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SF PERUSALS

MAN AND BOY

A Play

by Terence Rattigan

SAMUEL FRENCH

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ISBN 978-0-573-11267-6

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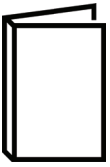
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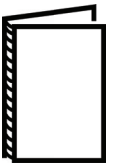
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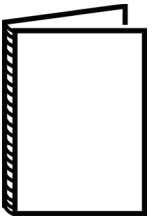
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



(1911–1977)

Born in London on the 10th June 1911, Terence Rattigan was educated at Harrow (Scholar) from 1925 to 1930 and Trinity College, Oxford (History Scholarship) BA to 1933. He served as a flight Lieutenant in the Central Command, RAF from 1940 to 1945. In 1934 he had become a full-time playwright.

His many successful plays include *French Without Tears, After The Dance, Flare Path, Love in Idleness, While The Sun Shines, The Winslow Boy, The Browning Version, Harlequinade, Adventure Story, Who is Sylvia?, The Deep Blue Sea, The Sleeping Prince, Separate Tables, Variation on a Theme, Ross, Man and Boy, A Bequest to the Nation, In Praise to the Nation, Cause Célèbre*.

Terence Rattigan still holds the record of being the only playwright to have notched more than 1000 performances for two separate plays, namely, *French Without Tears* and *While The Sun Shines*.

During the war years, he had three plays running on Shaftesbury Avenue: *Flare Path* at the Apollo, *While The Sun Shines* at the Globe and *Love in Idleness* at the Lyric.

He wrote screenplays of *French Without Tears*, *The Way To The Stars, Journey Together, While The Sun Shines, The Winslow Boy, The Browning Version, The Prince and The Showgirl, Separate Tables, The Sound Barrier*, *The Man Who Loved Redheads, The Deep Blue Sea, The Final Test, The VIPs, The Yellow Rolls Royce, Goodbye Mr Chips, Conduct Unbecoming, A Bequest To The Nation* – and collaborated on *The Quiet Wedding, The Day Will Dawn, English Without Tears, Uncensored, Brighton Rock, Bond Street.* His television plays include: *Heart to Heart, Adventure Story, High Summer, After the Dance* was shown in the performance series on BBC 2 in 1993 and *The Deep Blue*

Sea was recorded for the same series. In 1958 he was awarded a CBE, and in 1971 he became Knight Bachelor. Sir Terence Rattigan died in 1977.

For further information on Terence Rattigan, visit www.terencerattigan.com.

To join the Terence Rattigan Society, visit www.theterencerattigansociety.co.uk.

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FOREWORD BY DAVID SUCHET

I was first offered the role of Gregor Antonescu in *Man and Boy* in 1993. Since then it came my way three more times and on each occasion I declined the offer. However, in January 2004, I was offered the role yet again. And said, "yes".

There are many reasons for turning down a role and surprisingly very few reasons for saying "yes". Up until my final offer I just did not feel sufficient passion for the role, nor did I feel ready to play the kind of irredeemable villain that epitomizes Gregor Antonescu. In January 2004 I was ready on both counts.

Geoffrey Wansell's account of the history of *Man and Boy* in his most interesting biography of Terence Rattigan affected me deeply. Also, the very fact that *Man and Boy* was Rattigan's attempt at a come-back which he considered most important and which completely failed. The wounds he felt as a result of the play's rejection were never healed. The above, coupled with my feelings that the play had more relevance in 2004 than I felt it had in 1964 when it was first performed, also contributed to my feeling passionate about wanting to revive the play. It was in danger of becoming one of Rattigan's lost works. My *raison d'être* as an actor is first and foremost to serve my writers and I felt I wanted to give Terence Rattigan a better deal.

Our production started a British tour in the Autumn of 2004 and subsequently went into the Duchess Theatre for its West End run. This time the play received a rapturous reception. As a result of this, the play is now back in print and will also become part of Terence Rattigan's performance repertoire.

My sincere hope is that one day I will have the great pleasure of sitting amongst the audience enjoying another production of this extraordinary play by Terence Rattigan.

David Suchet

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I first read *Man and Boy* in 2003, trawling through the drama section of the London Library. Of course, by the new millennium, Rattigan's reputation had been reinstated with more revivals than at any time since the nineteen fifties; his plays are back in print; there are three biographies – so I was curious at the neglect of this particular play. Rattigan had considered it his masterpiece, but it had a disappointing critical reception in both London and New York and so far had never been seen again.

I took it to the producer Michael Whitehall, and we agreed that, while flawed, it haunted us, and the fulcrum of the play, intended to be shocking, still kept its potency – a rare thing in period plays. Soon after, David Suchet approached us, saying he had been offered the part three times before (in productions that never happened) but had always turned it down. Now, however, he felt the play – and the part – were too good to remain neglected. I had no doubt that he had the courage to embody Antonescu's dark side unflinchingly, as his predecessor in the role, Charles Boyer, apparently had not. In fact Rattigan said bitterly that he had played the part "like a head waiter". David and I agreed that our mission would be to get *Man and Boy* back into the repertoire.

One of Rattigan's biographers, Michael Darlow, alerted us to the existence often previous drafts of the play. There followed a fascinating period in the British Library, much aided by Curator of Modern Manuscripts, Sally Brown. It seemed to me that some of Rattigan's earliest ideas had been his finest and many of the later changes were probably brought about by commercial pressures. With permission from the Rattigan estate, I compiled a version principally drawn from four early drafts and the final one that played in New York.

I fully expected the shade of Rattigan to rise up and smite me as I directed his rearranged play – but he did not. In fact his own words to Binkie Beaumont seem a plea to posterity to give *Man and Boy* another life: "...will this new play be good or bad? Nothing else matters. Nothing at all. Because, if you...don't like the play...it will still probably be published...and possibly, be read by some historian of the theatre in fifty years time and

pronounced as 'the best work of a fashionable contemporary dramatist: ironically it wasn't performed in his lifetime.' That would be sufficient reward for my labours, even though I, perforce, had to read the review in heaven."

I hope he did look down and read his reviews: they were marvellous. And above all, I hope *Man and Boy* will now take its rightful place in the Rattigan canon and receive many more revivals.

Maria Aitken, London, February 2006.

MAN AND BOY

The Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford, production, presented by Thelma Holt, Bill Kenwright and Nica Burns for Theatreshare pic and Michael Whitehall, at the Duchess Theatre, London, 2005 with following cast:

CAROL PENN	Jennifer Lee Jellicorse
BASIL ANTHONY	Ben Silverstone
SVEN JOHNSON	David Yelland
GREGOR ANTONESCU	David Suchet
MARK HERRIES	Colin Stinton
DAVID BEESTON	Will Huggins
COUNTESS ANTONESCU (FLORENCE)	Helen Grace

Directed by Maria Aitken
Designed by Simon Higlett
Lightning by Mick Hughes
Sound and music by Howard Davidson

CHARACTERS

CAROL PENN
BASIL ANTHONY
GREGOR ANTONESCU
SVEN JOHNSON
MARK HERRIES
DAVID BEESTON
COUNTESS ANTONESCU

The action of the play takes place in a basement apartment in Greenwich Village, New York

Time: continuous, roughly between 6p.m. and 8.30p.m. on a July night in 1934

ACT I

1934. A summer's evening about six p.m.

BASIL ANTHONY*'s basement apartment in Greenwich Village, New York, a rather sleazy neighbourhood.*

There are two rooms. One room is a barely furnished living room with a kitchenette. The front door opens directly from the living room and steps lead up to street level. The other is the adjoining bedroom which has a door leading to a shower and a lavatory.

A girl, **CAROL PENN***, lies in a bed under a sheet and coverlet. She is smoking a cigarette. In the shower, a boy,* **BASIL ANTHONY***, in a state of semi-dress is gargling. His hair is still dripping from the shower. He finishes gargling, rubs a towel over his hair and then begins to comb it.* **CAROL** *puts out her cigarette and looks at a watch on the bedside table.*

CAROL *is American.* **BASIL** *speaks with an English accent.*

CAROL Hey, do you know it's nearly six? Are you going to be in there all day?

No reply.

I've never known anyone take longer showers than you. There's something symbolical in washing yourself as clean as that. Like the play I'm in you haven't even bothered to see. That's symbolical. So symbolical it's off on Saturday. Where's my bathrobe?

BASIL *(moving in to the bedroom) Your* bathrobe?

CAROL My usual.

BASIL I hung it up.

BASIL *takes the bathrobe off a hook on the wall and throws it to* **CAROL.** *He gets dressed during the following.*

I thought the Federal Theatre Project had promised you a minimum three weeks.

CAROL *(going in to the shower)* They didn't promise us anything. They just said how lucky we were not to be starving like all the other actors in New York, and how we all ought to get on our knees every night to President Roosevelt and the Federal Theatre Project etcetera, etcetera. For a week's run on Second Avenue I should get on my knees?

BASIL You should.

CAROL What?

BASIL *(shouting back)* You should get on your knees to Equity and President Roosevelt and the Federal Theatre Project and the W.P.A. etcetera, etcetera.

CAROL But you hate President Roosevelt.

BASIL I don't hate him. I just don't happen to think he's going far enough fast enough, that's all.

CAROL You goddamn Bolshie.

BASIL Ok, so I'm a goddamn Bolshie. I'm going to the corner to get a paper.

CAROL Why?

BASIL Because I want to see the news, that's why.

CAROL *(still in shower area)* What's gotten into you this afternoon? You're acting like you got fired or something. You haven't, have you?

BASIL Haven't what?

CAROL That's just what I mean. All afternoon you've been acting like I wasn't here.

BASIL Well, I don't know about you but I've had rather a good afternoon.

CAROL No. No complaints about that. *(Pause)* You haven't got fired, have you?

BASIL *(going towards the living room)* No. As a matter of fact, I got a raise.

CAROL No kidding!

BASIL I'm up to twenty-six dollars a week now.

CAROL Bloated capitalist. And just for playing the piano in a crummy joint.

BASIL It's not a crummy joint. You thought it very high class, remember? And now I'm playing three times a night – they've added a dinner session.

CAROL Why didn't you tell me?

BASIL I didn't think of it.

CAROL That's what I mean. This afternoon you're not with me.

BASIL *(at the front door)* I'm not with you now.

BASIL *exits.*

CAROL, *from the shower, begins to sing. The telephone rings.* **CAROL**, *bath-towel wrapped round her, comes to answer it.*

CAROL Hallo, Gramercy 73961 ...No, but he'll be back in a moment. Shall I get him to call you? Or would you like to leave—

The telephone is abruptly disconnected.

—a message, you heel.

CAROL *returns to the shower and sings. Unseen, she is dressing as far as a slip petticoat.*

BASIL *enters through the front door reading a newspaper.*

(calling from the shower) Did I hear you come in?

BASIL Yes.

CAROL You must have run.

BASIL, *not answering, finishes what he is reading and then impatiently stuffs the whole paper into the wastepaper basket. He pours himself a stiff bourbon and water from the drinks trolley.*

(continuing blithely) Can I tell you something? It's not just this afternoon you're not with me. In six months you never have been with me – all that much. *(She comes out of the shower wearing the bathrobe over her slip)*

BASIL I don't know what you mean by that.

CAROL Today you don't tell me you've got a raise. So when have you ever told me anything about yourself, except that you're English and play the piano and haven't got any folks—

BASIL I'm not English.

CAROL What are you then?

BASIL American.

CAROL Sure. All of two months American. What were you then? Listen, I can tell an English accent, honey. I see Ronald Coleman pictures...

CAROL *moves into the living room at the exact moment that* **BASIL**, *having finished his drink, is getting another.*

Yeah. That's my Basil.

BASIL It's my whisky if I want to drink it.

CAROL Sure. It's your life too if you want to shorten it.

BASIL You exaggerate abominably.

CAROL Exaggerate abominably! Gee, I go for the way you talk. *(She points to his drink)* How many does that make?

BASIL We're not married yet.

CAROL *Yet? (She kisses him)*

BASIL *returns the kiss.*

Does that mean you haven't finally turned me down?

BASIL We haven't enough money to get married.

CAROL Come the end of the Depression, I'll be keeping you. *(She spots the newspaper in the basket)* Unless you keep up this millionaire stuff of throwing papers away. It's today's, isn't it? I haven't even seen it, I would have gone and bought another—

BASIL There wasn't anything in it. *(He finishes his drink and puts the glass down)*

CAROL *is staring at the headline.*

CAROL Wasn't anything in it? This is serious, isn't it? If this guy Antonescu crashes, I mean?

BASIL Yes.

CAROL *(going to the bedroom)* He's the greatest, isn't he?

BASIL Yes.

CAROL Didn't he save the pound or something?

BASIL No.

CAROL Some currency he saved.

BASIL The franc in 1926.

CAROL *(shrugging off her bathrobe and stepping into a dress)* So he's the one who rescued Europe after the war?

BASIL Yes.

CAROL If he goes down, we'll all be out of work. I suppose you're delighted.

BASIL D-delighted?

CAROL *(sitting on the bed and putting on shoes)* You want the capitalist system to crash, don't you? Put the radio on, honey.

BASIL *puts on the radio . We hear the strains of Guy Lombardo.* **BASIL** *picks up his abandoned drink.*

BASIL Not necessarily *want* it to crash. I just know it's going to, that's all, and probably very soon. Certainly before the thirties are out. And when it does, there'll be a better system to take it's place.

CAROL *(applying lipstick)* So you're delighted if Antonescu goes the way of the rest – Insull, Stavisky...

BASIL I'm not d-delighted—

CAROL Why not? He's a capitalist, isn't he? Zip me up, will you?

BASIL *(going in to the bedroom)* B-but a rather d-different kind of capitalist. He a sort of v-visionary – a Keynesian economist really...

CAROL What's with the stammer all of a sudden? *(She takes the glass from his hand)* Looks like you've had enough of that, honey.

BASIL *allows her to take it.*

Why do you do it?

No reply.

Why do you dislike yourself so much?

She draws him down to sit beside her on the bed, puts her arms around him. No reply.

You're the only person in the world who does, you know. And me, frankly, I love you.

No reply.

I know you need me. What are you so scared of?

On the radio we hear "Six p.m. BULOVA. Bulova Watch Time. Every hour on the hour, the New York Times brings you important news bulletins."

BASIL *makes a move towards the living room to turn the radio off.*

No. Let's hear it.

On the radio: "All day sensational rumours regarding the impending collapse of the financial empire of Gregor Antonescu, Roumanian-born radio and oil king, have been coming in minute by minute. It has been hard to separate fact from fiction, but this much is known.".

Come back here. It was kind of nice the way we were.

BASIL *comes back and sits beside her on the bed.*

During the following, **SVEN JOHNSON** *silently enters through the unlocked front door, which he closes carefully behind him. He is an elegantly dressed man of middle-age, carrying a briefcase. He listens impassively to the voice of the radio announcer.*

On the radio: "The crisis began late last night when first reports hit Wall Street that a merger planned between one of Antonescu's concerns, Manson Radios, with the great combine American Electric, has failed. Today a wave of selling has flooded the market and stockmarkets all over the world have reported panic unloading of all Antonescu shares. The crash, if it should come, will be much the biggest in financial history.".

What'd I tell you? Poor guy. The poor guy.

BASIL *(suddenly fierce)* Don't be so sure.

On the radio: "The international banker, Mr J.P. Morgan, said an hour ago that Antonescu had undoubtedly overextended himself with loans to many European countries and the failure of Antonescu's merger with American Electric was merely the last straw – a straw that not only has shown which way the wind is blowing, but has also, perhaps, broken the camel's back."

CAROL He's mixing his metaphors a bit, isn't he?

On the radio: "Of the financier himself, Gregor Antonescu, so called Saviour and mystery man of Europe – nothing has been heard since he was photographed leaving his Long Island mansion for the Antonescu Building on Wall Street early this morning. But there have been several rumours as to his whereabouts – none of them confirmed as yet."

SVEN *has grown impatient and abruptly turns off the radio. In the bedroom,* **BASIL** *and* **CAROL** *look at each other, puzzled.* **SVEN** *turns to the bedroom.*

SVEN *(calling gently)* Vassily?

BASIL *jumps to his feet and stands stiffly, making no move towards the door.*

CAROL Who's that?

SVEN *(calling, with more authority)* Vassily?

BASIL *now moves towards the door very slowly. It is plain to us and to* **CAROL** *that he knows the owner of the voice.*

CAROL Who is it?

BASIL *doesn't reply. He may not even have heard her. He goes into the living room, staring at his visitor. During the following,* **CAROL** *moves to the living room doorway.*

SVEN Good evening, Vassily.

BASIL *(at length)* Get out. You're not wanted here. Get out.

SVEN Could we talk in private?

BASIL No, because we're not going to talk at all.

SVEN You mustn't try and use violence, dear boy.

BASIL You got the thugs outside?

SVEN Your manners haven't improved. Sergei and William have been promoted since your time. William is even President of a bank—

BASIL But they still carry guns?

SVEN These are violent times. You must know how many attempts have been made on the life of— *(He looks at* **CAROL***)* our mutual friend. Anyway, they're not outside. Tonight I'm the bodyguard.

BASIL You're not going to use force on me...

SVEN No, of course not. If it gives you pleasure to hit me, I shall simply stand here and let you. *(With a faint smile)* Perhaps *lie* here, after you've done your worst. *(He eyes* **BASIL***'s slight figure and smiles again)* But I'm not leaving this apartment until I've said what I have to say.

BASIL *stands hesitant.*

(after a few moments, he nods at **CAROL***)* Would you introduce me?

CAROL I'm Carol Penn.

SVEN I'm Sven Johnson. How do you do. I have some matters of great urgency to talk over with Vassily here—

CAROL Basil?

SVEN Basil? Yes. Stupid of me. With Mr Anthony here.

BASIL At least you've got the surname right.

SVEN Yes. I should have had the Christian name too.

BASIL And you knew the address?

SVEN Oh yes. That's been known for a long time. Also the phone number. I called earlier and having established you were here, I thought I'd better come and explain things myself. *(To* **CAROL***)* Miss Penn, I wonder if I could trouble you—

BASIL She's not going. You can say what you want to in front of her.

SVEN Won't that embarrass you – Basil?

BASIL Do you think she hasn't guessed already?

CAROL Well, frankly, I hadn't – but well – maybe I'm beginning to get thoughts I shouldn't – maybe, in fact, I'd better get – the hell—

BASIL No. Stay here. Don't leave me alone. *(To* **SVEN***)* All right. Tell me. What does father want?

SVEN Just a shelter for the night.

BASIL God – he must have his hideouts—

SVEN No. Only known places of residence and there are reporters watching all of them. This – situation – wasn't envisaged, you see—

BASIL Christ – it should have been. I envisaged it five years ago – when I was eighteen. And if you – and the great master-minds round him – didn't see this thing coming—

SVEN Your father inspires great faith, you know.

BASIL Sure I know. In everyone else, but not in me.

SVEN You were always such a pessimist, Vassily.

BASIL A paper empire. It stood out a mile, even then.

SVEN Currency is paper, you know. And any piece of paper signed by your father has always been far more valuable than currency. We haven't dropped dividends – even in '30 and '31.

BASIL Dividends paid out of capital—

SVEN A bit of shifting of assets from time to time. But all quite sound – essentially sound.

BASIL *(scornfully) Sound*? It looks like it now, doesn't it?

SVEN *(with conviction)* We'll come through, you know.

BASIL You don't believe that, do you?

SVEN Yes. I believe it.

BASIL *(bitterly)* Because father says so?

SVEN I know of no better reason. Do you?

BASIL Yes. Facts. *(He points to the radio)* What I heard tonight.

SVEN We went through something almost as bad over the Hoover moratorium. It only took him a week to straighten that out.

BASIL Then why doesn't he face the press and tell them that in a week's time he'll be back again – on top of the world?

SVEN I've no doubt he will, in due course. Tonight he's very tired. He hasn't slept in three nights, you know.

BASIL I wonder he's slept any night at all in the last ten years.

SVEN He's tired to death, Vassily. I've been with him every minute since the crisis broke, and I know. It's I who stopped him facing the press today. It's a terrible strain on a man to have to smile and smile—

BASIL And be a villain.

SVEN That came out very aptly. It quite reminded me of the old days. But your father isn't a villain, Vassily – and you know it.

BASIL Then why is he behaving like one now? Why is he hiding out like some common little gangster on the run? Why is he in such straits that he even wants to come here?

SVEN I don't think you've ever understood what he feels about you, Vassily—

BASIL No. I haven't – ever – understood—

SVEN Your leaving him was the greatest shock of his life—

BASIL Not the greatest. Not even a very big shock. But it must have been a shock all right. The emperor had to acknowledge a defeat. A small one – but a defeat—

SVEN You've grown very cynical in your five years.

BASIL Grown up, perhaps.

SVEN I don't think it's grown-up to deny that there might be other reasons for a father to feel unhappy at being deserted by his only son. However, don't let's argue. At this moment he wants shelter. And are you going to refuse it?

CAROL Where is Basil's – Vassily's – father now?

SVEN In that square, two blocks away. I don't know what it's called—

CAROL Washington Square. Isn't that dangerous?

SVEN No. It's getting dark. He's sitting on a bench. No one would believe—

CAROL You're goddamn right no one would believe. A park bench! *(To* **BASIL***)* Your idea he should stay there all night?

BASIL *(wildly)* There *must* be places – there are small hotels – Turkish baths—

CAROL He'd be recognised for sure. That face has been on the front page of every paper these last three days. Plenty of times before that, too.

SVEN Besides, it's vital for him to use the telephone tonight, and there is no other place that is safe. *(To* **BASIL***)* That is all quite apart from the paternal reasons I told you—

BASIL *(interrupting harshly)* Leave out the paternal reasons. All right. He can have this apartment for tonight. But I won't be here.

SVEN He'll be very sad to hear it.

BASIL Tell him I have to go and work.

SVEN Ah yes. At the *Green Hat.*

BASIL *(furiously)* Sure, at the *Green Hat.* I suppose he knows what I get paid there, too? Who my friends are? What music I play?

SVEN *(faintly amused)* I should think it's all in the dossier—

BASIL Dossier! Oh, my God! The Antonescu Intelligence system. I might have guessed. Here. *(He throws* **SVEN** *a key)* Give that to the saviour of postwar Europe with my blessing. Tell him I won't disturb him – sorry, *upset* him by coming in later. I'll sleep out.

SVEN *shrugs and nods. He turns to leave through the front door and moves up the steps.*

(shouting after him) And keep him out of here for ten minutes. That's all I ask. Just ten minutes and I'll be clear.

SVEN I'll tell him. He'll be sad.

SVEN *exits.*

BASIL *moves swiftly to the bedroom, puts on a bow tie and dinner jacket.*

CAROL *(following him, from the doorway)* I don't think you should run out.

BASIL *(savagely)* Oh, don't you? God – you don't know—

CAROL No, obviously I don't. But I don't think you should run out now. *(Coming in)* You won't feel too good about it tomorrow.

BASIL *(bitterly)* You mean, "I'll hate myself in the morning"?

CAROL Sure. Things can be true you know, even if they do say them in the movies... *(Shrugging)* You're European and maybe I'm just a sentimental American. But the guy seems to be in trouble, he seems to be your father, and he seems to need help.

BASIL Oh, for Christ's sake, shut up.

CAROL You could have told me. I can be trusted. I wish you had told me.

BASIL I couldn't tell anyone. Not anyone. Not even you. Get it?

CAROL Yes.

BASIL I'd better go. Coming?

CAROL *(tidying the bed)* Hold on a second. Look at the bed, we don't want him to get the wrong idea.

BASIL *laughs.*

What's so funny?

BASIL Wrong idea. He thinks I'm queer anyway.

CAROL *(finishing the bed)* No kidding. Were you ever? I mean – schoolboy stuff?

BASIL No.

CAROL Then why—

BASIL You've said it sometimes. I'm too soft. Come on.

CAROL *(peering at him)* Do you have any eye-wash?

BASIL Yes.

He goes to the bathroom and we see him apply eyewash and towel.

CAROL *(keeping it matter-of-fact)* Your mother alive?

BASIL No. She died when I was two.

CAROL Tough. Wasn't she a famous actress? Didn't I read somewhere—

BASIL She was a French chorus girl. A stripper, if you must know. Yes. They had them – in Bucharest music halls – even in those days – only they didn't call it stripping, they just came on and stripped and stayed stripped.

Pause.

CAROL Your father tell you that?

BASIL Who else?

Pause.

CAROL He married again, didn't he?

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