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Samuel French Acting Edition

Good Evening

by Peter Cook & Dudley Moore

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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www.SamuelFrench.com

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FOR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Info@SamuelFrench.com

1-866-598-8449

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PREMIERE PERFORMANCE NOVEMBER 14, 1973

THE PLYMOUTH THEATRE

ALEXANDER H. COHEN and
BERNARD DELFONT

present

PETER DUDLEY
COOK MOORE

in

GOOD EVENING

COMEDY WITH MUSIC

Written by

PETER COOK and DUDLEY MOORE

Directed by

JERRY ADLER

Designed by

ROBERT RANDOLPH

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH
DONALD LANGDON FOR HEMDALE, LTD.

ACT ONE

HELLO

ON LOCATION

MADRIGAL

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

DIE FLABBERGAST

DOWN THE MINE

ONE LEG TOO FEW

SOAP OPERA

ACT TWO

GOSPEL TRUTH

THE KWAI SONATA

MINI DRAMA

THE FROG AND PEACH

AN APPEAL

TEA FOR TWO

GOODBYE

Good Evening

ACT ONE

HELLO

PETER. Hello.

DUDLEY. Hello.

PETER. How are you?

DUDLEY. I'm terribly well, how are you?

PETER. I'm terribly well as well.

DUDLEY. I must say, you're looking very fit.

PETER. I'm feeling pretty fit actually. Isn't it amazing—us just bumping into each other like this?

DUDLEY. Yes, I mean here of all places.

PETER. Here of all places! I mean I haven't seen you since—er—

DUDLEY. Now er hold on a minute—er when was it? Er we, we haven't seen each other . . .

PETER. Well actually we haven't seen each other . . .

DUDLEY. We haven't seen each other . . . er . . . before.

PETER. That's right we've never seen each other before, have we?

DUDLEY. No . . .

PETER. You've never seen me.

DUDLEY. And I've never seen you . . . what a small world.

PETER. What a small world.

DUDLEY. Last thing I expected.

PETER. Well, it must be about a million to one chance.

DUDLEY. Oh, more than that.

PETER. Do you think so?

DUDLEY. A couple of billion to one.

PETER. Couple of billion, yes, couple of billion and a half, possibly.

DUDLEY. Yes. Probably three billion to one, the way the world is going.

PETER. Yes, they're breeding like rabbits, aren't they?

DUDLEY. Yes, indeed. Anyway, it's awfully nice to . . . um . . . er . . . see you.

PETER. Well, it's terribly nice to see you.

DUDLEY. Yes. Tell me . . . er . . . are you still doing . . . er . . . whatever you have been doing . . . that is, of course, if you ever do anything.

PETER. Oh, yes. I'm still with the old firm, you know.

DUDLEY. Oh, the old firm.

PETER. Yes, soldiering on—I've just been made a Director in fact.

DUDLEY. Oh, congratulations.

PETER. Well, under somewhat tragic circumstances—er—I've stepped into poor old Bender's shoes. Did you know Bender?

DUDLEY. Bender. The name certainly doesn't ring a bell. Bender who?

PETER. Bender Harrison.

DUDLEY and PETER. (*Together.*) Oh! Bender Harrison—yes.

DUDLEY. No, I've never heard of him.

PETER. You never will now, poor chap. He died last week.

DUDLEY. God! So, poor old Bender's dead.

PETER. Completely dead—yes—yes.

DUDLEY. I'm so sorry. I had no idea.

PETER. Nor did Bender really, he sort of . . . er . . . keeled over at the office party. Mind you, knowing Bender the way I knew Bender, which was pretty well, I think that's the way he would have wanted to go.

DUDLEY. Yes, you knowing Bender the way you must have known Bender, I'm sure that's the way he must have wanted to go.

PETER. Yes—yes.

DUDLEY. Not much point lingering on.

PETER. No, he was 106. I tell you the one thing I really ought to know and that is—how's . . . er . . . how's your . . . er . . . if you . . . er . . . have a . . . er.

DUDLEY. My wife? Vera?

PETER. Yeeees. How is she?

DUDLEY. She's awfully well.

PETER. I'm so pleased about that.

DUDLEY. Yes, terribly well, Vera. And of course young Martin's going to school now.

PETER. Martin going to school. Good God, I had no idea. How time flies.

DUDLEY. Yes, one moment they're that high—the next moment, they're . . .

DUDLEY and PETER. (*Together.*) . . . that high.

PETER. Good heavens—Martin at school.

DUDLEY. Yes. Tell me, how's um . . . er . . . er . . .

PETER. Roger Braintree?

DUDLEY. Yes—how's Roger Braintree?

PETER. Absolutely no idea, I've never met him. I just saw his name in the telephone book and I er . . . I was rather hoping you might be able to fill me in on what Roger's up to.

DUDLEY. I . . . I . . . I . . . I can't help you there, I'm afraid

PETER. You've no idea what Roger might be doing?

DUDLEY. No . . . well, not apart from what you've told me.

PETER. About him being in the telephone book.

DUDLEY. Yes. Yes—mind you, that's bloody good news.

PETER. Well I'm very pleased for Roger.

DUDLEY. Yes, tremendous— I suppose he is under "B" is he?

PETER. Yes he is, right under "B" which is a . . . pretty bloody good place to start.

DUDLEY. What? . . . B.R.A.I.N.T.R.E.E.?

PETER. The whole thing. Yes . . . he's got his whole thing in there.

DUDLEY. I'm very pleased for Roger.

PETER. Yes, I'm sorry you don't know more about what Roger might be doing in other directions.

DUDLEY. Sorry I can't really help there. Perhaps I could give him a ring this evening and see what he's up to?

PETER. Good idea. Anyway, terribly nice . . . to see you. I . . . I really ought to be dashing back to the office . . . time waits for no man.

DUDLEY. I'd better be toddling along myself, I think.

PETER. Do remember me to . . . er . . . um . . .

DUDLEY. Vera.

PETER. Yes. You must forgive me. I'm terribly bad at names. I keep forgetting them . . .

DUDLEY. Quite all right.

PETER. Do remember me to . . . um . . . er . . .

DUDLEY. Vera.

PETER. That's the chap. And jolly good luck with . . . um . . . er . . . it.

DUDLEY. Yes, well, the same to you—and we must keep in touch.

PETER. Yes, absolutely. I'll give you a tinkle.

DUDLEY. Yes, or vice versa.

PETER. Yes, we must do this again.

DUDLEY. Yes. Goodbye.

PETER. Goodbye. (*They exit.*)

FADE OUT

ON LOCATION

PETER. Good Evening, ladies and gentlemen. You've now seen the entire cast of "GOOD EVENING," and in case you're wondering, which is which, I'm the tall one. For the purpose of the next sketch I'd like you to imagine that Dudley Moore is slightly older than he actually appears on stage. He's playing the part of my father—a man of some seventy-five years of age, and he's just taken these last few seconds to add the necessary ten years. Thank you. (*PETER walks behind door and knocks.*)

DUDLEY. (*Coughs. Opens door.*)

PETER. Hello, Dad.

DUDLEY. Hello, Roger.

PETER. Hello, Dad.

DUDLEY. How's my famous film star son, then, eh?

PETER. I'm fine, Dad, how about you?

DUDLEY. Ah, not so bad, son, 'ere come on in and sit down.

PETER. Oh, thanks, Dad.

DUDLEY. Let's have a look at you—let's have a look

at you—yeh. You're looking a bit more healthy than you did in your last film, I'm glad to say.

PETER. Oh, thanks, Dad.

DUDLEY. Yeh . . . how about a nice cup of tea and a piece of fruit cake?

PETER. Oh, that'd be great, Dad, terrific.

DUDLEY. Right . . . might take a little while . . .
(*Business with the tea cart.*)

PETER. That's alright, Dad. (DUDLEY almost falls over tea trolley.) You all right Dad?

DUDLEY. Yes, I'm all right. You all right Son? —No bones broken?

PETER. Yes, I'm all right. You all right Dad?

DUDLEY. Okay, Son. . . . (DUDLEY spills milk.) Sod it. You don't mind your tea black, do you, son?

PETER. No, I like it continental.

DUDLEY. Continental it will be. Oo, la, la! (DUDLEY starts to stagger precariously towards PETER while carrying two cups of tea.)

PETER. Can I help you, Dad? You alright?

DUDLEY. Of course, I am. You sit yourself down.

PETER. You okay, Dad? (DUDLEY gives PETER his tea and sits down.)

DUDLEY. Nothing like a nice cup of tea is there? . . .

PETER. No, Dad, it's great. I feel terrible about not being able to get here earlier.

DUDLEY. Oh, look, son, it's your life. You can't play silly buggers with your career.

PETER. Did Mother understand that, Dad?

DUDLEY. I told her everytime I went to that bloody hospital. I said, Ada, you can't expect a film company to stop a multi-million dollar production in Yugoslavia just because you're feeling a bit under the weather, dear.

PETER. You know, Dad, I tried to get away, but we were shooting this snow sequence and the snow was melting, and the director just refused to release me.

DUDLEY. Of course he refused to release you, Roger, I would have refused to release you. Now then. I kept on saying to your Mother, I said, Ada, what is Mr. Omar Sharif going to say if his co-star—our only son—suddenly does a midnight flit out of Yugoslavia just to see his Mother—they'd call him Mummy's Boy, he'd never hear the last of it in the profession.

PETER. So Mother understood the situation did she, Dad?

DUDLEY. Well, I can't vouch for that, son. She went on and on— "Where's my little son, where's my little Roger" —I said—Ada— (*Tea business. DUDLEY shakes PETER's arm, spilling his tea.*)

PETER. It's all right, Dad, I've got enough here.

DUDLEY. Try to be a bit more careful.

PETER. Yes. I'm sorry, Dad, I don't know what came over me.

DUDLEY. I said, Ada—he's on location in Yugo—bloody—slavia—I couldn't get through to her.

PETER. It must have been rather tricky for you, Dad.

DUDLEY. She started screaming and hollering, where's my little son, where's my little Roger? In the end they had to move her to a little ward all by herself—well, she was disturbing the transplants—you know, and then she kept on complaining about that—she said, I hate this new ward, I want to go back to the old ward, you know. . . . Stubborn and wilful to the last, your Mother.

PETER. Yes, that's Mum all over.

DUDLEY. Just like with this lovely new house you

bought us—she never really got used to it. Not, of course, to be quite fair, that she had that much time to appreciate it because no sooner had she walked in through that door she started feeling strange and then it was downhill all the way.

PETER. Oh, Dad, you don't think moving to the new house had anything to do with her getting ill, do you?

DUDLEY. (*Gestures indecisively.*) . . . I don't think so, Roger.

PETER. I thought she'd like it here, you know, with the garden and everything like that.

DUDLEY. Oh, it's a lovely garden, Roger, those roses are going to be really nice when I get to them.

PETER. They're lovely roses, Dad, aren't they?

DUDLEY. Oh . . . yes, and don't think I don't appreciate it, son. No. Quite honestly, the thing with your Mother was, she missed some of her old friends, like Mrs. Stringer and Mrs. Booth from one one two . . .

PETER. Yes . . .

DUDLEY. But I'm sure she'd have made new friends, given time, I'm sure I'll make new friends, given time.

PETER. So . . . so you like it here, Dad, do you?

DUDLEY. Ooooh . . . yees . . . oh, yes, well, it's much more spacious than Mansfield Road.

PETER. More room for you to sort of dash around in . . .

DUDLEY. Yes. Not, of course, that I need quite so much room now—with your Mother gone . . . (*Sobs, PETER taps his head.*) Thank you, Roger. The way I look at it—what you lose on the swings, you gain on the roundabouts . . . Mind you, it's nice having an indoor toilet at my time of life—but your Mother would never go within 2 feet of that indoor toilet.

PETER. I thought she'd like it, Dad.

DUDLEY. I thought she'd revel in it—but you can't

change the habits of a lifetime. Directly we moved here, she bought a chamber pot and put it down the bottom of the garden— I think that's how she contracted the pneumonia. Sitting out there on those frosty nights, the wind howling up her nightie. The complaints we had about the noise out there—like Guy Fawkes Night every night.

PETER. I see part of the greenhouse has been broken.

DUDLEY. Yes. She shattered it.

PETER. She what, Dad?

DUDLEY. She shattered it.

PETER. Oh, yes, well, the Delphiniums have come up nicely.

DUDLEY. Yes, mmm. Everything's come up huge down there.

PETER. Must be about 12 foot tall.

DUDLEY. Yes, well, your Mother had green fingers . . . or something like that . . .

PETER. Dad, did you consult that Specialist I told you about in London?

DUDLEY. No.

PETER. Well, why not, Dad?

DUDLEY. I'll tell you why, son. I didn't want to offend Dr. Groarke. Now you must understand, Roger, that Dr. Groarke has always been very good to us.

PETER. I know that, Dad, but . . .

DUDLEY. I mean, he saw you through your German Measles.

PETER. Yes, Dad, but that was thirty years ago.

DUDLEY. It might have been thirty years ago but Dr. Groarke has lost none of his acumen. He was absolutely right about your Mother, you need have no fears about that, 'cause I asked him, I said, "Dr. Groarke, you've got to be quite frank with me, what is the situation concerning my wife, Ada?" He looked

me straight in the eyes—he said, “Norman, your wife is dying, there is no hope” —and he was absolutely spot on. Ada died. Now how can you grumble with that sort of expertise?

PETER. Very accurate diagnosis, wasn't it, Dad?

DUDLEY. Yes. Dr. Groarke is a staggering diagnostician. (DUDLEY fumbles hopelessly with the word ‘diagnostician.’)

PETER. Dad, is there anything I can do for you at the moment? You know, can I get you anything? Anything you need? Any little luxury?

DUDLEY. Roger, what more could I need? I've got this lovely new house, lovely new colour TV you gave me and your Mother, I couldn't be more comfortable. Oh, Blimey, here's me rattling on—I nearly forgot. Some bits and pieces your Mother set aside she wanted you to have especially. Good job I caught sight of them, she'd never have forgiven me if I'd forgotten. Must get this right—for her sake. (DUDLEY sorts out “bits and pieces.”) Yes, these first. Here are all your old exercise books and school reports from the County High.

PETER. Oh, thanks, Dad, that will come in handy. Oh, here's an essay I wrote about Spot. (PETER reads from exercise book.) “He is a mongrel. We got him from the dog's Home. My Dog is Called Spot.”

DUDLEY. (Reading.) He was a stray dog and he was starving to death. Someone found him and took him to the Dog's Home where they gave him some dinner and a bath because he had fleas . . . it's a bit boring.

PETER. Not bad for seventeen, Dad.

DUDLEY. And here, here is the illustrated Bible Mum gave you in 1948—you forgot to take it up to

town with you when you moved up to your pent-house.

PETER. Sorry, Dad, I forgot it in all the excitement.

DUDLEY. Don't think I don't understand, my boy—I've been young myself, haven't I? And er . . . here is the . . . er . . . aahhh . . . (*Starts to sob.*) I mustn't . . . I mustn't let go . . . Roger, here is your Mother's signet ring she wanted you to have and wear for her. Took me two hours to get it off her bloody finger.

PETER. Well, thanks, Dad, I'll wear it everywhere.

DUDLEY. (*Indicating PETER's finger.*) Just there'll be all right, son. And if you wouldn't mind wearing this black armband in memory of your Mother. I know she'd be pleased because she sewed it especially for you.

PETER. Dad, the one thing I really wanted to know, was, in the end, did Mother die peacefully?

DUDLEY. Roger, your Mother left this life as she lived it, screaming her bloody head off. I remember it very well, it was a Wednesday afternoon, Uncle Ralph had come in for a cup of tea, we hadn't seen him for twenty years and we were, you know, talking about when we used to walk over the cliffs at Leigh on Sea watching the boats come in—he's a boring bugger, that Ralph—once every twenty years is good enough for me.

PETER. Yes, Dad.

DUDLEY. Anyway, Mother was lying very quietly, very still, almost at rest and suddenly, without a word of a lie, she sat bolt upright in bed, she went, "Aargh" (*Screams.*) her false teeth hit the ceiling and that was it.

PETER. Oh, Dad, I just wish I could have been there.

DUDLEY. Your Mother never did anything by halves—both sets—POW—hit the electric light bulb, the bulb fell to the floor, smashed, matron came running in, slipped on the broken glass, hit her head on the bedpost, killed outright . . . Nurse Oviatt, hearing the commotion, came roaring in from the President Roosevelt Memorial Ward, tripped over matron and went flying out the window. She fell five stories onto a car that was coming into the forecourt. It was an open car, she killed herself and the two passengers. The weight of the three dead bodies on the accelerator took that car roaring into the catering department, killed seven nurses, knocked ten orderlies into a huge vat of boiling potatoes. Well naturally, the valve on the vat got stuck and there was a tremendous explosion—and the first floor collapsed. Well you can imagine what that did to the second and third floors. Anyway, son, I won't bore you with details—suffice it to say, that I was the sole survivor. Nine hundred and eighty-seven people wiped out in a flash of your Mother's teeth.

PETER. Oh, Dad. I just feel so guilty that I couldn't have been there.

DUDLEY. There's nothing for you to feel guilty about: there's nothing anybody human could have done. You were on location, Roger. You were on location.

PETER. Dad, I really ought to be getting back to London. I've got this meeting.

DUDLEY. Of course you have, Roger.

PETER. Mr. Broccoli has just got back from Brussels and I've got this rather important meeting with Cubby.

DUDLEY. I'm sorry to keep you hanging about like this, Roger.

PETER. There's just one thing I want to say . . .

DUDLEY. Here, Roger, your jacket's split.

PETER. No, Dad, that's a vent.

DUDLEY. A what?

PETER. A vent. It's the fashion.

DUDLEY. Well, you get your vent sewn up. You could catch a cold in your pinnie. Look, it's a death trap.

PETER. All right, Dad, I'll get it sewn up. Just one thing I wanted to say before I left, Dad. If ever you need me, at any time, if you're feeling ill or anything like that—just give me a ring and I'll come straight down—whatever I'm doing. Okay?

DUDLEY. That's very kind of you, Roger. Oh, just one thing. Are you by any chance on location this Saturday afternoon?

PETER. No, dad, I'm not working Saturday. Why?

DUDLEY. Marvellous. I just wondered if you'd like to come to the wedding.

PETER. What wedding, dad, you never mentioned a wedding. Who's getting married?

DUDLEY. Me and Auntie Joan.

PETER. But, dad, you can't. Auntie Joan's already married to . . .

DUDLEY. Roger, Uncle Ralph died in the hospital catastrophe. We thought we might as well make the best of things.

PETER. Oh, well, congratulations, Dad.

DUDLEY. Thank you very much, Roger.

PETER. I've always liked Auntie Joan.

DUDLEY. Yes, so have I.

PETER. We all know about that, dad.

DUDLEY. That's just not bloody true!

PETER. You've always liked Auntie Joan, haven't you?

DUDLEY. Oh, yes. I'm sorry, son. I thought you were implying something else.

PETER. No, it's just something mother said in passing.

DUDLEY. Yes. Well, your mother had a wild imagination. And some photographs.

PETER. Well, I'll see you Saturday, dad.

DUDLEY. Righto, Roger, I'll see you on Saturday. Two P.M., St. Thomas', Beacontree. The Reverend Griffin's doing the service.

PETER. Oh, he's got his frock back? Has he?

DUDLEY. Yes.

PETER. Right then, dad. I'll see you Saturday.

DUDLEY. Okay, Roger. I'll see you Saturday. (PETER exits.) If I'm spared.

FADE OUT

MUSIC SPOT

MADRIGAL

by DUDLEY MOORE

The sun doth shine so brightly,
And the river singeth merrily.
Let us to the maypole fly, and dance—
With fronds and garlands gay, garlands gay,
Garlands gay, dance, dance, dance—
With fronds and garlands gay,
With fronds and garlands gay,
To celebrate Diana's holiday
With a fa, la, la, la, la, la,—
La, la, la, la, la, la,

Ding-a-ding-a ding, Ding-a-ding-a ding,
Ding-a-ding-a ding, ding ding ding ding-a-dong,
With a fa, la, la, and a ding-a ding ding,
Jug, jug, pee-wee, twit-a-woo fa,
La, la, la, la, la, la.

FADE OUT

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

(DUDLEY in schoolmaster outfit paces room. There is a KNOCK on door.)

DUDLEY. Come in.

PETER. You sent for me, sir?

DUDLEY. Yes, I did indeed, Rawlings. (*Clears his throat.*) Rawlings, I had a rather distressing piece of news this morning. As you know, three generations of Rawlings have brought distinction and credit to this school.

PETER. Yes, sir.

DUDLEY. Your father, your grandfather and your great-grandfather have all, in their time, been head boy of the school.

PETER. Yes, sir.

DUDLEY. You, yourself, are in line for this privilege when Whitwell leaves the school next year and goes up to Oxford to study forestry. However, Rawlings, I was rather disappointed to hear from Mr. Asprey, the physical training master, that a pair of very valuable gymnasium slippers disappeared from his stock room Tuesday last and reappeared as if by magic in your locker next to a copy of *Busty Beauties Around the World*.

PETER. Yes, sir.

DUDLEY. Well, do you have any explanation for the appearance of these gym shoes in your locker, other than the one that immediately springs to mind?

PETER. No, sir. I wanted the gym shoes, sir, and I took them.

DUDLEY. You wanted the gym shoes, Rawlings, and you took them?

PETER. Yes, sir.

DUDLEY. Good God, man, do you realize what would happen in this world if people took exactly what they wanted?

PETER. Sir . . .

DUDLEY. We'd be living in a sea of anarchy, the whole moral fibre of society would fall apart! You feel you're somebody unique and exempt from these basic laws of human behavior?

PETER. No, sir.

DUDLEY. Do you feel that the ethics of a civilized society should apply to everyone except yourself?

PETER. No, sir.

DUDLEY. Are you some latter-day Hitler, Rawlings, who feels he can annex whatever he wants? Today gym shoes, tomorrow the world! It is my responsibility, Rawlings, to douse the flames of such over-weening ambition, to exorcise this creeping cancer. And you will find, Rawlings, not for me the policy of appeasement. Oh, no! Like Churchill, I will fight you on the beaches, I will fight you in the air, I will repel your doodle bugs, I will snatch your Messerschmidts from the sky! You may gather, Rawlings, there is only one course open to me. I must punish you very severely. I must ask you to bend over this desk and take six of the best.

PETER. Yes, sir. Could I just say one thing, sir?

DUDLEY. Well, come on, Rawlings, out with it. But I'm afraid you'll find that any plea for mercy will fall on deaf ears.

PETER. I did take the slippers, sir, and I deserve to be punished, and you're much older and wiser than I am, sir . . .

DUDLEY. Come on, Rawlings, out with it!

PETER. I'm much bigger than you are, sir, and if you lay a finger on me I'll smash your stupid little face in.

DUDLEY. (*Pause.*) Rawlings, why didn't you tell me all this before?

PETER. Sorry, sir.

DUDLEY. Well, Rawlings, this puts a completely different complexion on the whole thing! Now, Rawlings, I'd like you to accept on behalf of the school, my private collection of *Screw Magazine*, this excellent deck of Acapulco Gold, here's ten pounds, why don't you pop up to the school nurse, present her my compliments and have her give you a deep, relaxing Swedish massage on me . . .

FADE OUT

DUDLEY MOORE

DIE FLABBERGAST

Ich meine Hunste far die Flabbergast
Und Swein-Hunds divein hein Heinst.
Mein is eine veine, is meine,
Mein is eine veine, is meine,
Mein is eine—Ah! (*Screech.*)

Ich meine swein, ach is mein is mein is mein is
mein is mein—Ach!

Mein is a veine, mein is a vein,

Mein is a veine, mein is a vein,

Ich mein ich vein, mein is a vein,

Ich mein ich mit ein mit ein,

Mit ein mit ein mit ein mit ein

Mit ein mit ein mit—Ah—Aaar (*Growl.*)!

(NOTE: The song is sung by one voice, alternating between tenor and soprano range, as in a duet. The words are mainly gibberish, and may be altered to suit the convenience of the singer, who may find certain sounds easier to sing than others. The only words that should be unchanged are "Die Flabbergast.")

FADE OUT

DOWN THE MINE

JUDGE. Yes I could have been a judge but I didn't have the Latin. I never had sufficient Latin for the judging exams; they're very rigorous the judging exams, they're noted for their rigour; people come staggering out of the judging exams shouting "Oh my God, what a rigorous exam"; so I became a minor instead, a coal miner; I managed to get through the mining exams; they're not very rigorous; they only ask you one question; they say "Who are you?" and I got 75% on that. But the trouble is that all the people down the mine are not as intelligent as I am . . . I'm not saying you get a load of riffraff down the mimes. I'm just saying we've got a load of riffraff down my mine; they're very boring conversationalists; all they talk about is what goes on in the mine which

isn't very much; if ever you want to hear a conversation like "Hello, I've just found a lump of coal; have you really? Yes there's no doubt about it, this black substance is coal alright; jolly good, the very thing we're looking for." If you want to hear a conversation like that, then just pop down my mine . . . it goes on all the time. I've often tried to make the conversation a bit more stimulating. I once said to one of my colleagues "have you heard of Marcel Proust?" and he said, "No. I think he must work in some other mine." So I explained that Mr. Proust was a writer who dipped biscuits into his tea and whenever he did that all his past memories came flooding back. So this other fellow said, "Why don't I try that" so he dipped a biscuit in his tea and sure enough all his memories came flooding back . . . a strange look came over his face and he said, "All my memories are flooding back; I can remember coming down the mine one day and I saw a lump of coal and I picked it up and put it on a trolley" and I said, "Is that all you can remember?" and he said, "Yes." It's not enough to keep the mind alive, is it? It must be nice to be a famous writer like Marcel Proust, drinking tea and writing down all you remember . . . then you get into your white sports car and drive along the street shouting out to ladies "Hello lovely lady, I'm a very famous writer, jump into my speedy roadster and I'll take you back to my place and immortalize you." That's why I do a bit of writing on the side. I've written a book about my experiences down the mine. I've called it "My experiences down the Mine" in order to give the public an indication of what the plot is all 'bout. It's about a man who goes down the mine one day and sees a lump of coal quite near him, so he grabs the lump of coal and puts it on a trolley and the trolley wheels down a long

dark tunnel and he never sees it again. That's the story. I think it's a comment on the meaninglessness of life; it's a very short story but it's also extremely boring. I fell asleep the first time I read it through. I took it along to a publisher and he confirmed my opinion; he said it was probably the most boring story he had ever read; and he's not a man who's given to superlatives. He said, "The main trouble with your story is that it lacks everything. You name it, it lacks it, and above all" he said, "it lacks the elements of sex and violence which are so vital to us in these troubled times"; of course he was quite right so I've spiced it up a bit. I've kept to the main story outline but I've changed the title to "Sex and Violence Down the Mine." It's about these three naked women, Beryl, Stella, and Margaret, who are very sexy and violent; and they are wandering about the desert kicking each other in the stomach looking for kicks; they wander along for several days kicking each other; it's very sexy and violent; then, suddenly, Beryl Whittington, who is the leader of the nude women kicks Stella in the teeth and says, "Hello, isn't that a mine shaft over there? . . . why don't we all go down it and do provocative things to each other." So, as one man, the three girls rush down the mine and start throwing lumps of coal at each other in an amazingly sexy and violent way. Quite soon they are all exhausted and completely covered in coal dust, so they lie down and go to sleep. And now comes the interesting twist. A miner, whose character is very closely based on mine, stumbles across the three sleeping bodies, but as they are completely covered in coal dust he mistakes them for lumps of coal. "Aha" he says, "three lumps of coal," and he picks them up and throws them on a trolley that disappears down a long dark tunnel and he never sees

them again. It's a very sad story and it's also very moral. It tries to make the point that if you spend your whole life wandering around in the nude kicking each other and doing sexy things you'll end up as a lump of coal. I think Proust would have been proud of it. Whoops! Did you notice for no apparent reason I suddenly went "Whoops"? It's an impediment I picked up from being down the mine. Whoops! 'Cause one day I was walking along in the dark— Whoops! —and I saw the body of a dead pit pony Whoops! I went in surprise and ever since then I've been going "whoops!" unexpectedly and that's another reason why I couldn't have been a judge. It would destroy the dignity of the Court. One day I might have been up there sentencing away, all dignified and regal in my robes, and I'd have been sentencing the criminal and saying "You have been found guilty of murder and I sentence you to "Whoops!" and you see under the English law, that would have to stand. But all in all, I would much rather have been a judge than a coal miner, because being a miner as soon as you get too old and tired and sick and stupid to do the job properly, you have to go. Well, the very opposite applies to the judges. It's a pity, really, because I've always been after the trappings of great luxury. I really have. And yet all I've got hold of is the trappings of great poverty. I've got hold of the wrong load of trappings and a rotten load of trappings they are.

FADE OUT

ONE LEG TOO FEW

PETER. Miss Rigby! Stella, my love! Would you send in the next auditioner, please. (*Enter DUDLEY hopping*

on one leg. The other is held up by his free hand and concealed under a coat.) Mr. Spiggott, I believe it is.

DUDLEY. Yes—Spiggott's the name, acting's the game. (DUDLEY follows PETER around stage, taps him on shoulder and hops away.) You're it!

PETER. We're not here to play tag, Mr. Spiggott. Now, if you'll settle down for one moment, please. Now, Mr. Spiggott, you are, are you not, auditioning for the role of Tarzan.

DUDLEY. Right.

PETER. Now, Mr. Spiggott, I couldn't help noticing almost immediately that you are a one-legged man.

DUDLEY. You noticed that?

PETER. I noticed that, Mr. Spiggott. When you have been in the business as long as I have, you get to notice these little things almost instinctively. Now, Mr. Spiggott, you, a one-legged man, are applying for the role of Tarzan—a role traditionally associated with a two-legged artiste.

DUDLEY. Correct.

PETER. And yet, you a unidexter, are applying for the role.

DUDLEY. Right.

PETER. A role for which two legs would seem to be the minimum requirement.

DUDLEY. True.

PETER. Well, Mr. Spiggott, need I point out to you with overmuch emphasis where your deficiency lies as regards landing the role?

DUDLEY. Yes, I think you ought to.

PETER. Need I say with too much stress that it is in the leg division that you are deficient.

DUDLEY. The leg division?

PETER. Yes, the leg division, Mr. Spiggott. You are deficient in the leg division. To the tune of one. Your

right leg I like. It's a lovely leg for the role. As soon as I saw it come in. I said, "Hullo. What a lovely leg for the role." I've got nothing against your right leg. The trouble is—neither have you. You fall down on your left.

DUDLEY. You mean it's inadequate?

PETER. Yes, it's inadequate, Mr. Spiggott. And to my mind, the public is just not ready for the sight of a one-legged Tarzan swinging through the jungly tendrils, shouting "Hello, Jane!"

DUDLEY. Oh.

PETER. However, don't despair, Mr. Spiggott. After all, you score over a man with no legs at all.

DUDLEY. Well, I've got twice as many. So there's still hope?

PETER. Of course, there is still hope. If we get no two-legged character actors in here within the next 18 months, there is every chance that you, a unidexter, will be the very sort of person we shall be attempting to contact.

DUDLEY. Oh, thank you. (*Shakes PETER's hand and hops up and down.*)

PETER. Sorry I can't be more definite, but you must understand with the state of the industry today, we can't afford to take any risks whatever . . . (DUDLEY hops off.)

FADE OUT

SOAP OPERA

(*The doorbell rings. PETER goes and opens it. DUDLEY is there, dressed in jeans and a T-shirt.*)

DUDLEY. Hello, blue eyes. (*Enters swishily and sings.*) "There's no Business Like Show Business . . ."

PETER. Excuse me. What can I do for you?

DUDLEY. It's more of a question of what I can do for you, isn't it, love? I'm your new daily, your new Mrs. Mop.

PETER. You're the temporary domestic?

DUDLEY. Yeeeee.

PETER. I . . . I'm sorry, I was expecting the agency to send me a woman.

DUDLEY. (*Laughs.*) Well, you'll have to make do with me then, won't you? Oh, I love your place, I think it's absolutely super.

PETER. Oh, thank you very much.

DUDLEY. You a bachelor?

PETER. Yes, bachelor gay, that's me.

DUDLEY. Me too . . . mm . . . You may have guessed, this isn't my normal sort of work.

PETER. Well, I did get an inkling when you came in through the door.

DUDLEY. No, I'm an actor, actually.

PETER. Oh, an actor.

DUDLEY. Yes. I'm resting between engagements, you know—mind you, not that I don't like this sort of work—I absolutely adore it—because one gets to meet all sorts of interesting people, and I was terribly excited when I was assigned to you, because do you know, I've never met a barrister before. (*Sits on sofa.*)

PETER. Would you mind not sitting on my briefs?

DUDLEY. (*Picks up ribbon.*) —What's this, dear?

PETER. It's the little pink ribbon I tie round my briefs.

DUDLEY. Oh, well, that's our little secret. I suppose being a barrister is rather like being an actor, isn't it?

PETER. I don't really see the connection, no.

DUDLEY. Well. You call it "acting for your client," don't you?

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