley I'm *thinking* about it.
Helga You are *thinking* about it?
Stanley That's what I said. Yes.
Helga Oh, stop making excuses. If you *can* do it, then for heaven's sake get on with it. (*And she lies back on the bed*)

Stanley is stung beyond endurance by her manner, and her challenge to his virility

Stanley (*shouting*) Right, then. (*He starts to take off his trousers*)

Helga sits up slowly in horror

Helga (*shouting angrily*) What the hell are you doing?
Stanley What?

Stanley freezes with his trousers half off

Helga What are you doing?
Stanley I was—er—taking my trousers off.
Helga (*incredulously*) To mend the *radiator*?
Stanley No . . .
Helga Well, to what?
Stanley Well I've got wet trousers, you see. They're soaking wet—I've got wet trousers . . .
Helga Put them on again.
Stanley No, it's true. I've wet my trousers—I mean they're wet. Honestly, they're all wet.
Helga Do you want me to call the Manager?
Stanley (*alarmed*) Oh! You wouldn't, would you? No, I was just going to bed.
Helga Where?
Stanley Over here or over there, or anywhere, I mean I was going after you'd finished, or we'd finished—we hadn't started, had we . . .? Oh Gawd. (*He is now convinced he has made some dreadful error but cannot see where*)
Helga Are you mad?
Stanley No. Just confused—I'm awfully confused.
Helga Now look, I won't tell you again. Put your trousers on and get out of here.
Stanley I mean they're soaking wet. Have a feel, they're soaking—and I have got another pair in the wardrobe.

Helga looks at him wide-eyed with horror. He points to the wardrobe

Helga Another pair of what?
Stanley Trousers.
Helga And what are your trousers doing in my wardrobe?
Stanley It's my wardrobe.
Helga Now don't be ridiculous, it's my room, so how can it be your wardrobe?
Stanley (*stunned*) Your room?

Helga Yes, of course.
Stanley But it's my room. I was given this room over an hour ago.
Helga (*horrified*) What are you saying?
Stanley I think we've made an awful mistake . . .
Helga (*swallowing*) You are not the plumber?
Stanley No, and I take it you're not . . .
Helga Not what?
Stanley Well you thought this was your room?
Helga Well, yes, of course I did, at least I thought it was my husband's room.
Stanley Ah well, that explains it, doesn't it?
Helga Yes.
Stanley Yes.
Helga Well I'm most awfully sorry, whatever must you have thought of me?
Stanley Well, I thought you were the chambermaid.
Helga Lying on the bed and telling you to get on with it?
Stanley Well, I thought . . .
Helga You thought I was a tart.

Stanley zips his trousers up again hastily

Stanley (*vehemently*) Oh no no no no no. Never. No. No, goodness No. Never. No.

Stanley shakes his head vigorously and it dislodges the wax in his ears. He starts banging his ear with the flat of his hand

Helga (*smiling*) Are you sure?
Stanley Positive, absolutely positive. Ooh, my ears.
Helga What's wrong with your ears?
Stanley I've got water in my ears. I should never have shaken my head like that.
Helga Do you know that is caused by excess wax?
Stanley Yes, I know that. Yes.
Helga And the cold makes it worse usually.
Stanley I didn't know that, actually.
Helga Take your trousers off.
Stanley Oh, not again, thank you.
Helga They're soaking wet. So take them off.
Stanley I will when you've left the room.
Helga Oh, don't worry about me. I was a nurse.
Stanley Oh well, if you advise it on medical grounds.

Stanley goes to the wardrobe and modestly turns his back to Helga as he slips his trousers down, the cuckoo clock gives a loud cuckoo. Stanley pulls his trousers up again and turns

I beg your pardon.

He realizes it was the cuckoo and slips his trousers off and Helga takes them

Helga I'll hang them up in the bathroom for you. It's a little bit warmer in there.

She goes to the bathroom

(*From inside the bathroom*) Then I must get dressed and find my husband's room.

Stanley tries to open the wardrobe. It has jammed again. He tries both ends, banging and thumping it

Helga comes back out of the bathroom

What's wrong?
Stanley It's jammed.
Helga Oh well, try the other end.
Stanley No, it's jammed both ends.

Helga tries the other end. But both doors are firmly jammed

Helga We have to open it. My clothes are in there.
Stanley You see sometimes it opens, sometimes it doesn't . . . My wife touches it and it flies open. (*He crosses to Bed Two and sits at the foot of it*)
Helga You have a wife?
Stanley Yes, of course I have.
Helga (*with slight alarm*) Well where is she?
Stanley Oh, she's just popped out for a minute.
Helga And supposing she just pops back—and finds *us* like this?
Stanley Oh no, she won't be back yet. If ever.
Helga (*sympathetically*) Ah, do you mean she has left you?

Helga sits beside Stanley on Bed Two

Stanley Oh no. Not really. No.
Helga Oh—well if you don't want to talk about it . . .
Stanley Oh no. It's just that we had a few words and she drove off and left me here—that's all.
Helga Well, don't worry.

She rests her hand reassuringly on his bare knee and he reacts

I'm sure that she will come back.

There is a loud banging on the main door. They both start

Stanley She's back!

From outside the door we hear Claude shouting angrily at Karak

Claude (*off*) Come on, man, open the blasted door.

Helga jumps up in alarm

Helga That's my husband!

Stanley follows suit

Stanley Your husband?
Helga Yes. He will kill you.
Stanley *Kill* me? Why? What do you mean, kill me? Why?

There is another loud bang on the door

Karak (*off*) Is no good banging door. You have wrong key.
Claude (*off*) Well, where's the right key?
Helga You don't know my husband.
Stanley Well—I'm getting out of here.
Helga No, don't leave me . . .
Stanley Well, you get out of here. Yes, in the bathroom. In the bathroom, quick.
Claude (*off*) Come on man.

Helga runs to the bathroom and shuts the door

Stanley sits in the armchair then realizes he has no trousers on. He gets up and runs to the bathroom door. The door opens and Helga hands him out his trousers. He struggles to put them on, stumbling across the stage as he does so

Helga (*from the bathroom*) Try to get rid of him.
Stanley Yes, I will. I'll just get my trousers on.

Helga shuts the bathroom door

Claude (*off*) Come on, man, what the hell are you doing?
Karak (*off*) I am looking for pass key.

The door opens and Claude Philby enters. He is a middle-aged and pompous English businessman. He reacts at the sight of Stanley struggling to get into his trousers. Karak follows him with a hold-all, and Claude's suit in a plastic cover

Claude (*to Karak*) Who the hell is that?
Karak Is man taking trousers off.
Stanley I am not taking them off. I am trying to put them on again.
Claude Oh, you're English?
Stanley Yes, I am English, and would you mind telling me what you are doing, bursting into my room like this?
Claude *Your* room? My dear chap, I do apologize, only this drunken fool said it was my room.

Karak puts Claude's bags down

Karak Drunk? Who is drunk?
Claude You are.
Karak So now you are insulting me. Because I am porter you think you can insult me. (*He moves towards Claude, menacingly*) Well, I am showing you different.

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