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ME AND MY GIRL

A Musical Play

Book and lyrics by L. Arthur Rose and
Douglas Furber

Music by Noel Gay

Book revised by Stephen Fry

Contributions to revisions by Mike Ockrent

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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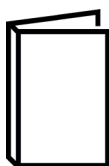
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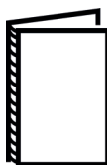


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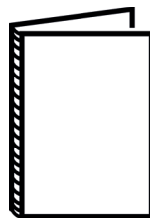
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Billing must be substantially as follows:

(Name of Producer)

presents

ME AND MY GIRL

Book and lyrics by
L. Arthur Rose
and Douglas Furber

Music by
Noel Gay

Book revised by
Stephen Fry

Contributions to revisions by
Mike Ockrent

Originally produced at the Adelphi Theatre, London, by Richard Armitage

Subsequently produced at the Marquis Theatre, New York City, by Richard Armitage, Terry Allen Kramer, James M. Nederlander and Stage Promotions Ltd & Co.

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ME AND MY GIRL

First presented in this version at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre by Richard Armitage for Farworlds Ltd; later transferred to the Adelphi Theatre, London, opening on 12th February 1985 with the following cast:

BILL SNIBSON	Robert Lindsay
SALLY SMITH	Emma Thompson
MARIA, DUCHESS OF DENE	Ursula Smith
SIR JOHN TREMAYNE	Frank Thornton
LADY JAQUELINE CARSTONE	Susannah Fellows
THE HON GERALD BOLINGBROKE	Robert Longden
HERBERT PARCHESTER	Roy Macready
SIR JASPER TRING	Geoffrey Andrews
CHARLES, THE BUTLER	Richard Caldicot
LORD BATTERSBY	Bruce Graham
LADY BATTERSBY	Denise Hirst
MRS BROWN/COOK	Myra Sands
BOB BARKING	Paul Grunert
JIM MATTHEWS/THOMAS DE HAREFORD	Robert Cotton
TOM CRANE	Michael Kirk
MRS WORTHINGTON-WORTHINGTON	Chris Melville
LADY BRIGHTON	Cynthia Morey
CONSTABLE	David Alder
LORD WILMOT/SIMON DE HAREFORD	Kevin A. J. Ranson
SOPHIA STAINSLEY-ASHERTON	Anita Pashley
ALF (BARMAN)/LORD FRENCH	Peter Sugden
COCKNEY GIRL/SERVING MAID	Rosemarie Ford
SERVING MAID	Caroline O'Connor
SERVING MAID	Susie Lee-Hayward
HOUSEKEEPER	Teresa Wellard
TELEGRAPH BOY	Peter Martindale
LADY DAMMING	Marisa Campbell
MISS MILES	Frances Richardson
ADRIAN HAREFORD/BARMAN	Ben Heaf
JONATHAN HAREFORD/BARMAN	David O'Brien
with Howard Rayner, Graeme Metcalfe, Antony Simons, Mark Hutchinson, Jenny Scott-Maiden, Greg Shand	

Directed by Mike Ockrent
Decor by Martin Johns
Lighting by Chris Ellis

CHARACTERS

LORD BATTERSBY

LADY BATTERSBY

SIR JASPER TRING

JAQUIE

CHARLES: a butler

GERALD

PARCHESTER

DUCHESS

SIR JOHN

BILL SNIBSON

SALLY SMITH

MAJOR DOMO

CHEF

COOK

FARMERS

BARMAN

PIANIST

LORD DAMMING

LADY DISS

LORD FRENCH

THE HONOURABLE MAY MILES

MRS WORTHINGTON-WORTHINGTON

LADY BRIGHTON

MRS STAINSLEY-ASHERTON

PEARLY KING AND QUEEN

BOY

MRS BROWN

BOB BARKING

COCKNEY GIRL

CONSTABLE

GUESTS, SERVANTS, COCKNEYS

The action of the play takes place in and around Hareford Hall, Hampshire; Mayfair and Lambeth.

Time—the later 1930s

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES AND MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT I

1 Overture (Instrumental)

Scene One May fair/On the road to Hareford/Hareford
Hall. A summer's evening

2 A Weekend At Hareford (Guests, Jaquie, Gerald)

3 Thinking Of No-one But Me (Gerald, Jaquie)

4 The Family Solicitor (Parchester, Family)

5 Me And My Girl (Bill, Sally)

Scene Two The Kitchen

6 An English Gentleman (Charles, Staff)

6A An English Gentleman (Reprise) (Servants)

Scene Three The Drawing-room

7 You Would If You Could (Jaquie, Bill)

8 Hold My Hand (Bill, Sally)

8A The Family Solicitor (Reprise) (Parchester)

9 Scene Change: Underscore (Instrumental)

Scene Four The Hareford Arms

10 Once You Lose Your Heart (Sally)

Scene Five The Hareford Hall exterior

11 Preparation Fugue (Instrumental)

12 The Lambeth Walk (Bill, Sally, Pearly King and
Queen, Cockneys, Aristocrats)

13 Entr'acte (Instrumental)

ACT II

Scene One The Garden of Hareford Hall

14 The Sun Has Got His Hat On (Gerald, Jaquie,
Guests, Servants)

15 Take It On The Chin (Sally)

15A Playoff (Instrumental)

Scene Two The Library

- 15B British Grenadiers** (Instrumental)
- 15C British Grenadiers** (Instrumental)
- 16 Once You Lose Your Heart (Reprise)** (Sally)
- 17 Song of Hareford** (Duchess, Ancestors)
- 17A Song of Hareford: Playoff** (Instrumental)
- 17B The Family Solicitor (Reprise)** (Parchester, Bill, Sir John)
- 18 Love Makes The World Go Round** (Bill, Sir John, Ancestors)

Scene Three Capstan Street, Lambeth

- 19 Lambeth Underscore** (Instrumental)
- 20 Leaning On A Lamppost** (Bill)
- 20A Leaning On A Lamppost: Tag** (Bill)

Scene Four Hareford HaLL; as ACT I Scene One

- 21 The Hunt Ball** (Instrumental)
- 22 Sally's Entrance** (Instrumental)

Scene Five As Act II Scene Four

- 23 Love Makes The World Go Round (Reprise)/
Me And My Girl (Reprise)** (Chorus, Bill, Sir John, Gerald, Sally, Duchess, Jaquie)
- 24 The Lambeth Walk (Reprise)** (All)
- 25 Leaning On A Lamppost (Reprise)** (All)
- 26 The Lambeth Walk (Reprise)** (All)

The music for *Me and My Girl* is available on hire from Samuel French Ltd.

ACT I

MUSIC 1: “OVERTURE” – Instrumental

Scene One

Mayfair/On the road to Hareford/Hareford Hall. A summer's evening.

The curtain rises.

From a sign on a lamppost we learn that we are in Mayfair. In the road is a large open car which is made up of items of luggage; the guests are grouped in and around it. A London policeman stands nearby.

MUSIC 2: “A WEEKEND AT HAREFORD”

LADY 1

THE SEASON IN LONDON HAS STARTED TO BORE

ENSEMBLE

THERE'S NOTHING TO DO THERE YOU'VE NOT DONE BEFORE

MAN

THE PEOPLE ARE TIRESOME

ENSEMBLE

THE PARTIES A CHORE

WE JUST COULDN'T STAY THERE FOR ONE MINUTE MORE.

THE WEEKENDS IN LONDON HAVE LOST ALL THEIR FUN

NOW WIMBLEDON'S OVER, THE TEST MATCH IS DONE

NOW HENLEY HAS FINISHED AND ASCOT HAS RUN

IT'S TIME FOR THE COUNTRY, IT'S TIME FOR THE SUN

*The car starts up and the guests are en route to Hareford.
The lamppost fades into the distance, the policeman is
left behind.*

THERE ISN'T ANY DOUBT ABOUT
THE BEST PLACE WE KNOW
IT'S HAREFORD HALL IN HAMPSHIRE
WHERE THE SMART PEOPLE GO
IF THE DUCHESS DOES INVITE YOU
THEN YOU'RE TOP OF THE TREE
THANK GOODNESS, THANK GOODNESS,
SHE DID WRITE TO ME
SHE DID WRITE TO ME

THE ATMOSPHERE WILL LIGHTEN
WHEN WE ALL TAKE THE AIR
AND EVERYTHING WILL BRIGHTEN
WHEN WE FIND OURSELVES THERE

*The car arrives outside the gates to Hareford Hall. The
guests dismount and the luggage is quickly disposed of
by the staff and the guests.*

YOU'LL FIND NO-ONE WILL FORCE YOU
TO WAKE UP AT DAWN
THERE'S BREAKFAST IN BED AND
THERE'S LUNCH ON THE LAWN
AND IF THERE ARE INCHES
YOU'D LIKE TO WORK OFF
THERE'S SWIMMING, THERE'S CROQUET
THERE'S TENNIS AND GOLF
WITH NO EQUIVOCATION
WE CAN ALL RECOMMEND
THE NOBLE INSTITUTION OF
THE HAREFORD WEEKEND
IT HAS ITS SOCIAL EQUAL
NOWHERE ELSE IN THE LAND
THERE'S NO OTHER HOME QUITE SO STATELY AND GRAND
SO STATELY AND GRAND

The gates open to reveal the exterior of Hareford Hall.

THE ATMOSPHERE HAS HEIGHTENED
 NOW WE'RE NEAR HAREFORD HALL
 THE YOUNGER GUESTS ARE FRIGHTENED
 WHO'VE NOT BEEN HERE AT ALL

The doors of the Hall open and LORD and LADY BATTERSBY, and SIR JASPER TRING, emerge to greet their guests. GERALD looks out of an upstairs window.

BUT YOU'RE WELCOME SO LONG AS
 YOU KEEP TO THE RULES
 THE DUCHESS HAS NEVER
 BEEN PARTIAL TO FOOLS
 BUT REALLY SO LONG AS
 YOU KNOW WHAT IS DONE
 YOU'RE HAPPY ENJOYING
 YOUR PLACE IN THE SUN.

The house revolves to display the interior of Hareford Hall. There are ancestral portraits on the walls, and a suit of armour to one side of the front entrance. The room is furnished with two long tables, set as for a grand buffet, a number of dining chairs, and an occasional table, with a vase of flowers, a newspaper and a letter rack. Decanters of whisky, brandy and other drinks are in evidence, also a box of cigarettes.

The servants distribute food and drinks during the following.

JAQUIE and **CHARLES** are standing on the steps up to the front doors, and **GERALD** paces above them on the balcony.

FOR A WEEKEND AT HAREFORD
 IS SIMPLY DIVINE
 THE PEOPLE, THE PARTIES,
 THE FOOD AND THE WINE

THERE'S LEISURE AND PLEASURE
FOR EVERYONE
YOU'RE HAPPY ENJOYING
YOUR PLACE IN THE SUN

JAQUIE

IT DOES SEEM SUCH A PITY THAT
THEY CAN'T FIND THE HEIR
THE FAMILY SOLICITOR
HAS LOOKED EVERYWHERE

MEN

IT'S RUMOURED AT THE MOMENT
THAT HE'S TEARING AROUND

WOMEN

THE DUCHESS DEMANDS
THAT THE HEIR SHALL BE FOUND
THAT THE HEIR SHALL BE FOUND

GERALD

LISTEN EVERYBODY
FOR THE NEWS WILL SOON BE ROUND
THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

PARCHESTER, *the Family Solicitor, crosses the balcony
in front of GERALD.*

HAS RUN THE HEIR TO GROUND
THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT
THERE ISN'T ANY SNAG
HE'S DUG HIM OUT OF SOMEWHERE
HE'S GOT HIM IN THE BAG

I'VE SEEN HIM, I'VE SEEN HIM, HE'S HERE AND AT ALMOST
ANY MOMENT—

ENSEMBLE

ALMOST ANY MOMENT?

GERALD

ANY BLESSED MOMENT HE'LL APPEAR.

JAQUIE

IS HE DARK?

LADY 2

IS HE FAIR?

MEN

DO YOU THINK WE SHALL CARE
FOR THE NEW LORD HAREFORD?

LADY 2

IS HE SHORT?

JAQUIE

IS HE TALL?

MAIDS

DO YOU THINK WE SHALL FALL
FOR THE NEW LORD HAREFORD?

MEN

WON'T YOU TELL US IF YOU CAN
WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MAN.

MAIDS

IS HE WHAT WE ALL EXPECT?

LORD BATTERSBY

IS HE CIRCUMSPECT?

LADY 3

IS HE WEAK?

JAQUIE

IS HE STRONG?

CHARLES

DOES HE REALLY BELONG?

ALL

IS HE ALL HE SHOULD BE?

GERALD

WELL VERY SOON WE WILL SEE HIM.

ALL

VERY SOON WE SHALL SEE.

The party spirit dissolves now and the servants start clearing away some of the plates and empty glasses.

Most of the guests go, leaving one or two chatting, whilst JAQUIE and GERALD are closeted together.

JAQUIE So. Parchester's found the heir. What do you know about him, Gerald?

GERALD Nothing at all. Except that he's alive and kicking, worse luck for me.

JAQUIE He's going to be rather a rich man, isn't he?

GERALD This rather dashes our chances of scooping up the Hareford "Millions" for ourselves, doesn't it?

JAQUIE Possibly.

GERALD Jaquie, what are we going to do?

JAQUIE Well, you could get a job.

GERALD A what?

JAQUIE You know. Work.

GERALD Work? Jaquie please! Don't be disgusting. Good lord! Me, work! Disgrace the family name? Get up before noon? Earn one's living? You must be off your chump. There must be better ways of raising money than that.

JAQUIE (*holding out her engagement ring*) Well, you could try selling this.

GERALD But Jaquie—that's our engagement ring!

JAQUIE Sorry darling, but I can't afford to mix business with pleasure.

GERALD You can't! You won't! You couldn't!

She hands him the ring.

You have!

JAQUIE We live in a commercial age, Gerald. A girl must look after herself. If Lord Hareford is going to get the money, then I'm going to get Lord Hareford.

GERALD Well dash it! You've bally well gone and broken my bally heart.

MUSIC 3: "THINKING OF NO-ONE BUT ME"

I ONCE HAD A NOTION THAT WE'D GET ALONG
I STILL HAVE THE NOTION BUT MAYBE I'M WRONG
THE FEMALE EMOTION WILL THRIVE ON—I LEARN—
A LITTLE INVESTMENT

JAQUIE

—AND PLENTY OF RETURN
ME I'M FOR THE TOP OF THE TREE
JUST YOU LOOK ON AND YOU'LL SEE
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME

I WANT ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY
I'LL MAKE MY LIMIT THE SKY
THIS IS HOORAY AND GOODBYE

WHILE I'M YOUNG AND HEALTHY
I'LL FIND SOMEONE WEALTHY
SOME RICH CITY PRIZE
WITH RINGS ON HIS FINGERS

GERALD

AND UNDER HIS EYES

JAQUIE

ME —JUST YOU LOOK UP AND YOU'LL SEE
ME ON THE TOP OF THE TREE
THINKING OF NO-ONE BUT ME

I'LL MAKE MEN SO FOND THEIR PULSES WILL STIR
AND I'LL BE THE BLONDE THAT THE FELLOWS PREFER
THE PAST THAT I CLUNG TO IS NOW ON THE WING
DON'T CARE WHERE I'M FLUNG TO
I'M GOING TO HAVE MY FLING

ME—I'M FOR THE TOP OF THE TREE
JUST YOU LOOK ON AND YOU'LL SEE

GERALD

WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME?

JAQUIE

I—WANT ALL THAT MONEY CAN BUY
I'LL MAKE MY LIMIT THE SKY
THIS IS HOORAY AND GOODBYE
WHILE I'M YOUNG AND HEALTHY
I'LL FIND SOMEONE WEALTHY
SOME BIG CITY MAN—

GERALD

WHO'LL CANCEL THE CONTRACT AS SOON AS HE CAN!

JAQUIE

ME—JUST YOU LOOK UP AND YOU'LL SEE
ME ON THE TOP OF THE TREE
THINKING OF NOTHING OF NO-ONE BUT,
NOTHING OF NO-ONE BUT ME!

The guests exit. As they do so:

LORD BATTERSBY enters, heading for the whisky decanter.

LADY BATTERSBY arrives and **LORD BATTERSBY** is abruptly halted in his tracks. **SIR JASPER** enters and **PARCHESTER** comes in through the front doors.

LADY BATTERSBY Frederic!

LORD BATTERSBY Yes Clara?

LADY BATTERSBY Not a drop.

LORD BATTERSBY No Clara.

LADY BATTERSBY Ah, Mr Parchester.

PARCHESTER Good-afternoon, Lady Battersby, Lord Battersby.

LORD BATTERSBY What's all this about an heir?

SIR JASPER Eh?

PARCHESTER Well—I—

LADY BATTERSBY Who is he?

SIR JASPER Eh?

LORD BATTERSBY Where is he?

LORD and LADY BATTERSBY *bombard PARCHESTER with questions.*

JAQUIE Hallo, Mummy!

The DUCHESS enters, followed by CHARLES.

The others fall silent.

DUCHESS Good-afternoon, Sir Jasper, Freddy, Clara, Mr Parchester.

PARCHESTER Your Grace.

DUCHESS (*looking around*) Where is Sir John?

GERALD I passed him in the hallway, trying to recover from the shock we've all had.

The sound of barking is heard, off.

SIR JOHN *enters.*

SIR JOHN Get off, you flap-eared idiots! Damn those poodles of yours, Maria—they take an unhealthy interest in my ankles.

CHARLES *exits.*

Everyone sits.

DUCHESS Well, now that we're all gathered, Mr Parchester has some news which affects us all.

SIR JOHN Yes, I've heard all about it. He's found the heir.

PARCHESTER Now you will all be aware that the last Earl of Hareford contracted an unfortunate alliance in his youth. They soon parted and she died. There were rumours of a

son however, and Lord Hareford's will had to provide for the possibility of his one day turning up. I have to tell you that it is quite certain that he has turned up. The will is insistent that the heir must be a person fit and proper to assume his position at Hareford. Otherwise he cannot inherit, but is granted a generous annuity on which to live in retirement.

GERALD Yes, yes, but how do we decide whether he is fit and proper?

SIR JOHN Well, what's his club?

ALL Hear, hear.

SIR JASPER Hear.

PARCHESTER The two executors must decide, Gerald. Her Grace and Sir John.

SIR JOHN Well, wheel him in—let's take a look at him.

LADY BATTERSBY Yes, let's see him.

PARCHESTER Well, before he is introduced to you all, I should say—

GERALD Come on, Parchester, get on with it.

LORD BATTERSBY Rather!

SIR JASPER Eh?

JAQUIE He agrees.

LORD BATTERSBY We are all on absolute tenterhooks, aren't we, my love?

LADY BATTERSBY Frederic.

LORD BATTERSBY My lamb?

LADY BATTERSBY Shut up!

PARCHESTER But I feel I should tell you that his new lordship is not perhaps quite what—

SIR JOHN Damn it all, Parchester, never knew such a fellow for talking. Gerald, ring the bell.

GERALD *rings the bell.*

SIR JASPER Eh?

JAQUIE What's he called, Parchester, the new earl?

PARCHESTER William.

SIR JASPER Eh?

JAQUIE *(to SIR JASPER)* William.

DUCHESS William—the seventh Earl was a William.

CHARLES *enters.*

PARCHESTER Ah Charles, show the gentleman in now, please.

CHARLES *crosses to the door.*

LADY BATTERSBY Does he know yet that he is the new Lord Hareford?

PARCHESTER No. I felt it should be broken to him gently.

CHARLES *(opening the door and looking out)* If you would like to come this way, sir.

BILL *enters; he is wearing a check suit with a bowler hat and is smoking a cigarette.*

BILL Oi! Oi! Cor, stone me! How do!

The family are aghast.

SIR JASPER Eh? Whaddisay?

PARCHESTER *(bustling forward)* Welcome to Hareford, William. May I present Her Grace, the Duchess of Dene?

BILL *(grabbing the DUCHESS's hand and shaking it very vigorously)* Nice to meet you lady—very nice indeed.

DUCHESS *(withdrawing her crushed fingers)* How do you do? This is an old friend of the family, Sir John Tremayne.

BILL Wotcher cock!

SIR JOHN My God!

DUCHESS (*introducing JAQUIE*) My daughter, Lady Jaqueline Carstone.

JAQUIE How do you do.

BILL How do you do. Very nice to meet you. Very nice indeed.

DUCHESS My nephew, Gerald Bolingbroke.

GERALD How do you do.

BILL How do you do. Oh, I've dropped me fag in your drink!

GERALD Ooohh! Urgh!

DUCHESS Lord and Lady Battersby.

BILL How do you do?

LORD BATTERSBY How do you do? I expect you'd like a drink.

BILL Rather. (*He takes the decanter from LORD BATTERSBY and feigns dropping it*)

LORD BATTERSBY Do be careful! That decanter is over two hundred years old.

BILL That's a stroke of luck—it could have been a new one.

LADY BATTERSBY Frederic!

LORD BATTERSBY Oh right-o. (*To BILL*) P'raps later, eh?

BILL (*giving LADY BATTERSBY a playful pat on the rear*) That's right, darlin', you tell 'im. Bit of a lad, is he?

LADY BATTERSBY How dare you!

DUCHESS Mr Herbert Parchester you know already—and this is Sir Jasper Tring.

SIR JASPER Whoozat?

BILL (*gesturing in bookies' tick-tack*) How do you do. Very pleased to meet you I'm sure. (*To the company*) Well, my friends call me Bill.

PARCHESTER Shall we proceed, your Grace?

DUCHESS Sit down please, William.

BILL Ta, very much. *(He sits on the nearest chair and finds himself on SIR JOHN's knee. He then tries to find another chair and finds himself sitting uncomfortably close to JAQUIE. He rolls his bowler hat down his shin to rest on his foot)*

DUCHESS Before we tell you why you are here, we would like to know something about you, William.

SIR JOHN Where do you live?

BILL In a distant village called London.

JAQUIE Yes, but what part?

BILL All of me.

GERALD What part of London, you clot.

BILL Lambeth.

DUCHESS Lambeth!

SIR JOHN My God!

SIR JASPER Lambeth, did he say?

BILL *(to SIR JASPER)* Best part of London, Squire. South of the river—

SIR JOHN Yes, but the thing is... *(He crosses his leg, picking up BILL's hat on his foot as he does so. He looks surprised and returns the hat to BILL)* In a house or a flat?

BILL I've got a parlour, drawing-room, dining-room, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom. All in the same room. 'Bout the size of that fireplace over there.

They all lean forward, peering at the fireplace.

The bath's in the basin. One day you bath your top part, the next day you bath your middle and the third day you bath your—

SIR JOHN *(hastily)* Quite, quite! What do you live on?

BILL Me wits.

SIR JOHN You must be severely undernourished. Now look, what do you actually do?

BILL Do? Anything, squire. I do a bit of sparring now and again—

SIR JOHN Sparring?

BILL Y'know; run for a bookie, sell fruit off a barrow...

SIR JASPER Eh?

BILL Olly, olly, olly, all fresh—ripe strawberries... And I do a bit of “quickness of the hand deceives the eye”. (*He puts his hat on the table, takes a pack of cards from his pocket and fans them to SIR JOHN*) Take a card, any card. Do I know this man? No, I do not know this man. Take a card, any card—go on... Right, look at it, shuffle it— (*Under cover of the cards BILL picks SIR JOHN's pocket of his watch*)

SIR JOHN *takes a card.*

—but don't tell me what it is... What is it?

SIR JOHN Five of spades.

BILL Correct! The man wins a gold watch. (*He hands SIR JOHN his watch back*)

SIR JOHN Hey, that's mine. What are you doing? (*To the DUCHESS*) Let's just get on with it, shall we?

DUCHESS Now we have a surprise for you, William. Parchester.

PARCHESTER Your Grace. Do you know anything about your parents, William?

BILL They're brown bread.

GERALD Brown bread?

DUCHESS What are you talking about? Brown bread?

BILL Like I said, brown bread—dead!

GERALD Oh, it's cockney rhyming slang. Oh, goody! I say, can you do that?

SIR JOHN Rhyming slang?

GERALD (*enthusiastically*) Yes, you hear it all the time at the races...urn, apparently—so I'm told.

PARCHESTER Well, quite. The facts are these. Your late father was the Earl of Hareford. You were his only son. Therefore, William Percival Presteigne-Snibson, you are now the rightful and lawful 18th Baron Haveringland, Lord of the Stimpson Marshes, Marshall Royal in Ordinary to the Stewardship of Brandiston with Castle Dalling and 14th Earl of Hareford.

BILL (*turning to the family*) 'ere... (*He turns back to PARCHESTER*) But...

There is a silence; all eyes are on BILL. A smile slowly spreads across his face and he nudges PARCHESTER.

Gettaway! You're pulling my tinkler, encha?

SIR JOHN Nothing could be more serious.

BILL drops to the floor in a dead faint.

Good Lord, he's fainted. Quick, water.

BILL (*reviving*) 'Ere, I didn't faint for water.

SIR JOHN Have a little brandy then. (*He proffers the decanter*)

BILL (*taking a swig from the decanter*) Brandy! That'll do, guv; thanks squire, cheers.

BILL is helped to a chair.

DUCHESS This is your family. Your father was my brother, you may therefore refer to me as your Aunt Maria. Lady Jaqueline and Gerald are your cousins.

BILL What him? (*He points at GERALD*)

GERALD slams BILL's hat on to BILL's outstretched hand; BILL reacts in pain as if his finger has been crushed.

(to **SIR JOHN**) Hallo, Uncle John.

SIR JOHN Uncle John?

BILL (to the **DUCHESS**) Ain't you two married then?

DUCHESS Certainly not!

BILL Oops, naughty naughty. So this is my family? Me—an Earl—the Earl of Hareford? (*A thought strikes him*) 'Ere, am I rich then?

PARCHESTER Well, now you have about a hundred thousand pounds.

BILL Yeah, that's not bad, is it...?

PARCHESTER A year...

BILL I think I'm going to faint again. I said I think I'm going to faint again.

LORD BATTERSBY Oh rather. (*He gives BILL the decanter*) Cheers.

SIR JASPER Nothing wrong with Lambeth, old cousin Thomas used to live in Lambeth.

LADY BATTERSBY Of course he did, Sir Jasper, he was the Archbishop of Canterbury.

BILL One hundred thousand crispies a year, cor dear oh dear! Well, I'll take this year's instalment and leave you good people be, then.

PARCHESTER Ah, I'm afraid it's not quite as simple as that.

DUCHESS You are not allowed to touch the inheritance—

BILL The how much?

DUCHESS The money, unless the executors of your father's will, that is Sir John here and myself, are agreed that you are a fit and proper person to stay on here as master of Hareford. Otherwise you will receive an annuity and live in retirement.

BILL Fit and proper? Me? For you lot? Forget it.

SIR JOHN Quite right. Sensible attitude.

DUCHESS Nonsense. You are Lord Hareford. As Lord Hareford you will stay at Hareford.

SIR JOHN Maria, what are you saying? The man's an outsider, pay him off.

ALL Quite right. He's impossible. (*Etc.*)

DUCHESS I will educate you. I am confident you will learn to rule Hareford. If you do as I bid you, blood will tell.

SIR JOHN If you don't, blood will flow.

DUCHESS You are the last of the line. It is your duty to stay here and perpetuate the family.

BILL Perpetuate. Stewth! You wait till I show all this to Sally.

JAQUIE Sally?

BILL Yeah, she's my girl. She's gonna love all this...

DUCHESS This—Sally, is she also from—

BILL Lambeth? Yeah, 'course.

DUCHESS Lambeth.

SIR JOHN My God!

PARCHESTER I should perhaps have mentioned, William, that it is a condition of the will that you marry a fit and proper consort.

BILL Sally's fit for me all right. She come with me in the car. I'll get her in. (*He puts his fingers in his mouth and emits a piercing whistle*)

SIR JOHN Don't do that!

BILL All right, calm down. I'll go and fetch her in. (*He heads for the door, handing SIR JOHN his watch again as he passes*) Keep an eye on the time, mate!

DUCHESS Just one moment. The will states you must marry a woman of your own class.

BILL That's all right then, 'cos Sally is my own class.

DUCHESS Not any longer. You may bring her in and tell her who you really are, and then the car will take her back to Lambeth.

BILL (*challenging the DUCHESS*) Oh, yeah? We'll soon see about that, me old fruit. (*To JASPER*) Me old fruit! (*He heads for the exit, shouting offstage*) Oi! Sal!

He exits.

DUCHESS Well!

SIR JOHN Well!

JAQUIE Well!

GERALD Well!

LADY BATTERSBY We shan't have a penny!

SIR JOHN I can just see the newspaper headlines. "Hareford's Cockney Lord, Jellied Eels on the Crown Derby!" My God, Maria, you can't let this costermonger take over Hareford.

DUCHESS The family needs new blood.

SIR JOHN You call that new blood? Hang it all Maria, what are we going to do?

DUCHESS Mr Parchester is here to advise.

GERALD Dear Mr Parchester. Please do advise.

MUSIC 4: "THE FAMILY SOLICITOR"

PARCHESTER

AS THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

HERE'S MY ADVICE TO YOU

AS THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

HERE'S WHAT YOU OUGHT TO DO

FOR SIX AND EIGHT I'LL PUT YOU STRAIGHT

IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG

FOR I CONTEND YOU MUST PRETEND

THAT LIFE IS ONE SWEET SONG

SO SING A LITTLE AND DANCE A LITTLE
BE GAY A LITTLE AND PLAY A LITTLE
BRING YOUR TROUBLES MORE AND MORE
TO THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

SAY A LITTLE AND THINK A LITTLE
EAT A LITTLE AND DRINK A LITTLE
KEEP A DROP OF THE NINETY-FOUR
FOR THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

DUCHESS

HE'LL TAKE ALL YOUR CASES
KEEP YOU IN YOUR PLACES

SIR JOHN

MAYBE SAVE YOUR FACES

FAMILY

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
SING A LITTLE AND DANCE A LITTLE
BE GAY A LITTLE AND PLAY A LITTLE
BRING YOUR TROUBLES MORE AND MORE
TO THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

PARCHESTER

SAY A LITTLE AND THINK A LITTLE
AND EAT A LITTLE AND DRINK A LITTLE
KEEP A DROP OF THE NINETY-FOUR
FOR THE FAMILY SOLICITOR
HE'LL TAKE ALL YOUR CASES
KEEP YOU IN YOUR PLACES
MAYBE SAVE YOUR FACES
HA! HA! HA! HA!

LADIES

HA! HA! HA! HA!

GENTLEMEN

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

GERALD	}	HOP A LITTLE AND SKIP A LITTLE
SIR JOHN		AND JUMP A LITTLE, LET RIP A LITTLE
SIR JASPER		THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS ONCE MORE
BATTERSBY		FOR THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

PARCHESTER

HOP A LITTLE AND SKIP A LITTLE
 AND JUMP A LITTLE, LET RIP A LITTLE
 THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS ONCE MORE
 FOR THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

FAMILY

HOP A LITTLE AND SKIP A LITTLE
 AND JUMP A LITTLE, LET RIP A LITTLE
 THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS ONCE MORE

PARCHESTER

FOR THE FAMILY

FAMILY

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

PARCHESTER

THE FAMILY

FAMILY

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
 FOR THE FAMILY SOLICIT—

PARCHESTER

—TOR!

FAMILY

THE FAMILY SOLICITOR
 THE FAMILY SOLICITOR
 THE FAMILY SOLICITOR

PARCHESTER

FOR THE FAMILY SOLICITOR.

DUCHESS (*speaking*) I shall take a walk in the rose garden to
 compose myself.

She exits.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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