

Final Call

by

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Tim.....Twenty eight

BlancheFifty Six

Sasha..... Thirty Six

Rosie Nineteen

Man..... Forty

WomanForty two

Roy.....Thirty One

Woman 2...Sixty Seven

**The action takes place in the box office of a West End theatre.
Five weeks pass between acts one and two.**

Act One.

(The box office of a West End theatre. Nineteenth Century built, it is cramped, dusty and messy. There are two windows from which the staff serve, a computer terminal at each. At the back of the office is a tiny kitchenette with a fridge, sink, mirror and kettle. There is a long desk mounted against the wall with telephones with small push-button switchboards for incoming calls. There are two doors, one leading to the theatre foyer and one back into the theatre itself. At one window sits Tim, he speaks into an internal telephone. Blanche does likewise at the other window. Tim is emptying money from his drawer. A matinee is about to begin.)

Tim: *(To Blanche)* Sod it. Close up Blanche.

Blanche: *(To Tim)* Wellings. Says there's a double in the upper circle.

Tim: *(Not listening)* Yeah. Hi. Can I have the all clear? Well where the fuck is he?

Blanche: *(Into the phone)* Have you got them there?

Tim: *(Phone)* No don't worry.

Blanche: Yeah just a tick.

Tim: I don't believe this.

Blanche: Hold on! *(Hand over the receiver)* Shit your pants your little toad.

Tim: You got Wellings there?

Blanche: *(Nods)* Double.

Tim: Double?

Blanche: Double.

Tim: How many?

Blanche: Two.

Tim: Two.

Blanche: Two.

Tim: Bung 'em in stalls E twenty four and five.

Blanche: *(Phone)* Stalls Edward twenty four and five. Yes. Okay? *(To Tim)* What about the difference?

Tim: Don't bother.

Blanche: *(Phone)* It's okay leave it. *(To Tim)* He's determined to charge them.

Tim: Fucking... they'll only go bleating to head office.

Blanche: "It's thirty pounds."

Tim: *(Calling to be heard on Blanche's phone)* Forget it. Sit 'em.

Blanche: *(Phone)* Don't worry about it. Well you can if you want to.

Tim: Dickhead.

Blanche: No I don't as a matter of fact. Bye. *(He puts the phone down)* That boy's a cretin of the highest order.

Tim: Close up Blanche.

Blanche: You persuade me.

(Blanche closes his window with a flourish and sighs with relief. Sasha, a tout, approaches the window)

Tim: Any more we just tell them to fuck off.

Blanche: With pleasure.

Sasha: Bad one huh.

Blanche: *(Counting money)* Oh we've had worse.

Tim: I'm gonna bloody kill Rosie. She knows there's a matinee.

Blanche: There's probably a perfectly good explanation.

Sasha: It's a nice day out there.

Tim: Is it?

Blanche: There you see. She's probably been whisked away by some bronzed Adonis in cut off jeans.

Sasha: Lucky cow.

Tim: Poor sod.

Sasha: Look up some Saturdays for us Tim.

Tim: *(Reluctant)* Saturdays?

Sasha: Night if you can. Balcony whatever.

Tim: Busy time.

Sasha: Come on. This is your uncle Sash.

(Tim looks at the computer)

Tim: The twenty fourth?

Sasha: That's when?

Tim: Three... what three weeks.

Sasha: Nothing sooner?

Tim: No.

Sasha: *(Reaching into his pocket)* That's good.

Tim: Cash?

Sasha: Yeah.

(Tim prints tickets out)

Sasha: D'you sort out the June allocation yet?

Tim: Not yet.

Blanche: It's here.

Sasha: Nice one.

Tim: You squared this with Roy?

Sasha: I'm off down there now.

Blanche: Give him our love.

Sasha: Sure.

Tim: How's he doing?

Sasha: Not bad. Quite chipper.

Tim: Sixty then.

(Sasha hands over cash)

Sasha: Yesterday he grabs my arm – "Sash if you don't get me a fag I'm going to kill somebody."

Tim: That's good.

(Sasha puts up a hand to refuse his change)

Sasha: We hid out on the fire escape.

Blanche: Oh how seedy.

Sasha: You out for tonight?

(Tim looks at the seating plan on the computer)

Tim: Yeah. Just the usual shite. A few keeps that's it.

Sasha: Good for business.

Tim: I'll bet.

Sasha: Pufferoo?

(Sasha offers a cigarette. Tim refuses, Blanche takes one)

Sasha: Summer.

Blanche: Summer.

(A beat. Sasha offers Tim a thick envelope of cash)

Sasha: There's for the June allocation. It's all there.

Tim: You have squared this?

Sasha: Don't worry.

(Blanche hands over a large envelope of tickets. Tim is not pleased)

Blanche: These boys are so up-tight.

Sasha: Count it. *(Winks)* What's good for me is good for you.

Tim: Look you don't...

Blanche: *(Snatching the envelope)* Cheers Sash.

Sasha: It's what friends are for.

(He makes to leave)

Blanche: Remember us to Roy.

Tim: Yeah.

Sasha: I'll get you some beer in.

Tim: Cheers.

Sasha: Later.

(Sasha goes)

Tim: Friends my arse.

Blanche: Oh relax. He's okay.

Tim: Gives me the creeps.

Blanche: Better than Perry's mafioso.

Tim: So bloody cheerful.

Blanche: He sees us right. How many people can you say that about?

Tim: Yeah I guess.

Blanche: And it's not easy for him.

Tim: No.

(Tim picks up the envelope)

Blanche: How much?

Tim: *(Hands envelope to Blanche)* Count it.

Blanche: I need some new curtains.

Tim: And double check the allocation. I don't want the till short again.

Blanche: Don't sweat it honey.

Tim: Let's just be sure huh.

Blanche: Tim relax.

Tim: I hate being in charge.

Blanche: Think how we feel.

Tim: And where's that bloody girl?

Blanche: Leave her, she's young.

Tim: I want a cup of tea.

(An American couple appears at the window.)

Blanche: You hate being in charge huh?

Tim: Oh piss off you old codger.

Man: You got any tickets for tonight?

Tim: Good afternoon sir.

Man: What?

Woman: What he say?

Man: Do you have any tickets for tonight? (for Christ's sake)

Tim: How many would you like?

Man: You got any?

Tim: Yes. How many?

Man: Two!

Tim: And what sort of seats would you like?

Woman: What he say?

Man: What. We're new here.

Tim: There's stalls, dress circle, upper circle and balcony.

Man: What?

Tim: Stalls. Orchestra seats.

Man: You got orchestra seats?

Tim: I'm just explaining the layout.

Woman: The what?

Man: He's explaining the layout.

Tim: Orchestra, dress circle. You call it the mezzanine.

Man: The what?

Tim: The mezzanine. Dress circle. The first level.

Man: Yeah?

Tim: Then the upper circle above that, and the balcony right at the top.

Man: Woo. Way up high.

Tim: Yes. Clear view but very high.

Man: Big theatre?

Tim: Two thousand seater.

Woman: Two thousand?

Man: Yeah.

Woman: That's pretty big.

Tim: The prices are there.

Man: Here?

Tim: Yes. Where they're written.

Man: Let's have a look at these prices here.

(The couple confer.)

Blanche: They get worse dear.

Tim: Fucking clueless.

Blanche: Bastards. Every last one of them.

Tim: *(Standing)* Can you cover a minute?

(Tim picks up the phone and begins to dial.)

Blanche: Cost you a cup of tea.

Tim: Okay.

Man: Seats seats seats seats seats.

Woman: Do you think they have a ladies' room?

Blanche: Phoning one of your fancy women?

Tim: *(Perched on the desk)* There's nothing fancy about my women.

Blanche: I keep telling you, you need a man.

Tim: They wouldn't take me seriously.

Man: Seats seats seats seats seats.

Blanche: No. It's all that beer you drink. And the football! Heaven preserve us.

Man: So what you got for tonight?

Blanche: For two?

Man: You got it.

Blanche: (*Looking at the plan*) Stalls thirty pounds, slightly restricted front side. Single upper circle seats, twenty five pounds clear view, or restricted view pairs at twenty two. Balcony a tenner, clear view.

Man: Wo wo wo. You say stalls?

Woman: That's orchestra right?

Blanche: Right.

Man: How much?

Blanche: Thirty.

Woman: Where are they?

Blanche: (*Pointing*) Here.

Man: That's right in front.

Woman: Yeah but way at the side. I don't like way at the side.

Man: They're good seats right?

Blanche: They're close but restricted view.

Woman: Restricted they're restricted?

Man: What does that mean?

Blanche: It means the view is restricted.

Man: So they're terrible seats right?

Blanche: No. You just miss the extreme side.

Woman: There's a pillar?

Blanche: No. The proscenium curs it off.

Woman: The what?

(*There is a knock at the office door.*)

Tim: Christ.

Blanche: I'll get it. One moment.

(Blanche goes to the door and opens it Rosie comes in.)

Rosie: Afternoon all.

Blanche: Rosie dear. How nice to see you.

Man: Hey.

Rosie: Sorry. Sorry Tim.

Man: Sir!

Banche: Coming. Your mother called again.

Rosie: Oh God.

Tim: *(Still waiting on the phone)* Tea?

Rosie: Please.

(Tim points Rosie to the phones. She grimaces. She busies herself hanging her coat and unpacking books, magazines, mints and a banana onto the desk.)

Man: What else do you have?

Blanche: Upper circle twenty five pounds...

Man: Clear view?

Woman: But look, that's way up high.

Man: If it's all they got.

Blanche: They're separate seats.

Man: Not together?

Blanche: No.

Man: Oh jeez.

Woman: We'd like to sit together.

Blanche: *(Can't imagine why)*

Man: Nothing else at all?

Blanche: Other than that it's balcony or restricted view.

(The couple confer.)

Man: So what you wanna do?

Woman: *(Sulks)* I want to use the bathroom.

Man: Bunny.

Tim: The matinee was a bastard.

- Rosie:** Oh shit. I'm sorry Tim it's the walk from Waterloo. And there was this bloody...
- Tim:** You walked from Waterloo?
- Rosie:** Don't laugh at me.
- Woman:** I wanna go.
- Man:** Bunny if it's all they have.
- Woman:** Ask him.
- Man:** We already asked.
- Woman:** The bathroom.
- Blanche:** Did I tell you what happened to me on the tube this morning?
- Rosie:** *(Peeling banana)* No.
- Man:** So apart from this and this you're sold out right.
- Blanche:** *(Over his shoulder)* Basically yes.
- Man:** You see.
- Blanche:** There was this bunch of young chaps.
- Woman:** Busy show huh?
- Blanche:** *(To couple)* It's Saturday night. *(To Rosie)* "Lads" I suppose you'd call them.
- Man:** Do you have a show tomorrow?
- Blanche:** No show Sunday.
- Woman:** Ask him.
- Tim:** *(Hanging up and dialling again)* Shit. *(To Blanche)* Jenny.
- Blanche:** Ah.
- (The couple looks at one another. The man shrugs.)*
- Man:** Well do you at least have a bathroom my wife could use?
- Blanche:** No. Sorry.
- Man:** Thank you sir.
- Woman:** He was rude.
- (The couple slopes away towards the exit)*
- Blanche:** Oh goodbye. Do hurry back. So, I was on the tube. Clickety click.
- Rosie:** Yes.
- Blanche:** And this chap comes up to me and says "you're so queer".

Rosie: You're kidding.

Blanche: Young guy. Baseball hat, big jacket the whole bit. Great big bleeding trainers. Didn't even have co-ordinated teams, I ask you.

(The couple reappears.)

Man: Hey how about Monday?

Blanche: *(Restraining, looks at plan)* Monday.

Woman: Can we do Monday?

(Blanche glares at them.)

Man: Sure. Carol can wait.

Woman: Sure?

Man: You wanna see this doncha?

Woman: I guess.

Man: Okay. Monday. Two of the best you got.

(Blanche looks as he speaks. The couple become drawn into his story. It makes them uncomfortable.)

Blanche: Monday. "You're so queer me an' me mates can tell. Just by the way you stand." I said "So". He said "Queer". I said "Gloriously". He turns to his mates. "He says he wants to fuck me". "Faggot" they go.

Rosie: Unbelievable.

Blanche: Water off a duck's back dear. *(To couple)* Er... nothing Monday. Same as tonight.

Woman: On Monday?

Man: Tuesday? Wednesday?

Blanche: Same again by the looks.

Woman: Jeez.

(The couple confers.)

Rosie: Go on.

Blanche: You know the type.

Tim: *(Sitting back at the window)* Cheers Blanche.

Man: Tell you what. We're here until the twenty-fifth. What you got until then?

Woman: Except the twenty third. We can't make the twenty-third.

(Tim taps through the plans. The couple peer over the counter. It irritates him. He catches them.)

Blanche: *(Back to the till)* I said “and who are you happy campers? The Piccadilly Line Harlem queens?” Which was stupid.

Rosie: (Idly eyeing her magazine} No it wasn't. Sod 'em.

Tim: It'll be the same throughout.

Woman: Really?

Tim: Apart from Wednesday matinees.

Man: Yeah?

Woman: Good seats?

Tim: Good seats next week.

Man: Sure.

Tim: Say... two nice ones in the dress circle.

Woman: Dress circle?

Tim: Mezzanine.

Man: Where?

Tim: *(Pointing)* B seventeen and eighteen. In the middle.

Woman: Second row?

Tim: Great seats.

Man: Great seats huh. What do you say?

Woman: Let's do it. *(She opens her purse)* Can we go try them out?

Tim: There's a show going on.

Woman: We'd be real quiet.

Tim: Sorry no.

Man: We don't think much of your service.

Woman: Wookie.

Tim: Thankyou.

(Tim hits return with a flourish to print out the tickets.)

Rosie: Go on Blanche.

Tim: I'm listening.

Blanche: It was a stupid thing to say. At that moment.

Rosie: They live in a fantasy world.

Blanche: I thought they were going to get violent.

Rosie: They romanticise.

Man: How much?

Tim: Seventy pounds.

Man: Do you take Diners card?

Tim: Sorry no.

Man: Cash.

Woman: Wait a minute. *(She delves into her handbag)*

Blanche: There were eight of them. Making that heterosexual noise.

Rosie: I know.

Blanche: “Wooaaayyyyyy!”

Woman: You take travellers’ cheques?

Tim: Less than a hundred pounds yes.

Man: You need a passport?

Tim: *(Passing a pen)* Don’t worry.

(Tim prints out two tickets.)

Blanche: Sort of like cattle.

Tim: Don’t look at me.

Blanche: You never hear our Tim doing it of course. Too muffled inside the closet.

Tim: *(Taking the cheques)* Ah. I can’t accept these I’m afraid.

Woman: You can’t?

Tim: They’re in dollars.

Man: We’re American.

Tim: We only accept Sterling travellers’ cheques.

Woman: What?

Tim: Sterling. Pounds.

Man: You only accept pounds?

Tim: Yes.

Blanche: We’re English.

Woman: Oh God. I signed them already.

Tim: I’m sorry.

Woman: Can't you see the manager?

Tim: He isn't here.

Man: Well somebody.

Tim: We only accept pounds Sterling.

Woman: How come? They took them before.

Man: If he only accepts pounds he only accepts pounds.

Woman: That's crazy.

Man: Bunny.

Blanche: I began to get the vapours. I don't mind telling you.

(Woman picks up her cheques from the counter.)

Woman: Well that's just crazy.

Blanche: It was stupid. Thirty nine years and I've never had trouble. Not violence. And I really thought.

Woman: I signed!

Man: Mastercard?

Tim: That's fine.

Woman: I thought you only accept pounds Sterling.

Man: Okay. Get your card. Get your card.

(Tim receives the card and swipes it The couple fumes.)

Blanche: So eventually the biggest one comes over. I try to read my paper. His mates are pissing themselves now. I'm counting stops. "Hey petal," he offers me his beer. Nice looking lad.

Woman: *(Waving cheques in Man's face)* Ruined.

Blanche: So I'm thinking "what the hell" and I take a few swigs.

Tim: *(Handing over tickets)* So that's dress circle B seventeen and eighteen. Wednesday at three.

Man: *(Jockeying Woman out)* Thank you sir.

(Tim sighs with relief.)

Blanche: Then we get to Holborn and they all come over. So I'm standing there shitting my pantyhoolas...

Rosie: Bloody hell.

Blanche: And then I see one of them... little. Pretty. And my gaydar blips a blip. He's looking at me with such a look.

(Beat)

Rosie: And?

Blanche: They got off. But the poor little chicken!

Rosie: That's crap.

Blanche: Lumbered with a bunch of naff beer-swilling hetties.

Rosie: They didn't even mug you?

Blanche: What's to become of we shrinking violets?

Tim: Shrunk.

Blanche: Mind you, I know some queens who would've put his head through the window.

Tim: Rosie, phones.

Rosie: ohhhhhh.

Tim: "Ohhhhhh".

Blanche: Yes tardy, do some work.

Tim: *(To Blanche)* And you get on.

Blanche: Slave driver.

(Rosie turns to the phones and takes a call with a resigned sigh. It is a monotonous process with only a few set answers. Her call dialogue should run under the main action. She takes up a paper from the desk and idly attempts the crossword as she works.)

Rosie: Dukes theatre. I'm afraid not other than Wednesday matinees. That would be March of next year. Weekdays also. You can queue for returns on the day. No. Three to four hours before the performance. No guarantee. You could write in for the new booking period. That'll be into the summer. We don't know the exact details yet I'm afraid as the producer has yet to confirm.

(These standard sentences should be mixed with each new call. The couple reappears at the window.)

Man: Wednesday afternoon?

Blanche: *(Jumps)* Christ on a bike!

Tim: Sorry?

Man: Three PM?

Tim: It's a matinee.

Man: We wanted an evening.

Woman: We're on vacation.

Blanche: Certainly taken leave of something.

Tim: It's the best you'll do.

(Roy lets himself into the office. He is extremely emaciated.)

Man: Look at the evenings.

Tim: We have no evenings.

Roy: Hi.

Woman: Did he say afternoon?

Man: It's a matinee.

Woman: So?

Man: *(To Tim)* Hey...

(They look at Tim. He is looking at Roy. Everybody stops what they are doing. A moment.)

Hey...

Roy: Well I'm glad to see you too.

Blanche: Hello dear.

(He goes to Roy and kisses him. He holds his hand.)

Man: Hello!

Blanche: Welcome back to the arsehole of showbusiness.

Roy: Thanks Blanche.

Man: Hell. Sir.

Blanche: You're looking well. She's looking well don't you think.

Tim: Yeah.

Blanche: Quite sprightly.

Man: Sir!

Blanche: Sash was in earlier. Much to Tim's delight.

Man: Excuse me.

Roy: Business or pleasure?

Blanche: *(Offering a cigarette)* Bit of both I think. Something to clear the pipes?

Roy: Ooh cheers.

Blanche: *(Searching)* Now where's my bloody lighter?

Man: *(Banging on the counter top)* Excuse me sir.

Tim: *(Turning to the couple)* Yes. Sorry.

Man: How about Friday?

Tim: Basically unless you want restricted view or balcony, no evenings. Just Wednesday matinees.

Man: So whadda we do?

Woman: Find a damn bathroom.

(Man looks at the ticket prices and hoardings, still hoping for a miracle. Woman needs to leave. Blanche finds his lighter.)

Blanche: Ah. *(Offers a light)* How's the blood?

Roy: In need of dilution I fear.

(Blanche goes to the kitchenette and produces a bottle of vodka. He starts pouring.)

Blanche: Is this okay?

Roy: Vital. Having one.

Blanche: Oh I think so. Tim?

(Blanche passes a large vodka and tonic to Roy.)

Man: Do people come and stand on line?

Tim: Yes.

Man: For tickets?

Tim: Yes, for tickets.

Man: How does that work?

Tim: People queue for returned tickets.

Man: And do you have any for tonight?

Blanche: Jesus.

Tim: No.

Man: I see.

Woman: *(Impatient)* Wookie.

(Man goes to woman.)

Man: What! What!

Roy: *(To Tim)* You not having one?

Tim: In a minute.

Blanche: Well. *(Toasting)* Chinkly chinkly gay gay.

Roy: Cheers.

Rosie: *(Finishing a call)* God! What a shit head!

Blanche: Rosie. Meet the boss.

Rosie: Oh. Hello.

Blanche: He rules with an iron handbag.

Roy: Hardly.

Rosie: Nice to meet you.

Roy: Getting to grips with the clientele?

Rosie: *(Taking another call)* Lovely people.

(Blanche goes back to counting his till. The couple reappears at the window.)

Man: Are those people out there waiting?

Tim: Yes.

Man: Jeez.

Woman: *(needing a piss)* Wookie.

(The couple goes to survey the queue. Blanche surveys Roy.)

Blanche: She looks well. Doesn't she look well.

Roy: When was Sasha in?

Blanche: Oh she's been in and out dear.

Tim: He was going to the hospital.

Roy: Oh.

Blanche: He'll be back.

Tim: Does he know you're here?

Roy: Not exactly.

Tim: Who does?

Man: *(Back at the window)* And if you get tickets you sell them.

Tim: Sorry?

Man: To the queue.

Tim: That's right.

Man: So if we want tickets we just come and queue.

Tim: Yes. For that day.

Man: And we'll get in?

Tim: Well there's no guarantee.

Woman: *(Bladder aching)* Wookie!

Man: We could wait on line.

Roy: God I missed them.

Man: Tell me sir, if we stand on line for tonight will we get in?

Tim: Pardon?

Man: Will we get in?

Tim: I don't know.

Woman: How come he doesn't know?

Man: How many returns do you normally get?

Tim: It varies. Forty. Sometimes more sometimes less.

Man: And on Saturdays?

Tim: I don't know. Less if anything.

Man: But if we're number forty or less we should get in.

Tim: Maybe.

Man: Well say thirty five.

Tim: I don't know.

Man: Thirty?

Tim: I really can't say.

Man: I see.

Woman: How come he doesn't know?

Man: Are you always this unhelpful?

Tim: I'm trying to explain.

Man: Try harder.

(Tim grudgingly looks at his computer.)

Roy: Jesus.

Rosie: *(Finishing a call)* Wanker! *(To Roy)* How was your holiday?

Roy: Huh?

Rosie: Did you go anywhere nice?

Roy: Holiday?

Rosie: *(A quizzical look at Tim)* Yes.

Roy: *(A wry smile)* Very nice. Thank you.

(Rosie takes a call)

Blanche: Sweet child. She's an actress.

Rosie: *(Hand over receiver)* Would be.

Roy: Aren't we all.

Man: *(Tapping the counter top)* Look brother look.

Tim: I am.

Man: We want seats. Real good seats.

Woman: *(Dying for a piss)* For a Saturday night.

Man: Yeah Saturdays.

Tim: It'd be well into January or February.

Woman: What. Christmas?

Tim: Next year.

Woman: Jeez.

Tim: Sorry.

Roy: You having a drink or what?

Tim: I think I'd better.

Roy: Vodie?

Tim: We got any beer in the fridge?

Blanche: What it is to be a man.

Man: So you never got seats right.

Tim: Not the sort you're asking for no.

Woman: *(Desperate)* Well who gets them for Christ's sake?

Man: You give them all to brokers right. And people like us got to pay a fortune.

Tim: No.

Man: Jeez that makes me sick.

Blanche: I do hope so.

Man: Somebody oughta complain.

Woman: They should.

Man: Somebody oughta complain. It ain't right.

Woman: We only need two tickets.

Man: What do you say huh?! What do you got to say for yourself?!

Woman: Come on. Let's go.

Man: You oughta be ashamed!

Woman: *(In pain)* Come on Wookie.

Man: This my wife's vacation!

(They go. Pause. Blanche takes a vodka to Tim.)

Blanche: Well done Tim.

Tim: Tosspot.

Blanche: It's enough to put you off your drink.

Roy: Or make you turn to it.

Tim: Blanche. *(He motions Blanche back onto the window)*

Blanche: My name's Blanche, use and abuse me.

Tim: You're a man amongst men.

Blanche: *(Sitting)* Where've you been honey?

(Tim goes to the phones. He dials, watching Rosie's crossword progress.)

Roy: I'll go on.

Blanche: Don't worry.

Roy: You do that. *(The till)*

Blanche: Roy.

Roy: I'm still here Blanche.

Rosie: *(Finishing a call)* God! Boredom!

Roy: Remind me not to fire 'till I see the whites of their eyes.

(Roy replaces Blanche on the window. Tim waits on the phone.)

Rosie: Same bloody questions.

Blanche: Steady my girl.

Rosie: Where do they all come from?

Blanche: *(Looking out the window)* Oooh. Vada vada.

Roy: *(Looking)* Not bad.

Blanche: Pretty. Dolly wee dish.

Rosie: I want to act.

Tim: I know.

Blanche: I wouldn't mind him warmed up with custard.

Rosie: I know I can.

Blanche: I'm wild for him.

Tim: Then act.

Rosie: I can't. Nobody'll let me. I hate this.

Tim: You've said.

Blanche: Is he new?

Roy: I don't know.

Rosie: Anyone could do this. People only work here because they love the theatre.

Tim: I hate the theatre.

Roy: Get down.

Blanche: I'm not up dear.

Rosie: If it wasn't for people like me there'd be nobody here and no theatre at all.

Tim: *(Redialling)* Bugger this.

Rosie: I have a gift. Do you know how frustrating that is?

Tim: You tell me incessantly.

Rosie: No. But really. Never to get the opportunity.

Tim: I know what that's like.

Blanche: Whip me strip me and call me Betty.

Rosie: Mr Wellings wanted to direct.

Tim: Hello. Hi. I'm trying...

Rosie: Blanche used to sing...

Tim: Yeah.

Rosie: We're talented people.

Tim: 409 3010. Ta... 71. Thanks.

Rosie: I hate this.

Tim: Well do something about it.

Rosie: What? How?

Tim: I dunno.

Rosie: You're useless.

Tim: *(Into phone)* Come on.

Rosie: I have ambition. I have belief.

Tim: Oh do you.

Rosie: Yes. In life you have to believe. This is just my job. It wasn't what I am.

Tim: *(Into phone}* Thanks. *(He hangs up)*

Blanche: Delectable boy.

Rosie: This isn't what I am.

Tim: Phone's ringing.

Rosie: I can't be bothered. I hate this.

Tim: Ionesco.

Rosie: What?

Tim: Eighteen across. Ionesco.

Rosie: Who?

(Tim looks at Rosie. Blanche goes to the safe to put away the matinee cash. He stands by Tim.)

Blanche: No luck?

Tim: No. She's done a bunk.

Blanche: I don't why you just don't tell her to take a running jump.

Rosie: Me?

Tim: No. *(Pointing)* Phone.

(Rosie pulls a face and takes a call)

Roy: The course of true love never did run...

Blanche: Straight.

Tim: Ha ha.

Blanche: Ahh. You okay pet?

Tim: Yeah.

Blanche: You have to learn sweetie.

Roy: Leave the man alone.

Blanche: Uh-uh-uh. Pearls of wisdom.

Tim: Blanche.

Rosie: *(Finishing a call)* I'm starving.

Blanche: She starts to treat you like this. And you let her.

Tim: Yeah I know.

Blanche: And you become scared of her.

(Tim puts the phone down.)

Rosie: My tummy's rumbling. *(She takes a call)*

Tim: Blanche...

Blanche: You're a good lad Tim. Somebody else doesn't stop you being a good person. Whatever they do.

Roy: She's serious you know.

Tim: I think he is.

Blanche: Ugh! It's called a pep talk you ungrateful little sod.

(Blanche goes back to the window to ogle the attendant)

You try and bring a ray of sunshine into people's lives... splendid derriere.

Rosie: Mother. I'm at work! *(Slams the phone down)* Sorry.

Tim: *(To Rosie)* Go on.

Rosie: What?

Tim: Go and sit with Roy.

Roy: What?

Tim: I'll get these. Go on.

Rosie: You sure?

Tim: Yeah.

Rosie: Thanks Tim.

(Tim takes up the crossword and answers a call. Rosie goes to the front of the office.)

Blanche: Do you think he bats for our team?

Roy: I dunno. Ask him.

Blanche: He's light on his feet.

Rosie: Hi.

Roy: Hello Rosie.

Blanche: Camp as tits on a U boat.

(Woman 2 approaches the window.)

Roy: Oh dear. Look at the state of this one.

Woman 2: Hello.

Roy: *(Face like a smacked arse)* Good afternoon.

Woman 2: I'd like three tickets please.

Roy: That's nice.

Woman 2: For maybe next week.

Roy: Maybe next week. Any particular day?

Woman 2: No.

Roy: Okay. Let me have a look.

Blanche: Excuse me dear.

(Blanche motions Woman 2 slightly to one side so he can still ogle the attendant)

Blanche: Thank you. Your type Rose?

Rosie: I know him. Well I don't know him...

Blanche: There's knowing and there's knowing.

Rosie: Yeah. He's nice. Is he a whoopsie then?

Blanche: I saw him first.

Rosie: I was coming out the station this morning and this old bloody wino starts waving his dick at me.

Tim: Sounds like Seamus.

Rosie: He's shouting "Up your arse up your arse"

Tim and

Blanche: *(Nodding)* Seamus.

Rosie: Seamus?

Tim: Famous Seamus. The man who put the shaft in Shaftesbury Avenue. Everybody knows him.

Blanche: "Up your arse!"

Tim: *(Dialling)* Shout it back at him. Makes his day.

Rosie: So I'm stood there, like, agog, and this bloke just says "I can think of better ways of asking a girl out." Kind of in passing sort of thing.

Tim: Oily git.

Rosie: It was him. I thought he looked familiar.

Blanche: Tartlet.

Rosie: I thought it was witty.

Roy: Wednesday matinee.

Woman 2: I'm not able to Wednesday.

Roy: Didn't think you would be.

Woman 2: How about Thursday or Friday?

Blanche: Spectacular.

Roy: Thursday.

Woman 2: Preferably Friday. Three tickets.

Roy: Three.

Woman 2: Cheap ones.

Roy: Ten pounds?

Woman 2: Is that close to the stage?

Roy: Excuse me. (Stupid fucking bitch)

(He leans over to the bottle and tops up his vodka.)

Blanche: Oh to be young again.

Roy: *(Back to Woman 2)* Sorry about that. Just had to inject something.

Woman 2: Sorry?

Roy: Ten pounds. Up at the top.

Woman 2: That's a bit high.

Roy: Yes. It's the top you see.

Woman: My father's legs.

Tim: *(Crossword)* Who betrayed Norway to the Nazis?

Woman 2: Have you anything maybe a little closer?

Roy: One stall at twenty seven.

Woman 2: That's a bit expensive.

Roy: *(To Tim)* He began with a Q I think.

Woman 2: Nothing in between?

(Woman 2's mobile starts to ring.)

Roy: No.

Woman 2: Oh. Let me think.

Roy: (Do try) (*Woman 2 goes*) See? Pig-fuckers all.

Rosie: At least she wasn't rude.

Woman 2: (*Answering phone*) Yes father.

Roy: Too stupid.

Tim: A Q? You sure?

Roy: I think so.

Tim: Gibraltar's fucked then. (*Takes a call in frustration*) Hello Dukes theatre. (*etc*)

Woman 2: No. Absolutely not.

Rosie: When do I get to go on there?

Roy: (*Shrugs*) Have a go later if you want.

Rosie: Can I?

Roy: Watch and learn.

Blanche: Arse like a peach.

Woman 2: No. Absolutely...

Tim: Yep. One second. (*Offering the phone*) Rosie it's your mother.

Rosie: Bloody hell.

Woman 2: (*Into mobile*) No. Absolutely no.
(*Rosie goes to the phone.*)

Blanche: (*Ogling*) I was a beautiful boy. You would've been amazed.

Rosie: Hello. Yes.

Blanche: And so happy. I was happy then.

Roy: Only because you didn't have any balls.

Woman 2: (*Into mobile*) You must mind your legs.
(*Woman 2 put her mobile away.*)

Rosie: (*Into phone*) No! Look mum... I'm at work. I was late as it was. No. Traffic. People.

Woman 2: I'm back.

Roy: How nice to see you again.

Rosie: Yes. Fine. Look. I'm at work. It's embarrassing.

Woman 2: How about Saturday?

Roy: Nothing Saturday.

Woman 2: The week after?

Roy: No Saturdays 'til January next year.

Woman 2: That's nine months.

Blanche: And I still haven't done my Christmas shopping.

Rosie: I'm okay!

(Everybody looks at Rosie.)

Woman 2: It's for my father.

Roy: There's nothing.

Rosie: The weekend. I'll call... Yes... the weekend.

Woman 2: You must have a father. Can't you look?

Roy: I've looked.

Rosie: Christ. She's impossible.

Woman 2: You're a very nasty man.

Roy: Thankyou.

Woman 2: Is there a manager?

(Woman 2's mobile rings again.)

Roy: Yes.

Woman 2: Could I speak to him?

Roy: You are speaking to him.

Woman: Well someone else then.

Roy: They'll only tell you the same thing.

Woman 2: *(Answering her mobile)* Father you can't go.

(Woman 2 retreats and peeps out through the doors at the queue and touts.)

Roy: Mad witch. *(He drinks)*

Woman 2: They won't be there.

Blanche: *(To Rosie)* You okay dear?

Rosie: Yeah.

Blanche: It's only 'cos she cares.

Rosie: Like walking me to school 'til I was sixteen. That's not concern that's madness.

Woman 2: Because they're all dead.

Blanche: Never mind. *(He pinches Rosie's cheek)*

Woman 2: Who're those people outside? Can I get tickets from them?

Roy: Well they're touts. Mainly.

Woman 2: Well how do they get tickets?

Roy: You tell me.

Woman 2: But they're valid for this show?

Roy: I don't know.

Woman 2: It's coming to something when the black market can provide a better service than you can. It's no wonder the theatre is dying.

Blanche: Ooh I'm stung.

Woman 2: So I'll pay a fortune and still not know if I'll actually get in.

Roy: Not for certain no.

Woman 2: It's a lottery. It's ridiculous.

(Woman 2's phone rings again.)

Roy: *(My heart bleeds)*

Woman 2: And you're not helping.

Roy: Make some tea could you Rosie.

Rosie: I'm not paid to make tea.

Woman 2: are you making tea or selling tickets?

Roy: I can't sell you tickets I haven't got.

Woman 2: Saturday.

Roy: Sorry. No Saturdays 'til next March.

Woman 2: When?

Roy: I'm afraid so.

Woman 2: Well why don't you tell people?

Roy: Look I've...

Blanche: Down boy.

Roy: *(Sighs)* Do you want an application form for next year?

Woman 2: A what? No.

Roy: Well than I don't think we can help you.

Woman 2: My nephew knows the producer.

Blanche: I've danced with a man who's danced with a girl who's danced with the Prince of Wales.

Tim: Boom boom.

Roy: Sorry.

Woman 2: I don't believe you're sold out. I don't.

(She goes, speaking into her mobile.)

Yes father! The war. That's right. I'm sorry.

Roy: Cunt.

Tim: Take it easy Roy.

Roy: Did you hear her? Lady piss elegant from butt fuck nowhere.

Blanche: How's that tea Rosie?

Rosie: You're exploiting me.

Blanche: Two sugars.

Rosie: No!

Roy: Get us another drink Tim.

Tim: Roy.

Roy: Please.

Tim: Did they tell you to leave?

Roy: They let me go.

Tim: Jesus Roy.

Roy: Stop it.

Tim: Roy...

Roy: Fuck 'em anyway. I mean... there's only so much prodding and poking a man can take.

Blanche: Hallelujah.

Roy: I'm full of holes look. I got bored of pissing in a bucket.

Blanche: Will somebody please make some tea.

Rosie: *(Suddenly picking up the phone and giving a V sign)* Hello Duke's theatre...
(etc)

Blanche: Oh God I'll do it. *(He goes to the kitchen)* I want you to remember this though.

Tim: *(Starting towards the kettle)* If you're gonna be a martyr...

Blanche: *(Snatching up the kettle)* No no no. Tea cannot be made grudgingly. I'd choke on it.

Rosie: *(Into phone)* Don't phone again mum!

(Rosie cuts her mother off. Blanche goes about making tea. Woman 2, brandishing a pair of tickets, comes to the window accompanied by as furtive looking Sasha. He sees Roy at the window.)

Woman 2: Are these valid?

Sasha: What the bloody hell are you doing here?

Roy: Hiya Sash.

Sasha: What're you doing here?

Roy: Keeping the customers satisfied.

Sasha: Why didn't you call?

Woman 2: Are they valid?

(Her phone starts to ring.)

Roy: They seem okay.

Woman 2: Where are they?

Roy: Stalls. There.

Sasha: Where's your stuff?

Roy: I left it.

Woman 2: Excuse me.

Sasha: You left it?

Roy: Calm down.

Woman 2: *(To Sasha)* How much do you want?

Sasha: I was just going to see you.

Roy: Saved you a trip then.

Woman 2: Excuse me young man, I'm speaking to you.

Sasha: I'm speaking to him. Come on.

Roy: Where?

Sasha: I'll run you back.

Roy: No.

Sasha: Roy.

Roy: Not yet.

Sasha: A drink then.

Woman 2: Do you want my money or not?

Sasha: *(Snatching back the tickets)* Answer your phone. *(To Roy)* Come on.

Roy: Blanche'll come for a drink.

Blanche: Now you're talking...

Sasha: Christ Roy.

Roy: How's the flat?

Sasha: It's a fucking mess what do you... ah shit.

Woman 2: *(Phone)* I'm trying to get them now.

Blanche: *(Getting his coat)* Bugger the tea. This is living.

Woman 2: I'm in negotiations.

Sasha: You come out after okay.

Roy: I'm working.

Woman 2: Yes. This moment.

Sasha: When Blanche gets back.

Roy: I've only just got in Sash.

Sasha: I mean it.

Woman 2: I'll be back soon.

(Sasha stares at Roy.)

Blanche: *(Emerging into the foyer)* Let's go poppet.

Sasha: Come on then you old trout.

Blanche: See how he spoils me.

Woman 2: Excuse me.

Sasha: What?

Woman 2: I've got money.

Sasha: Piss off darling.

(Sasha slams a bag of fruit onto the counter.)

Come on.

Blanche: See you in a bit girls.

Woman 2: *(To Sasha as he leaves)* I don't mind paying a little over the odds. As long as you can guarantee their validity.

Sasha: Piss off.

(Blanche and Sasha go. Woman 2 stands abandoned in the foyer. Roy toys with the fruit)

Tim: Well done.

Roy: Fruit fruit fruit. Sick food.

(Woman 2's mobile rings. She stands, upset.)

Tim: Do you want to go and get yourself some lunch Rosie?

Rosie: Huh?

Tim: Food. Lunch.

Rosie: Oh. Cool.

(Woman 2 produces a handkerchief from her bag and dabs her eyes.)

Tim: *(To Roy)* It's quiet.

Roy: Sure.

Rosie: I'm busting for a piss.

(She exits to the loo.)

Roy: I like her.

Tim: You gonna eat that?

Roy: Do you want it?

Tim: No. Are you gonna eat it?

Roy: I'm not hungry. Later.

Tim: Roy.

Roy: Don't you start. Please. It's not needed. It's not... required.

(Pause. Tim looks at Roy. Roy is slightly shame-faced.)

How're you?

Tim: Nothing changes.

Woman 2: *(Exiting with her phone)* Hello Dad. How are you?

Roy: You see Jenny and the boy on Sunday?

Tim: I went.

Roy: How were they?

Tim: You tell me.

Roy: You went?

Tim: Yeah.

Roy: So?

Tim: So I get there and... nobody. She'd gone.

Roy: Out?

Tim: No. Gone. Joey's chair was gone. His robot thing. She's fucked off.

Roy: Are you sure?

Tim: I waited six hours. Gone.

Roy: Do you know...

Tim: No.

Roy: I mean...

Tim: No. Not really. I phoned round her friends but...

Roy: What?

Tim: They usually lie for her.

Roy: It's happened before?

Tim: Once in a while. Usually it's Yorkshire. She thinks it's better for Joey. You know.

(Woman 2 finally retreats and exits.)

Roy: Jesus Tim.

Tim: She'll turn up. She always does.

Roy: What...why?

Tim: Oh God. We went to dinner at some friends of ours. Still a couple. They're our role models. They always start us off. We got talking – “old times” and stuff, and – and Jenny told this story she always tells – how we got together. There was a bunch of us going to see this film and I was really late. So I rush in, I was rooting through my pockets and stuff, this movie had already started. You know so everybody's watching me and thinking... So she gave me a fiver.

Roy: How sweet.

Tim: Thought I looked vulnerable, sensitive, the whole bit. When of course I'd just been in the pub all afternoon. I was pissed. That's the way our story goes. Big laughs. And she says – “And there's the original misunderstanding that has led us to where we are today” It's our little party piece.

Roy: Maybe it's true.

Tim: Yeah it is sort of.

Roy: So?

Tim: But it never happened. We made it up. It's a lie.

Roy: What?

Tim: It sort of evolved. It's stupid. So I told her to stop telling it. Big mistake.

Roy: Oh dear.

Tim: Pow. End of evening.

Roy: Oof.

(Rosie comes back in and collects her coat and bag.)

Tim: Anyway, I'm not chasing all over.

Roy: I guess.

Tim: I should be glad of the break.

Rosie: Want anything?

Roy: No thanks.

Rosie: Tim?

Tim: No. Cheers.

Rosie: Won't be three shakes of a doobie.

(Rosie leaves.)

Tim: Six hours, you know. I thought, "God, I lived here once". The marshes and everything. Weird. Stupid. I don't know why we fucking bother.

Roy: Come on. I remember you coming in here...

Tim: It's amazing what you can convince yourself of. Jesus I don't know. *(Beat)* How... Roy how can you say – "I don't want this" when – to someone who's like – four months gone – I dunno – who feels...

Roy: Uh-huh.

Tim: She didn't bloody tell me till she was beginning to show.

Roy: I thought something like that.

Tim: Thought I'd make her "do something terrible" Can you believe that? I mean maybe I would have, I don't know. It meant more to her – than me. I didn't feel I had the right.

Roy: You know... can I say this?

Tim: Sure.

Roy: I mean you don't have to. It's not necessarily your responsibility.

Tim: He's mine. You know. Anyway – no – he's great. I... you know. He's great.

Roy: Well that's good.

Tim: I'm lucky.

Roy: That's true.

Tim: But now it's like "Tim is..." I dunno just bad and – that's it. That's it and there's no getting by it. It's me and it's them.

Roy: Talk to her.

Tim: I can't... she won't let me. I don't dare get upset or angry. I do... she disappears. I can't... say anything.

Roy: Odd person.

Tim: I tell you. Years. Years it took to get me into this position. To get totally fucked up. Holidays. Sex. Ages. Just fucked me up.

Roy: That's not true.

Tim: You see signs but you think "no no this is fine". Then you wake up one day...

Roy: And you're in it up to here.

Tim: Yeah.

Roy: Pour me a drink.

(Tim pours Roy a drink.)

Tim: Sasha's gonna kill you.

Roy: No. He's not. He's not a bad person Tim. He's doing everything he can. You shouldn't expect so much.

(Pause.)

Tim: I never wanted anything.

Roy: No.

Tim: Anything to happen to me.

Roy: Me neither.

(Blanche appears at the window. Tim goes to open the door.)

Blanche: Hi-ho.

Roy: Okay.

Tim: Hey. Eat.

(Tim opens the door. Blanche enters.)

Tim: You were quick.

Blanche: It's like a spiv's convention over there. Perry cornered us so I made a quick getaway.

Roy: Did he make you an offer you couldn't refuse?

Blanche: He tried. Ten quid a ticket if we sell.

Roy: And concrete slippers if we don't.

Blanche: Grey's just not my colour.

Tim: *(Pointing across the foyer)* Hey Blanche.

Blanche: *(Looking)* The little slut!

Roy: *(Looking)* What?

Blanche: She's talking to my attendant again, the little bitch.

Tim: Another one bites the dust.

Blanche: Stop her Roy.

Roy: Me?

Blanche: You're in charge.

Roy: I'm only visiting.

Tim: Well well well.

Blanche: Oh you're cruel to me.

Tim: Life is never kind.

Blanche: What can she do for him? She's a child. A boy like that needs taking in hand. He needs an older woman.

Roy: Sasha still over there?

Blanche: What – oh yes. Trapped with the godfather. Eugh. They look like Torvill and Dean.

Tim: You're a bitter man Blanche.

Blanche: No no really. You give up wishing after a while.

Tim: Come off it.

Blanche: Sexual intrigue isn't like riding a bicycle you know. You lose the habit. You fall off.

(Sasha enters furiously, pursued by Woman 2.)

Woman 2: Hello. I – I have... hello... I say... Do you... would you still be in a position to...

Sasha: Can I come in?

(Sasha motions to Tim to open the door. Tim hesitates.)

Roy: Let him in.

Woman 2: It's my father you see. Music calms him.

(The door is slammed in her face.)

Sasha: Go and get in the car.

Roy: I'm working.

Sasha: Get in the bloody – the car.

(Rosie appears at the window, munching on a sandwich.)

Rosie: Peek-a-boo.

(Tim lets her in.)

Blanche: I saw you Jezebel.

Rosie: I guess you've either got it Blanche

Blanche: Don't you speak to me harlot. Nel Gwyn.

Rosie: What?

Blanche: You well know. Hands off.

Rosie: Oh you mean James.

Blanche: "James" is it?

Tim: Aah. Too bad Blanche Dubois.

Blanche: Not another word. I was enticing young men into public conveniences before you were born.

(An internal phone rings. Tim picks it up.)

Tim: Yup.

Sasha: You and me had a deal remember.

Roy: Hush. Don't fuss.

Tim: Hello. How're...

Woman 2: *(At the window)* Can I please talk to that man there?

Sasha: Wait til the flat's done.

Tim: Oh shit.

Woman 2: Excuse me. Hello young man...

Sasha: Then you come home.

Tim: Jesus fuck.

Roy: What?

Tim: Oh fuck oh fuck oh fuck.

Sasha: Roy.

Tim: Close the window.

Sasha: Roy!

(The telephone rings. Blanche answers quickly.)

Blanche: Box.

Tim: Close up Roy.

Roy: What?

Blanche: *(Laughs)* They've stopped the show.

Tim: Close up. This happened before. Close up.

Sasha: You've got to go.

Woman 2: Could somebody attract the attention of that gentleman there?

(Tim slams the window shut)

Woman 2: What on earth are you doing?

(She bangs on the window.)

Roy: *(Sing-song)* Sorry, can't hear.

Blanche: *(Phone)* Yep. Okay well Roy's just closed up. That's right. Well you'll cope. You're a big strong lad. *(Hanging up)* Idiot child.

Sasha: Five weeks Roy. I've sorted it.

Blanche: Some lighting boy triggered the fire sprinkler things. The electrics are knackered.

Roy: Now why did I never think of that?

(Phone rings. Rosie picks it up.)

Roy: *(Smiling, getting a buzz from the mayhem)* Pass me a bottle someone, this is going to be fun.

Rosie: Hello box... Oh hi. James.

Blanche: Trollop.

(Blanche pours drinks. Sasha takes his glass and approaches Roy.)

Sasha: Listen to me Roy.

(Another phone rings. Tim picks it up.)

Tim: Trevor. What're you doing.

Blanche: And I was dying for a pee.

Rosie: I know. Where are you? No! *(To Blanche)* Mr Wellings won't come out of his office.

Blanche: I'll have to go in a bottle I suppose.

Tim: Oh for fucks sake. You've got plenty of staff on. How hard can it be?

Sasha: Jesus listen will you.

Roy: Where's my drink?

(Sasha hands Roy his drink. He guzzles.)

Rosie: If we survive.

Tim: Well of course they're gonna be pissed off but... No... you can't. We've closed up...

Blanche: We could throw Mata Hari here out as a sacrifice.

Rosie: Er... yes, alright. Where? *(Mouths to Blanche)* He's asking me out!

Blanche: Pa! No idea.

Sasha: Roy. Please.

Roy: Can't go anywhere now.

(Sasha retreats to the back of the office. He lights a cigarette.)

Tim: No... because... because...

Rosie: French. Okay.

Blanche: I'll bet.

Tim: A.) We don't want to get yelled at any more than is strictly necessary, which we do anyway and B.) we haven't got any seats to...

Rosie: Friday... I think I'm working...

Blanche: *(Over Rosie's shoulder)* I wouldn't go there love.

Rosie: *(Turning away)* Is it? Oh fine – okay.

Blanche: Never know who you'll meet coming the other way.

Tim: Look. Explain... explain. Okay. Okay but organise it first. I'm not opening til you sort them out...

Rosie: Okay, well don't get duffed up or anything.

Tim: Explain we're sold out, get the boys to queue them up outside...

Rosie: God I can hear them. Yeah.

Roy: They're gonna be up for us next.

Rosie: Yeah. Bye. Good luck.

Sasha: You're not even listening.

Rosie: Aah. He was all nervous.

Blanche: Probably because he's about to get pummelled.

Tim: Well sort it out then!

Rosie: We're going out to eat.

Blanche: Chomp slurp chomp.

Rosie: Jealous.

Blanche: He won't be so pretty once the lynch mob have finished with him.

Tim: Yeah... yeah, call when... yeah. *(Puts the phone down)* Twat.

(The phone rings again.)

What now?

Sasha: For God's sake...

Tim: *(To Rosie)* It's your mother.

Rosie: *(Into the phone)* Yes.

Roy: Top up Sash?

Sasha: You're not supposed to be here you're not...

Roy: Pretend I'm not. If it's so bad...

Sasha: Roy.

Rosie: Yes.

Roy: Pretend I'm gone.

Sasha: Don't be fucking stupid.

Roy: Why the fuck not?

Sasha: You're only making it worse.

Roy: Who for?

Rosie: Yes. .

Roy: I wanted to come and see everybody. I wanted to be...

Sasha: Angry. Be angry.

Roy: How?

Sasha: The flat – it's gonna be ready. You know – I got your pictures framed. For the room.

Roy: I can't...

Sasha: I cut my finger.

Rosie: Look! I am not a child!

(Rosie slams the receiver down. Beat)

Roy: I can't even see.

Sasha: It'll be ready. Go back.

Roy: Sash...

Sasha: I got your pictures...

Roy: Sasha?

Tim: Oh Christ. A million and one refunds.

Blanche: And rude letters.

Tim: *(Flat)* Hooray.

Roy: Sash. I can't fucking see.

(Pause. The phone rings.)

Tim: Here they come.

Blackout.

Act Two.

(The office at closing time. Tim and Blanche are sat at the windows. Rosie is on the phone. The house has just gone in. Complete panic. There have been lots of big problems. Blanche slams his window shut as the lights come up. The American couple from Act I stands at the window, Tim waits on the phone.)

Blanche: Bastards.

Man: So we go to a broker.

Woman: an agent.

Man: a respectable agent.

Woman: He's in all the brochures.

Rosie: Dad... I...

Tim: *(Into phone)* Well go and see.

Man: Are you listening to me?

Tim: Fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck fuck.

Blanche: Cunts.

Rosie: Well have you heard from her?

Man: A respectable agent.

Tim: Where we gonna put 'em.

Blanche: Royal box?

Tim: Full.

Blanche: No keeps?

Tim: All gone.

Man: Sir, I could get angry.

Rosie: When?

Tim: I'm trying to locate the house manager.

Man: The guy... when I bought these I was assured. How's a person supposed to know?

Rosie: That was bet ore I saw her.

Tim: How the fuck is this happening?

Blanche: What about moving those Japs in the upper?

Tim: I've already moved them twice.

Blanche: Tell them the show's crap.

Tim: When did that ever stop them?

Man: Do you think this is funny? Sir, you. Young man. Do you think this is funny?

Woman: I believe I am going to cry.

(Phone 2 starts to ring.)

Man: See what you do. My wife is about to cry. She only ever cries at Easter.

(Blanche snatches up phone 2.)

Rosie: No. She was a little upset...

Blanche: Box!

Tim: Come on.

Woman: Wookie. *(She starts to cry)*

Man: He was outside your theatre. He was wearing a suit. How am I supposed to know? I'm not local.

Tim: Look if you could please remain...

Man: Don't give me "please remain", give me seats. Now!

Tim: I'm doing what I can.

Blanche: *(Into phone 2)* Ooh dumplings. That is sad. Hold on.

Tim: *(Into phone 1)* Any luck?

Man: Hey.

Blanche: *(Into phone 2 while peeping at the computer)* They can't be sitting there.

Rosie: No I'm sure she's...

Tim: *(Into 1)* Another? How many's that now?

Blanche: *(Into 2)* Are you sure it's dress circle.

Man: Hey!

Tim: *(Into 1)* Aren't they sat yet?

Blanche: *(Into 2)* Check and call back.

Tim: Fuck. *(He frantically checks the seating plan)*

Man: What, am I invisible?

(Blanche puts the receiver down. The phone rings again immediately.)

Rosie: Nothing, really Dad...

Blanche: Fucking hell. *(He answers)* Hello darling.

Man: This is a disgrace. We came back from Munchen.

Woman: Munchen Germany.

Rosie: She let herself in I...

Tim: *(Into 1)* Shit. Stall them.

Blanche: *(Into 2)* Quelle surprise! Which numbers?

Tim: *(Into 1)* I don't know. I've got people here.

Rosie: I'm a grown woman I...

Tim: *(Into 1)* No James I don't want...

Blanche: *(Into 2)* How many!?! Oh my God.

Tim: *(Into 1)* You do and I'll kick your fucking ar...

Blanche: *(Into 2)* Well where's Wellings?

Tim: *(Into 1)* Good evening madam.

Blanche: *(Into 2)* Stupid question. Hold on.

Tim: *(Into 1)* Yes I appreciate the way... the way you must... yes... there seems to have been... well yes, there has been... *(Puts hand over receiver)* Christ.

Rosie: Dad! Dad I...

Man: My wife is very upset.

Woman: He was in all the brochures.

Tim: If you could just be patient.

Man: My ass.

Woman: *(Bursting into tears again)* Wookie Wookie Wookie Wookie Wookie Wookie.

Man: You see.

Rosie: Can I call you back?

Blanche: *(To Tim)* Have you got a moment?
(Tim looks at Blanche – "What do you think?")

Rosie: Can I... it's...

Tim: *(Into phone 1)* Could you please put me back onto the attendant?

Rosie: Yeah. Love you. Bye.

Blanche: *(To Tim)* We've got eight doubling in the circle.

Tim: *(Mock boasting)* Sixteen downstairs.

Rosie: Do you need some help?

(Tim picks up phone 3 and dials frantically.)

Tim: How's your carpentry?

Blanche: You could find Wellings.

Rosie: Where is he?

Blanche: Stupid girl.

Tim: *(Into 1)* We're trying to locate the manager now madam. I'm afraid I don't understand either.

(Phone 4 rings.)

Blanche: Oh joy.

(Rosie grabs phone 4.)

Rosie: Hello box.

Blanche: *(Into 2)* Look. Just sit 'em in the crap seats up top and promise a refund.

Tim: *(To Blanche)* No. I gave them to Wellings' mum.

Blanche: *(Into 2)* Wo wo, hold on choochy face.

Tim: *(Into 3)* Hi it's Tim. Is the Grand Poobah there?

Rosie: *(Offering phone 4 to Tim)* Four more doubles in the stalls.

(Tim motions that his hands are full. Blanche takes phone 4.)

Blanche: Here.

Tim: *(Into 3)* Now how did I know that?

Blanche: *(Into 4)* We've not got much left petal.

Tim: *(Into 3)* Okay cheers.

(Tim slams phone 3 down. It rings immediately.)

Fuck. *(Answers)* Box.

Blanche: *(Into 4)* Don't get shitty with me darling.

Tim: *(Into 3)* Yep. Hold on mate. *(He looks heavenward)*

Blanche: *(Into 4)* If we haven't got them we haven't got them, it's not our bloody fault.

Tim: Fucking bollocks!

Rosie: What?

Tim: Eight more.

Rosie: That's nice.

Blanche: *(Into 4)* Just hold on, we're trying. Little shit.

Tim: Fucking nightmare.

Man: This would never happen in New York.

Tim: If you could just be patient.

Man: I will not have my wife cry!

Woman: Let's go.

Man: She wants to go.

Woman: Come on.

Man: You see?

Woman: Wookie.

Man: I don't believe you people.

Rosie: *(Not heard)* Well then fuck off the pair of you.

Man: She's had fits before now!

Blanche: *(Into 4)* Look, stop giving me attitude and try and find Wellings, okay.

Man: *(To Woman)* I said. Didn't I? Didn't I tell you? We could be in Florida.

Woman: *(Crying)* I need culture in my life.

(Blanche slams down phone 4. It rings immediately.)

Blanche and Tim: Bollocks!

Blanche: *(To Rosie)* Where's your mother when we need her?

(Blanche answers 4.)

Rosie: Don't bloody ask.

Blanche: Box! Fie do your worst.

Tim: *(Into 1)* James! Look... just hold them there. I don't know.

Blanche: *(Holding 4)* It's Wellings.

Tim: *(Into 1)* Hold on Jim. *(To Blanche)* Gimme.

(Tim grabs phone 4 and offloads 1 onto Blanche.)

(Into 4) Where the fuck are you?

Blanche: *(Glaring at Rosie)* Hello? Oh hello James.

Tim: *(Into 4)* I don't care who she is.

Blanche: *(Into 1)* How're you coping my sweet?

Tim: *(Into 4)* We've got thirty two doubles and no seats left.

Blanche: Would you like to speak to Rosie?

(Rosie desperately shakes her head at Blanche.)

Tim: *(Into 4)* No. None. You'd better get over here. Please. Now!

(Tim slams down phone 4. It rings immediately.)

Blanche: *(Into 1, taunting Rosie)* Well I could ask her.

(Rosie goes to answer phone 4.)

Rosie: I'm busy.

Tim: Leave it!

Blanche: *(Into 1)* She's not busy at all.

Rosie: You never trust me with anything.

Tim: *(To Blanche)* Tell 'em hang on. *(To the couple)* Excuse me, the manager's on his way over now.

Blanche: Did you hear that chucky-egg?

Rosie: Bastards.

Man: Does he have seats?

Tim: If you stay put he'll be with you shortly.

Man: Will he get us a seat?

Woman: It doesn't have to be great.

Tim: He'll be here in a minute.

Man: I don't approve of your service.

Tim: If you'd like to go through to the bar area. We'll treat you to a complimentary drink while you wait.

Man: I ain't going nowhere.

Woman: Come on Wookie. Maybe they got sandwiches.

Man: I bet your show stinks too huh?

Blanche: *(Calling over)* It does actually.

Man: What?

Blanche: there's not enough arse fucking for our tastes.

Tim: Blanche.

Man: What did he just say?

Tim: The manager's on his way...

(Tim starts to lower the shutter on his window.)

Man: What did he just say?

Tim: ...he'll be here shortly so...

(The window is shut)

Man: Hey!

Tim: Thankyou.

Man: Faggot boy!

Blanche: Oh fuck off John Wayne.

Tim: *(Ringing the bar)* Joan – Tim – Another two drinks please. He'll authorise – 'cos I'll stuff his head up his arse if he doesn't.

Blanche: *(Into 1)* Good news pumpkin. The Mr Wellings is on his way, get them nice and riled for him.

Tim: The fucker was over the pub again.

Blanche: She's a cunt dear. *(Into 1)* Not you sweet pea.

Tim: With that bandy legged witch from upstairs.

Blanche: *(Into 1)* When was the last time you saw a man naked James?

Tim: *(Standing)* Fuck this.

(Tim moves to the back of the office. A sharp whistling comes from phone 2.)

Blanche: *(Into 1)* Hold on. *(Into 2)* Wait you little turd. *(Into 1)* Not you. *(Into 3)* Or you. *(Another whistle from 2)* What?! No, they're all gone.

Tim: *(Sitting)* Shit.

Blanche: *(Into 2)* No. All of them. Everything.

Tim: Shit.

(Tim rolls up sheets of paper and shoots them, basketball fashion, into a bin.)

Blanche: *(Into 2)* No. Not a sausage. Not even a chipolata.

Tim: Shit.

Blanche: *(Into 2)* Not a restricted view I or a crap box.

Tim: Shit.

Blanche: Or a milk crate or a space hopper.

Tim: Shit.

Blanche: Not a single solitary succulent sordid somnolent...

Tim: Shit.

Blanche: Strawberry flavoured sickle-backed Siamese stunt-seat.

Tim: Shit.

Blanche: Okay? *(A whistle comes from phone 3, Blanche angrily talks into it)* Oh piss off!

(Blanche tosses the phones away.)

Tim: This is fucked.

(Everyone is still. Only phone 4 ringing disturbs the peace. It stops. Pause.)

Blanche: Peace.

(Pause.)

Tim: Come on. Let's cash up and fuck off. I've had enough.

Blanche: Ooh big Timbo's in charge.

Rosie: Late home again I suppose.

Tim: *(Settling at the desk to do the figures)* Let's get on then.

Blanche: Drinkies first.

Tim: I want to get home.

Rosie: Oh me Oh my.

Blanche: When the going gets tough the tough get pissed.

(Rosie starts pouring large vodkas.)

Tim: I can't believe that guy, he's a wanker.

Blanche: Oh but he does it so well.

(Phone 4 rings and Rosie goes for it.)

Tim: Don't...

(Too late. Rosie mouths "sorry".)

Rosie: Agh! Wellings Tim.

Tim: The wanker in question. *(Into the phone)* Yup. Thirty two altogether.

Blanche: Thirty six.

Tim: Thirty six.

Rosie: *(Leaning over Tim and calling)* Wanker.

Tim: I know. I don't know. Look if I knew that it wouldn't have... All you can do is... We've sat the ones with tickets from us, you'll have to lob out the rest. James has got a list. Yes you can. Because it's your job. It's not our fault eith... look...

We've just spent the last hour... I've had half of North America screaming their bollocks off at me...

Rosie: And tits.

Tim: *(Into phone)* Yeah.

Blanche: That's a lot of tits.

Tim: *(Into phone)* I appreciate that Trev...

Rosie: And a load of bollocks.

Blanche: Hallelujah.

Tim: Just say... We'll have to look into it. Look pull yourself together. I couldn't give a shit what she promised...

Blanche: Oh my God.

Tim: ...you're supposed to be at work.

Blanche: I feel quite sick.

Tim: Look Trev... Trev... It's full. There-are-no-seats. None. *(Aside)* Jesus pig fucker. *(Into phone)* Look. We'll look into it. It means we'll look into it. Well what else can... Do it. No. Because I'm having a fucking drink. *(He slams the phone down)* Bastard.

Blanche: Shit.

Rosie: Mongoid.

(Rosie hands out vodkas.)

Blanche: Thankyou Rose, our tower of strength.

Rosie: Load of bollocks.

Tim: What an arsehole.

(Phone rings. Tim looks at Blanche hopefully.)

Blanche: Don't look at me.

(Tim sighs and picks up the phone.)

Tim: Yep. Look get a fucking grip will you. Well fucking report me then. I couldn't give a shit. We've done our bit mate. That's your fucking problem. It's what they pay you for. Look if she's such a sure thing she'll keep. *(Slams phone down)* Fucking hell.

Blanche: When was she ever not a sure thing?

Rosie: If you're prepared to queue.

Tim: I always thought he was one of yours.

Blanche: We wouldn't have him dear.

Rosie: She must have no pride at all.

Tim: At least she doesn't disappear off the face of the planet.

Blanche: Oh God, here we go.

Rosie: She's not from this planet. Nobody's tits stick out like that.

Blanche: What did she promise by the way? On second thought I don't want to know.

Tim: No you don't.

Rosie: Yuck.

Blanche: (*Downs his vodka*) Wench, more drink. I must wash away the taste.

Rosie: (*Going for more drinks*) I am your slave.

Tim: Can somebody fetch these tickets.

Rosie: What tickets?

Tim: The doubles.

Rosie: I'm only paid 'til eight o'clock.

Tim: How kind of you to volunteer.

Rosie: God. I do everything round here.

Blanche: Pa!

Rosie: I do, the tea and...

Blanche: And?

Rosie: All the shit jobs. It's not fair.

Tim: (*Pointing*) Centre doors.

Rosie: I'm doing the drinks.

Tim: They're with James.

Blanche: Lover boy's waiting.

Rosie: He can just bloody wait then can't he.

Blanche: Oh? Do I detect something awry in the little pink garden.

Rosie: Hmm.

Blanche: Well come on, tell auntie.

Rosie: No. You'll only go blabbing.

Blanche: I do not go blabbing!

Rosie: Then who told James about the German exchange?

Tim: Will one of you just go.

Blanche: Tim! You insensitive brute!

Tim: Look...

Blanche: The girl's clearly in trauma.

Tim: *(Turning to the cashing up)* Oh have it your own bloody way.

Blanche: I know what I'm going to do tonight. I'm going to sing. Fuck the neighbours. Sondheim. No. Rogers and Hammerstein.

Rosie: Ice?

Blanche: Please. My little man came over and tuned me up, so I'm raring to go.

Rosie: Tim?

Tim: Shh.

Rosie: Oh God.

Blanche: Yes. *(Sings)* I'm just a girl who can't say no...

Tim: Shhh.

(Rosie sidles up to Blanche and hands him his drink.)

Rosie: Blanche?

Blanche: Oh, I recognise that tone.

Rosie: Can you coach me? I mean could you?

Tim: Oi.

Blanche: I could have a listen. Find something to suit you.

Tim: *(Not looking up)* A torch song maybe?

Rosie: *(Flicking the Vs at Tim)* Are these yours?

Tim: Agh.

Blanche: We'll sort you out.

Tim: Look, you're putting me off.

Rosie: You butted in.

Tim: Precisely.

Blanche: Oh God silence reigns.

Tim: And one of you go and get these tickets please.

Rosie: What's got into him?

Blanche: Not nearly enough dear.

Tim: Just a few minutes.

(Rosie and Blanche confer, giggling. Tim works. Blanche begins to hum. He catches Rosie's eye. Rosie and Blanche sneak around the back of Tim in silence. They count three then burst boldly into song. Tim doesn't jump.)

Blanche and Rosie: *(Singing)* There's a place for us etc etc

Tim: *(Not looking up)* Do you want to get home tonight or not?

(Rosie and Blanche keep the song going, one humming/singing when the other speaks.)

Blanche: Not a bad pair of lungs.

Rosie: *(Hitching up her boobs)* Why thank you sir.

Tim: Keep it down. There's a show going on.

Blanche: Pah! Amateurs. *(Sings on)*

(The phone rings.)

Tim: Oh bugger off.

Blanche: *(Answering the phone)* B.O. Yep. Tim, his nibs.

Tim: Great. *(Takes the phone)* Yeah. No. No I've told you, nothing. I've honestly I've no... *(turns to Rosie and Blanche who, are still singing)* Shhh. Shut up. *(They sing louder. Back to the phone)* I don't know. Too bad. Listen, we've spent all night taking shit 'cos of... yeah. Well the sooner you do it the sooner you can get back to Madame X, now do your bloody job.

(Tim slams the phone down. Rosie and Blanche applaud.)

Rosie, please go and get those tickets or we'll be here all fucking night.

Rosie: Tim.

Tim: "Rosie".

Rosie: *(Relenting and heading for the door)* You treat me like shit here.

(The phone rings.)

Tim: *(Picks up phone)* Box!

Rosie: You'll pay for this. It's bad karma. It'll catch up with you.

Tim: No! *(Slams the phone down)*

Blanche: You'll come back as an actress.

Rosie: *(At the door)* Bastard.

(Rosie exits.)

Blanche: *(Singing)* A place for us... .

(The phone rings again. Tim furiously snatches it up.)

Tim: Look you're not getting me out of here, you do your bloody job and I'll do mine.

Blanche: Go girl! *(sings on)*

Tim: *(Shocked)* Hello... hello. It's me. No I... Yeah... Uh... Where are you? *(To Blanche)* Shut up. *(Blanche ignores Tim and sings on. Tim speaks into the phone)* Where? Blanche, shut up! *(Blanche shuts up)*

Blanche: (Oh God)

Tim: And the wee fella? Where'd you go I...? He lied to me then. I thought he was. Well I didn't know how hard I was supposed to look... No. How's Joey? How? *(Laughs)* I see. Nearly done. Problems, lots. I'll try and be quick. It's just a bad time. ...yes I know. I know it is. There's nothing I can do. Fuck ups. Everywhere. No. No he's not he... yeah... the ward. Yeah. Okay. You'll be there? Yes. Okay. Bye. *(Slowly puts the phone down)* Ding ding. Round seven thousand four hundred and ninety one.

Blanche: Back from the wild blue yonder?

Tim: Five fucking weeks and she's calling me darling.

Blanche: How sweet.

Tim: Bad sign.

Blanche: How's the child thing?

Tim: He's fine. He banged his head but... you know. Good. Huge lump by all accounts.

Blanche: You want to go poppet? I can sort this out.

Tim: Are you sure?

Blanche: I can handle it.

Tim: Yeah. *(Looks at Blanche. Reaches for the vodka)* Courage.

(Tim tops up his drink and does likewise for Blanche.)

Blanche: You okay pussy cat?

Tim: She's cooking dinner. Spells trouble.

Blanche: Be brave.

Tim: Oh I will. I expect we'll sit down like two adults and be honest with each other for a bit. Reach an impasse, have a shag to ease the tension then start getting pissed off with each other all over again. *(Toasts)* Love is a many splendoured thing Blanche.

Blanche: Don't be so cynical...

(A drunk and furtive Sasha peeps around the open door.)

Sasha: Hello.

Blanche: Sasha.

Tim: Alright.

Sasha: Rough night?

(Rosie bursts in.)

Rosie: Jesus. Men.

Blanche: Oh God.

Rosie: What is it with them?

Blanche: The shoulders do it for me.

Rosie: I think you lot've got the right idea. Men and women just weren't meant to... For Christ's sake he's so bloody... vain. And pig headed. And his feet stink. No more. Never again. When I get broody it's a wank and a teaspoon for me. I hope the lot of them drop dead.

Blanche: Oh but he's got an arse to die for.

Rosie: I know. Where's my drink.

(Rosie shoves the bundle of tickets into Tim's grasp.)

Tim: Thankyou.

(Tim looks at the tickets. He is immediately struck. He looks at Sasha.)

Sasha: Can I come in?

Tim: Close the door.

(Sasha enters and closes the door. Tim sits and checks through the tickets and the seating plan. Sasha, unnoticed, carries a large hamper through to the kitchenette.)

Blanche: What did he say?

Rosie: Nothing.

Blanche: Nothing?

Rosie: I was chatting away. Looked straight through me.

Blanche: Why?

Rosie: It wasn't even my fault the bastard.

Blanche: Prey tell prey tell.

Rosie: It was my mum.

Blanche: Ugh, threesomes.

Rosie: She came into the flat this morning. She got herself a key cut.

Blanche: She's only concerned.

Rosie: She bloody is now.

Blanche: Wh...?

Rosie: Well I didn't know she had a key. It's her own bloody fault.

Blanche: What is?

Rosie: Oh use your imagination.

Blanche: Alas I do nothing but.

Rosie: James and me were on the kitchen floor.

Blanche: Oh the poor woman.

Rosie: It was the fromage frais that did it.

Blanche: What did she say?

Rosie: Not much, just went a funny colour and left.

Blanche: But isn't that what you wanted little girly.

Rosie: I guess. Didn't exactly inspire Jim though. I've never seen anything shrink so fast.

Blanche: Very difficult for a young man.

Rosie: He lost the plot altogether.

Blanche: What a waste.

Rosie: Well no not really, I needed a lie in. But of course when I told him that... I mean I was trying to be nice. So mum's disappeared in a huff... she's not been home... and Jim thinks I'm patronising his willy. Christ. One minute you're slinky babe woman, the next you're glued to the lino with congealed yoghurt.

Blanche: *(Pouring her a drink)* Well, you know what Maggie Windsor says...

Rosie: *(Taking the drink)* Chin bloody chin.

(She downs her drink in one and pours herself another. Blanche sits over the cashing up. Pause.)

Blanche: Gimme gimme gimme Tim.

Tim: What?

Blanche: The offending articles.

(Tim hesitates.)

Sex kitten.

(Tim hands Blanche the tickets.)

Sasha: *(To Tim)* I was gonna come earlier but I got caught up.

Blanche: *(Looking through tickets)* What, my little chickadee?

Tim: They're his bloody tickets.

Blanche: No they're not.

Tim: They are Blanche. *(To Sasha)* Aren't they.

Blanche: No look. They're Perry's. Perry's. These two as well. Dress circle.

Tim: The allocation.

Blanche: *(Brandishing a ticket voucher)* Look, Perry's.

Tim: Six... six... six there. Special June allocation remember.

Blanche: I'll get the book.

Tim: Blanche they are.

(Blanche fetches a small hardback book from behind the safe – it has "Mr Blackpenny" written on the front. He leafs through it. Rosie goes through to the kitchenette. She notices the hamper and starts rooting through it.)

Blanche: Whoever it is, Perry's gonna have his kneecaps for earrings.

Tim: You're not fucking wrong.

Sasha: They're mine Blanche.

Blanche: Enough.

Sasha: No. They are.

(Blanche, looking at the book, sees that they are indeed Sasha's tickets.)

I would've come before...

Tim: Fucking great.

Rosie: *(Pulling a bottle of Champagne from the hamper)* What?

Sasha: I had to.

Tim: Had to?

Blanche: *(Looking through seating plans)* Oh my Christ what have you done?

Sasha: I...

Blanche: What have you done?

Sasha: Perry doesn't take tickets, you know...

Blanche: Jesus...

Sasha: ...just seat numbers. I sold him the list of numbers. He issued vouchers to the punters...

Blanche: Christ.

Sasha: Then I sold the tickets on the street.

Tim: How many?

Sasha: About half. *(Pause)* There was nothing else I could do.

Blanche: ...Three months worth...

Sasha: Yeah.

Tim: Fuck.

Sasha: I had to Blanche I...

Blanche: And what, pray, are we supposed to do?

(Pause.)

Sasha: I don't know.

Blanche: Say nothing and hope nobody notices thirty six homicidal tourists wandering the foyer every night?

Rosie: *(Removing posh nibbled from the hamper)* Have you seen all this shit?

Sasha: I needed the cash.

Blanche: What about us? If I lose this job... look at me. Look at me. A doctor? Bricklayer? I don't fucking think so.

Sasha: It won't come to that will it?

Blanche: No? Well then, tell me how we're going to explain this little lot. *(The tickets)* And this. *(The Plan)* Thet... fucking... stampede. Huh?

(Sasha doesn't reply. Tim goes to the computer and looks through the seating plans.)

Rosie: There's an entire bloody salmon in here.

Tim: I knew we shouldn't have got into this.

Blanche: I thought... "Sasha, he's..." I thought you were okay. What can I say Tim, you were right.

Sasha: Look, I'm here aren't I? I wouldn't just... do it...

Blanche: I rather thought you had.

Sasha: Roy said...

Blanche: Roy?

Sasha: He said you'd know what to do, he said...

Blanche: Don't try and bring Roy in to this.

Sasha: I'm not Blanche. The flat and... We had to have the floor up, and the heating... we needed the money...

Blanche: *(To Tim)* Do you know what to do?

Tim: What?

Blanche: What to do. With this. *(The tickets)*

Tim: Pfff.

Sasha: Look. I'm here aren't I?

Blanche: Fucking marvellous.

Sasha: It's what I came to tell you.

Blanche: Oh how fucking kind. How fucking thoughtful.

Sasha: We needed a place for him to go.

Rosie: *(Popping salmon into her mouth)* It's good. *(She notices the tension)* What is it?

Blanche: Ask the man with the exquisite new home.

(Pause. Sasha goes to his bag and produces a hefty envelope. He throws it onto the side.)

Sasha: You think I'd just do this? Okay. There's your fucking money. Alright. Or most of it. I don't know.

Blanche: Oh yes. That's alright then.

Tim: What about the flat?

Blanche: Let's retire the old gal.

Sasha: Do what you want.

Blanche: I could lounge on a chaise longue all day.

Tim: Shut up Blanche. The flat.

Blanche: Eating chocolates.

Tim: Shh.

Blanche: I could even get cats.

Tim: Blanche shut up!

Blanche: Stop telling me to shut up! You'll make me upset.

(Short pause.)

Tim: What about the flat?

Sasha: I just wanted it ready for him. It couldn't wait. He hated it in there... you saw it. Corpses everywhere. You know you watch somebody... and I would sit there... I wouldn't just do this. You think I'd... Anyway. It doesn't matter. It doesn't have to be finished. He doesn't need it now. Okay. So... there's your fucking money.

Tim: When?

Sasha: Two twenty one this morning. Okay. So I've brought back the money so...

(Sasha chokes on his words. He collects himself.)

I bought Champagne and stuff. Some treats.

(He goes to the hamper and picks out a bottle of Champagne. A knock at the office door.)

You know. The traditional... send off. I thought you might like to drink it with me.

(He holds out the bottle.)

Have some. I bought it for you. Go on. Have a fucking drink.

(Another knock.)

Rosie: Who's that?

Tim: I don't know.

(Another knock.)

Sasha: *(Uneasy)* Are you expecting anyone?

Tim: Not me.

Rosie: It's probably dick face.

(Another knock.)

Tim: Well get it and see.

Rosie: Not my turn.

Tim: Bloody hell. *(To Rosie as he goes to the door)* I would get you sacked but there doesn't seem much point.

(Tim opens the door to reveal Woman 2.)

Woman 2: Are you the man I spoke to?

Tim: Pardon?

Woman 2: Are you?

Tim: I'm afraid we're closed.

Woman 2: Where's the man I spoke to? *(She looks into the office)* What's going on in here?

(Blanche storms over to the door.)

Blanche: Fuck off!

Woman 2: I beg your pardon.

Blanche: *(Bundling Woman 2 out)* Fuck off fuck off fuck off fuck off fuck off!

(Blanche slams the door shut in her face. She calls from outside.)

Woman 2: I shall fetch the manager.

Rosie: You'll be lucky.

Blanche: God. They're everywhere. Why can't they just leave us alone?

(Pause.)

Tim: I'll fetch some glasses.

(Tim goes about fetching glasses from the kitchenette. He stops and holds up the doubled tickets.)

So all this is just – phhh.

Sasha: I suppose so.

Tim: Christ. That's almost funny.

(Tim picks up the Champagne, pops and pours.)

Rosie: *(An idea)* Hey! *(She goes to her bag)*

Blanche: What?

Rosie: You'll see.

(Rosie produces a box of candles from her bag.)

They were for my slinky pad.

(She starts placing them around the office. Blanche, Tim and Sasha stand with their full glasses.)

Sasha: He wanted a cup of tea. So I went to get him one. 'cos he'd been talking and everything. It was really good. The machine was out and when I got back... I could see... so I just watched him go. I've got his things... I've... got them. I've been wandering round all day. I'm really pissed actually.

Blanche: Oh Sash.

Sasha: *(Ignoring Blanche's sudden warmth)* Cheers.

Rosie: Have you got a light?

(Blanche tuts and roots around for his lighter. Tim produces it from the side and hands it to Rosie. She goes around the office lighting the candles.)

Tim: What the fuck are you doing?

Rosie: You'll see.

Blanche: Well hurry child.

Rosie: Nearly there.

(She finishes lighting the candles and grandly turns out the lights. Candle light Obviously.)

Da-daaaa!

Blanche: Very nice dear, now come and slurp.

Rosie: Gee thanks. You like it Sash?

Sasha: Oh yeah.

Rosie: See. Some people appreciate me.

(They don't quite toast)

Tim: Well.

Rosie: Fuck 'em.

Sasha: Yeah. Fuck 'em.

(They drink.)

Blanche: Mmmm. Yum diddley-um-dumcious.

(Rosie downs her Champagne in one and burps.)

Rosie: Fizzy.

Blanche: It's champagne.

Rosie: *(Sarcastic)* No!

Sasha: It's the good stuff. The best, and there's some salmon. A whole salmon, and some caviar, not the best 'cos they were out and the manager didn't like me drunk in his shop. And some truffles, chocolate not... pigs and that, and some good vodka, Russian. And some other stuff I got too. Good stuff. For you good people.

Tim: Come on Sash.

Sasha: Fuck off of me! I don't give a fuck. He was our friend. You think I fucking screwed you. Just for the fucking hell of it. Me? You're screwed the minute you get out of bed. Cos you're here being a – fucking – good people.

Blanche: Sash love you're drunk you...

Sasha: Oh fuck off Auntie Tom.

Rosie: Leave Blanchie alone.

(Sasha picks up the cash.)

Sasha: You're so fucking scared of doing yourself a favour. It's pathetic. Whose money is this? Yours? Mine? Roy's? Mr fucking producer, the suckers standing out there in the fucking rain? It's money. One sucker gives it to another who gives it to another. Little pieces of paper. So what's so horrifying? It isn't clean, or fair, or right or good? What is it? How-much-is-it? *(Beat)* Hm?

(Pause.)

I didn't want to talk about this I didn't come here to think about this. I thought if I came here we could... But you see...?

(Pause.)

Well I'm a man of my word. You got to say that. I promised Roy I'd give it you back. So have it. Burn it. Throw it away. I don't care. It's yours. Personally I'd rather leave you here to fucking rot. Okay?

(Pause.)

That's right.

(Sasha sways to the door and exits, slamming it behind him. Pause.)

Blanche: I don't think we're in Kansas any more.

Tim: I want to get pissed.

Blanche: I am.

Tim: No. I mean pissed. Falling down pissed. Puking up, crying at the bus stop pissed. And then I want to get in a fight, and get beaten shitless and left somewhere in a ditch where it's raining.

Blanche: I think I'll pass.

Tim: I don't feel like a very nice person.

Blanche: No. Me neither

(Rosie begins to sob gently. Tim and Blanche look at each other, then roll their eyes heavenward. Blanche goes and cuddles her.)

Blanche: I remember poor Ken Lovegrove's do at the Palladium. That was a night. All the stars came. We hobbled and we knobbed. Pissed as farts dear.

(The internal phone rings.)

I seem to remember having bizarre sex in the Prince of Wales' Box. Drank so much Champagne I pissed myself on the bus and it was still fizzy.

Tim: *(Answering phone)* Yep. Box.

Rosie: He was so nasty.

Tim: Okay *(He puts the phone down)*

Blanche: He's hurt. And when you hurt being nice doesn't always get you through sugar plum.

Rosie: No?

Tim: Your mother's at the stage door.

Rosie: You're kidding.

Tim: I'm afraid not.

Rosie: *(Storming out)* Right!

Blanche: A child.

(Rosie slams the door behind her. Pause.)

Tim: We fucked up.

Blanche: Yes. We did.

(Pause.)

Tim: Do you know what he meant?

Blanche: Who, Sasha?

Tim: Roy... what to do.

Blanche: I suppose we could just come clean and sort of plead for leniency. We were only complicit. Sort of.

**Tim and
Blanche:** No.

Tim: *(Picking up the money)* And all this money.

(Pause.)

Blanche: How much?

Tim: I dunno. Half the allocation. 36 a show, 35 quid each...

Blanche: Yum yum.

Tim: Too right.

(Silence. They look at the money.)

Blanche: And what exactly are you suggesting?

Tim: Nothing. I don't know.

(Pause.)

Blanche: When I was boy. In nineteen hundred and two. Before I pissed it up and pissed it away. I ran away to London. And there I was, standing on the platform with my suitcase like Little Orphan fucking Annie or some such dreadful shit. And I met a man on a building site. *(Beat)* Working.

Tim: No.

Blanche: It's true. He was a resting actor who said "Go West"! And here I came. Here and there.

Tim: Are you about to criticise me?

Blanche: Heaven forfend. I'm your favourite auntie aren't I?

(Tim looks at Blanche, puzzled.)

Aren't I?

Tim: *(Smiles)* Get to the bloody point.

Blanche: So anyway here I got. And this funky white pappafucker really started to get down. You dig?

Tim: Blanche...

Blanche: I'm coming to it. There's all the gin I can drink, an endless stream of young boys parading past my window and the peasants baying for my blood. It's a puff's paradise. This puff anyway. I don't need money. I need a place. A genteel environment.

Tim: It's not so genteel at the moment.

Blanche: It's enough Tim. Where I came from... I would have settled for this. Right at the start. I would have. And I'm still here. And here, Tim, is where I am. My little hidy-hole. But you... I can't for the life of me... Why are you hiding here with me?

Tim: Hiding?

Blanche: Yes Tim hiding. You don't need to.

Tim: Nor do you.

Blanche: (*Scoffs*) Sweet boy.

(*Pause. Blanche looks at Tim.*)

Tim: What?

Blanche: Take it.

(*Short pause.*)

Tim: No.

Blanche: Take it. Go on. Fly. Be free. You heard Sash. Do yourself a favour.

Tim: I couldn't.

Blanche: Who's to know Tim? Roy's gonna get the blame. If we try to be honest about this then we're royally shafted. (*Beat*) Think about it.

Rosie: (*From the foyer*) Fuck you needle dick!

Blanche: Oh but it's sad. Flat Champagne on a Monday night. I was born for better things. Hors d'ouvres and cocktails. (*Going to the door*) Dom Perignon and sparkling conversation.

Rosie: (*Knocking*) Can I come in?

Blanche: (*Opening the door*) Instead...

Rosie: (*Entering*) Hi fatty.

Blanche: Hurry inside you stupid fluffy article.

Rosie: I was banging for ages.

Blanche: Oh come come.

Rosie: Nearly ruined my big exit.

Blanche: Surely not.

Rosie: I swanned off I did.

Blanche: That's my gal.

Rosie: He went off to one side. To "talk about it sensibly" (*She puts her fingers down her throat*) Beugh.

Blanche: And?

Rosie: I dunno. I went over to his mates and told them he's shagging all their girlfriends.

Blanche: No, you're mother.

Rosie: Oh, her. (*She holds up a set of keys*) I she wants another floor show she'll have to go to Amsterdam. But! She did have her reasons...

(*She grandly presents Blanche with a crumpled letter.*)

I'm going to drama school.

(*Blanche reads.*)

Blanche: Oh my little lambkin.

Rosie: I'm going to live forever.

(*Blanche passes letter to Tim.*)

Blanche: You're going to learn how to fly.

Tim: Fucking hell, never thought you had it in you.

Rosie: Thankyou Tim.

Blanche: We must celebrate.

Rosie: I'm going to be a star. I can stay in bed all bloody day. And be rude to interviewers. And the shagging! I could probably shag...

Blanche: Mercy no.

Tim: Spare us the details.

Rosie: Huh. I wouldn't touch yours if it rattled the light fittings. Let's go to dinner shall we.

Blanche: Dinner?

Rosie: Come on Blanche – a celebration. I've jettisoned the bottom. And the old witch left her key...

Tim: She probably had three cut.

Rosie: You're Quite funny for an asshole. Come on Blanche, it'll be fun.

Blanche: Tim?

Tim: I gotta skedaddle.

Blanche: But Roy...

(Tim goes to the hamper.)

Rosie: Chinese?

Tim: What about this lot?

Blanche: Oh yes. How about my place – a picnic at the piano. We can warble and guzzle and fart. Roy would've liked that.

Rosie: Alright.

Tim: We'd better shift. Apart from anything else I don't fancy getting my head ripped off at the interval.

(Blanche turns to Tim.)

Blanche: Is there anything needs doing? Apart from everything of course.

Tim: You go on.

Blanche: There's all this.

Tim: Fuck it. Go.

Blanche: Sure?

Tim: Go on.

(Blanche and Rosie go to put on their coats. As they do so, Tim, unseen, takes up the cash. He splits it roughly three ways and shoves two of the bundles into the hamper.)

Rosie: I'm starving.

Blanche: I am going to get royally pissed. *(To Tim)* And you – have got to get home.

Tim: Yeah.

Blanche: Give her hell.

Tim: I'll try not to but I expect I will.

Rosie: Come on, the bell's gonna go.

Blanche: Oh God. Come on then troll child.

Rosie: Whisk me away.

Blanche: Oh no. I'd miss the deep gentle tones of effeminate conversation.

Rosie: My luck. My sugar daddy's a sugar mummy.

Tim: Blanche.

Blanche: Uh-huh.

Tim: I figured out what to do.

Blanche: Ah. There's my smart boy.

Rosie: Come on you sad old mincer.

Blanche: Tell me tomorrow.

Tim: Okay.

(Pause.)

Blanche: Tomorrow?

Tim: Seeya Blanche.

(Blanche touches Tim's face.)

Blanche: My favourite boy.

Tim: Bugger off.

Rosie: Fooooood!

Blanche: I was trying to be poignant.

Rosie: Not while I'm starving to death.

Blanche: Seeya Tim.

Rosie: Ciao laughing boy.

Tim: Piss off you old tart.

Rosie: *(Sing song)* I'm going to drama school.

Blanche: Mr DeMille I'm ready for my close up.

(Rosie and Blanche exit The office door is left open. Pause. Tim snatches up the remaining cash and stuffs it into his jacket He goes to the phone and dials.)

Tim: It's me. Yeah. I'm on my way. I know. I couldn't get away. It's Roy. Yeah. This morning. Oh I'm okay. Yeah. I gotta go. I'll get a cab – Give me half an hour. Seeya. I will. Bye. Hey. Let's er... let's talk about the Yorkshire thing. Okay. Yeah. Bye.

(Tim Looks at the till. He takes it to the safe along with the money trays from the windows. He locks the safe. He then goes to the desk and gets a pen and paper. He writes a note. As he does so, Woman 2 enters tentatively through the open door.)

Woman 2: Hello?

(Tim looks up. The two stare at each other for a moment)

Woman 2: Hello. Is the manager in here?

Tim: No. No he's not.

Woman 2: I can't find anybody. They've all disappeared. *(Pause)* Can you... it's my father. He's trapped in the upper circle.

(Tim stares at her. He goes to the phone and dials.)

Tim: *(Into the phone)* Hi. Trev. It's Tim downstairs. Yeah look listen... there'll be other... she'll be back here again. Madagascar? I'm not laughing. Listen there's

a lady here whose father needs a hand down from the upper circle. No. Oh yes, over twenty one. I've got to go. Hey, I'm finished here. Cheers Trev.

(Tim hangs up and turns to Woman 2.)

The manager'll be down. You can't miss him, he'll probably make a pass at you.

Woman 2: I love theatre folk.

Tim: Can't see why. When he comes, give him this.

(Tim hands Woman 2 his note in an envelope.)

Woman 2: Are those my tickets?

Tim: No.

Woman 2: My tickets were no good.

Tim: You're not missing much.

Woman 2: Father wanted to see it. It's his birthday. He's ninety one. I'm nearly sixty eight.

Tim: You'll be sure to give it to him won't you?

Woman 2: *(Tearful)* Yes.

Tim: Tell him... I've put it all in the safe.

(Woman 2 is too emotional to respond.)

Tim: And tell him... *(He looks at Woman 2)* Look.

(Tim goes to the computer, looks through the plans and starts reserving tickets.)

Tim: What's your name?

Woman 2: Patricia.

Tim: Your surname.

Woman 2: Greaves.

Tim: Right Mrs Greaves...

Woman 2: Miss Greaves.

(Tim presents her with two tickets.)

Tim: Miss Greaves. Royal Box. Saturday night. Seven thirty.

Woman 2: Saturday?

Tim: Yes.

Woman 2: But I've got to dress Tufty for the show.

(Tim sharply turns back to the computer and makes another booking.)

Tim: Monday?

Woman 2: Thankyou.

Tim: You're welcome.

Woman 2: *(Tearful again)* You've been so kind.

Tim: No, not really. Now give this to the manager and tell him... oh sod it just give it to him.

Woman 2: Yes.

Tim: I should've seen. *(Smirks)* Tell him that.

Woman 2: You should've seen.

Tim: Perfect Miss Greaves.

(Tim goes to leave.)

Tim: Oh.

(He offers her his office keys.)

And lock up on your way out. *(She hesitates)* Go on.

(Woman 2 takes the keys. Tim gathers his things and leaves. Woman 2 stands. A long pause. Eventually Tim re-enters. Woman 2 hears him coming and looks expectant She sags when she sees Tim.)

Tim: No. When he comes. Tell him I said he's an arsehole.

(Tim goes, leaving Woman 2 alone.)

Fade.