

Audition Pieces

1. HARVEY, BERNARD & Belinda

HARVEY: Bang! Look at that. Blown them to smithereens. Ought to have the kids down to watch this. Just up their street. Next time you do one of your shows for them, Bernard, take my tip. Put a bit of blood in it. They'll love it.

BERNARD: (*unconvinced*) Oh – hardly.

HARVEY: For God's sake, get them used to real life, man. You're a doctor, you ought to appreciate that. Give them some guts.

BERNARD: (*muttering*) I'm sorry, we don't agree, Harvey, we really don't. I'm sorry.

HARVEY: Boom! There goes another one.

BERNARD: We never have. It's a vicious spiral. You introduce children to violence in adults and the next thing you know, they're –

HARVEY: Well, I'll tell you this....

BERNARD: -imitating them...

HARVEY: I'll tell you what I've given them for Christmas and I'm not ashamed to say so. I've given them all a gun. All except Gary who's got a crossbow because he had a gun last year. But Lydia, Katie, Flora and Zoe, they're not getting any of your wee-weeing dollies and nurses' uniforms from me. They've all got guns, so there.

BERNARD: Well, I'm sorry, I think that is irresponsible and if I were a parent, I would...

HARVEY: But you're not, Bernard, you're not and that's your trouble. You've got no kids and you don't know a bloody thing about them.

BERNARD: I'm not arguing, Harvey, I am not arguing. We have this discussion every Christmas and I am not going to be drawn into it again. We beg to differ.

BELINDA: Now, what's going on?

BERNARD: Nothing. Nothing.

BELINDA: I don't want any of that, please. The holiday has just started and I can do without that.

BERNARD: (*sulkily*) I should speak to Harvey, not me.

HARVEY: Aha, wait till you see what I've got you for Christmas.

BERNARD: Me.

HARVEY: Yes, you.

BERNARD: What?

HARVEY: Aha. Something to wake your ideas up. You'll see.

BERNARD: If its another of your awful jokes, I'd prefer not to have it.

BELINDA: Bernard, Phyllis wants you in the kitchen.

BERNARD: (*immediately concerned*) Is she all right?

BELINDA: She seems to be. There's a lot of steam and groaning but I think she's coping.

2. NEVILLE & Eddie

NEVILLE: It just occurred to me, Eddie. Something for you to ponder.

EDDIE: What's that?

NEVILLE: Now I know you left the firm for good reasons. You wanted to start on your own and good luck – nobody minded and we've stayed friends through it all but let's be honest, Eddie, things haven't worked out, have they?

EDDIE: Well...

NEVILLE: So. Now, this is between us. No one else. All right? We're going to open a third branch, all right?

EDDIE: Another?

NEVILLE: Yes.

EDDIE: Where?

NEVILLE: Shall we say not twenty miles south of here.

EDDIE: South? Oh, you mean...

NEVILLE: Right.

EDDIE: Where?

NEVILLE: Main street, OK? Boots the chemist here on the corner before it moved, right?

EDDIE: Yes.

NEVILLE: Then there's the dry cleaners here and the delicatessen on the corner. Do you get me?

EDDIE: By the...

NEVILLE: Yes.

EDDIE: On the other side of...

NEVILLE: Yes, that's it. You've got it, you've got it.

EDDIE: How did you get that?

NEVILLE: Signed yesterday.

EDDIE: They were all after that.

NEVILLE: I know. Still, as I say, we shall shortly be needing a third manager and a full staff. Need I say more?

EDDIE: Well...

NEVILLE: Just think about it. Over the festivities. I must know by the New Year. All right.

EDDIE: (overwhelmed) Yes, yes...

NEVILLE: I'm just going to put this on the bench. Check it over. Won't be a second.

EDDIE: (still rather bewildered) Right. You don't need to go to any...

NEVILLE: No, this is a challenge, this is. You know me, I like a challenge.

3. BELINDA, Neville & Eddie

NEVILLE: (*absorbed in fixing a toy vehicle*) We might pop out in a minute. Eddie and me. For a pint.

BELINDA: Thought you might. (*pause*) Nev?

NEVILLE: Mm?

BELINDA: I'd say, on the whole, we'd stayed a very happy couple, wouldn't you?

NEVILLE: Oh yes.

BELINDA: When you look at some of our friends.

NEVILLE: Mm.

BELINDA: I mean, I know we have rows but all the same, I don't know anybody who seems to be happier than us. Of our age. Younger couples sometimes. Not always. I mean, I think we could both say without any false modesty that we're still very much in love, wouldn't you? (*pause*) I would.

NEVILLE: Mm.

BELINDA: I know it's a difficult thing to define. Love. Obviously, it's not like it used to be but then who'd expect that after – eight and a half years. Perhaps we're not so passionate. But we're still in love. Aren't we?

NEVILLE: Yes.

BELINDA: I think there are definitely other things more important, more lasting than passion. Companionship and sharing the same jokes. And familiarity.

NEVILLE: Sure.

BELINDA: I mean, maybe love's too strong a word to use. Perhaps it's friendship I'm talking about. We're still friends. That's what I mean.

NEVILLE: True.

BELINDA: And there really can be friendship between a man and a woman. Maybe not friends like you and, say, Eddie or between me and some woman friend. I don't think a man and a woman could ever get that close. No. Not as friends.

NEVILLE: No.

BELINDA: But we still definitely have something, don't we? Apart from sharing the same house. And the same children. We must have.

NEVILLE: (*after a pause*) Yes, I'd say that was - very true, yes.

BELINDA: What is?

NEVILLE: What you said. Look I'd better go and get that drink in. You'll be all right, will you?

BELINDA: Yes-yes...

NEVILLE: Cheer up, then. Love me?

BELINDA: Yes.

NEVILLE: That's what I like to hear. (*calling*) Eddie? We're off.

EDDIE: Oh terrific. (*To Belinda*) We're just going to the pub.

BELINDA: (*savagely*) Oh super, super!

4. PATTIE & EDDIE

PATTIE: You still here?

EDDIE: Yes.

PATTIE: (*indicating his book*) You'll ruin that before he gets it.

EDDIE: It's good.

PATTIE: Are you coming then?

EDDIE: Coming?

PATTIE: For a walk. We're off for a walk.

EDDIE: Now?

PATTIE: Yes. Now.

EDDIE: I've only just got up.

PATTIE: That's not my fault. The kids have been up since six. So have I.

EDDIE: Then you go for a walk.

PATTIE: Look, you said last night you would.

EDDIE: Did I?

PATTIE: Oh Eddie, honestly, I've told them you're coming now.

EDDIE: Well, tell them I'm not.

PATTIE: You tell them. I'm not telling them. You tell them for once. You tell them you can't be bothered to go for a walk with them. You'd sooner sit reading comic books.

EDDIE: Pattie, just go for a walk if you're going. Go on. Leave me alone this morning, please. (*pause*) Go on.

PATTIE: And you can stop reading this as well.

EDDIE: Give it back.

PATTIE: It's supposed to be for Gary. It's not yours. I bought it for Gary.

EDDIE: Pattie, give it to me, please.

PATTIE: No, I'm wrapping it up for Gary.

EDDIE: Pattie, you will make me do something I will really regret in a minute. Now put the bloody book back on the table.

PATTIE: No.

EDDIE: Pattie, I'll – I really will – I shall do something – I really will – in a minute. I really will.

PATTIE: It won't be the first time, will it?

EDDIE: I really will.

5. PHYLLIS & CLIVE

PHYLLIS: Do you know. This is the awful thing. Do you know I haven't read your book. Isn't that awful? Are you shocked?

CLIVE: No.

PHYLLIS: Really?

CLIVE: Not at all. I think I'm probably the only person who has read my book actually. I had to. They kept sending me all the proofs. I don't mind if you haven't read it. So long as you've bought it. Oh, Rachel's read it. I forgot about Rachel.

PHYLLIS: Oh yes. Poor Rachel. She reads everything. Nothing else to do. Now. I want you to teach me all about English Literature.

CLIVE: What now?

PHYLLIS: Please. Now. It's now or never. I realize I'm so ignorant. I'm thirty-nine years old. I know you wouldn't think that, but I'm thirty-nine years old and I want to know all about English Literature before it's too late.

CLIVE: Well, I'm really not an expert.

PHYLLIS: Let's start with you. What about you?

CLIVE: Well...

PHYLLIS: I'm dying to know. Where do your books come from? Are all those books up there then? Waiting to come out.

CLIVE: Book.

PHYLLIS: What?

CLIVE: Only one book. I've only written one book.

PHYLLIS: No, I don't understand that. Tell me about you, then. Are you a homosexual, for instance?

CLIVE: Er – no – no, I'm not.

PHYLLIS: That's a relief. A lot of them are, aren't they? Writers. Homosexuals.

CLIVE: Well. I don't know. There's a proportion that are. But then there's a proportion in most professions. Probably no more than there are, say, train drivers.

PHYLLIS: What?

CLIVE: Train drivers.

PHYLLIS: What are?

CLIVE: Homosexuals.

PHYLLIS: Are they?

CLIVE: No.

PHYLLIS: My God, I never knew that.

CLIVE: No, that's not what I'm saying.

PHYLLIS: I mean, my God, Those are great big machines, those trains...

6. BERNARD, Pattie & Harvey

BERNARD: Now. I've got the characters over here. And the scenery I'm keeping on this side. Now, all I want you to do is to be ready to pass me either a character or a piece of scenery as I ask for it.

PATTIE: There's an awful lot of this. Don't we need someone else?

BERNARD: No, no. Too many people and you're all in each other's way. It's hopeless. The less the better. Now. Off we go. Your first job will be to pull the curtain. You pull this for the curtain.

PATTIE: *(pulls)* Right.

HARVEY: Hooray!

BERNARD: Not yet, not yet. Let it down, let it down. I'm not ready.

HARVEY: Boo.

BERNARD: Oh, do be quiet, Harvey. I haven't got my beginners. Pass me the Postman and the pig.

PATTIE: *(searching)* Postman and a pig.

BERNARD: And then I'll need second pig very shortly. I'll keep hold of Postman, but you be ready to take first pig from me when he comes off and then hand me second pig.

PATTIE: Postman and pig.

BERNARD: No, no, that's second pig. I want first pig. That pig. That one there.

PATTIE: *(to Harvey)* Wrong pig. These pigs all look the same.

BERNARD: All right and curtain – UP. *(postman voice)* Well, well, well. Hallo children. *(To Pattie)* Tie it on the hook. On the hook there. *(postman voice)* Hallo there, children.

HARVEY: Hallo.

BERNARD: *(postman voice)* Oh dear that's not a very big hallo. Bet you can make a bigger hallo than that. Let's hear a big hallo. Hallo, children.

HARVEY (roaring) HALLO!

BERNARD *(shocked)* *(postman voice)* Yes, that's better. Well, isn't this a lovely day to be a postman here on the village green. Pom-Pom-de-dom. Well, good day, Mr. Pig. And what's your name may I ask?

(1st pig voice) If you please, Mr. Postman, my name is Hubert Pig. And I'm off to build my house. And I'm looking for some straw to build it with. Good Day.

(to Pattie) Second pig, quickly, second pig.

(postman voice) Well, good day, Mr. Pig. And what's your name may I ask?

(2nd pig voice) If you please, Mr. Postman, my name is Wilfred Pig. And I'm off to build my house. And I'm looking for some sticks to build it with. Good Day.

(to Pattie) Third pig, quickly, third pig.

BERNARD: *(postman voice)* Well, good day, Mr. Pig. And what's your... *(to Pattie)* This is first pig again. I said the third pig.

HARVEY: What happened there? A pig shot on and off.

PATTIE: Unless you know them very well, Bernard, it's hard to tell the difference. Honestly.

7. Rachel, Clive & Belinda

BELINDA: Look, I was just thinking. If you are going for walks around here, you'll need boots.

CLIVE: Oh, I think Rachel's...

BELINDA: Here.

CLIVE: Rachel's just getting me some.

BELINDA: Rachel?

CLIVE: She went to fetch some upstairs.

BELINDA: There's none up there. Have these. They're Nev's. They should fit.

CLIVE: Thanks.

BELINDA: And I brought you a scarf in case you haven't got one. It's mine so please don't lose it.

CLIVE: Thank you.

RACHEL: There. I knew there were some in the attic. I saw them when we were....Oh.

BELINDA: I've just lent him Nev's.

RACHEL: Oh. Well. Wasted journey, wasn't it?

BELINDA: God knows who's those are. Probably belonged to the builders. Are those OK for you?

CLIVE: They're fine. Perfect fit.

BELINDA: Oh wait. Here.

RACHEL: What's that?

BELINDA: It's a scarf for Clive.

RACHEL: He doesn't need a scarf.

BELINDA: Yes, he does. It's cold.

RACHEL: That's your scarf. He can't wear that.

BELINDA: Why not?

RACHEL: It's a woman's scarf. He can't wear a woman's scarf.

BELINDA: It's not a woman's scarf. It's just a scarf.

RACHEL: He'd look extraordinary.

BELINDA: Oh Rachel, don't be idiotic.

RACHEL: I'm not being idiotic. I just refuse to be seen going out with a man dressed in a woman's scarf.

BELINDA: Rachel, for God's sake.

CLIVE: It's all right, really. I don't need a scarf. I've gone off the whole idea of a scarf. Thanks all the same.

8. RACHEL & CLIVE

RACHEL: Here.

CLIVE: What's that?

RACHEL: Sandwiches.

CLIVE: Oh, I don't need...

RACHEL: You will on that train. It stops everywhere. You don't get to London till Thursday.

CLIVE: Well, thank you.

RACHEL: Wait till you see the sandwiches. All my culinary skills to the fore. Took me all last night. Three-inch slices of best white bread. Oh. By the way... (*produces balaclava*) It's bound to be freezing too. I brought you this down. Please. Take it.

CLIVE: Are you sure you don't mind? I mean it's a woman's balaclava.

RACHEL: It's OK. It's this woman's. (*Pause*) Look, Clive...

CLIVE: Yes?

RACHEL: There's something I have to say.

CLIVE: Ah.

RACHEL: Before you go. What you said yesterday to me about what you felt you thought I felt you needed... Well, I think I know why you said it. You said it because of what I'd said to you the night before about what I felt. Didn't you?

CLIVE: (*uncertainly*) Yes, I think so...

RACHEL: About me not being able to give you me because of how I felt.

CLIVE: Yes.

RACHEL: Well, the fact is I do.

CLIVE: What?

RACHEL: Want to give it. If you want it. You see, I think I only said I didn't want to give it because I felt you didn't want it. I think so. (*pause*) So...

CLIVE: I see. Sorry it's a bit early in the morning to... (*Pause*)

RACHEL: Well...I don't know if that changes anything. (*Pause*)

CLIVE: (*impulsively*) God, I've made such a mess of things. The story of my life. Look at me. I'm a writer, for God's sake, a writer. Every time something of value comes along, I...

(*RACHEL sobs loudly*)

Now, Rachel, Rachel...

RACHEL: (*weeping*) I'm sorry. Getting to be a habit now. I'm beginning to enjoy it...