

‘Pure Nectar’

A stage play in three acts

By

Paul Howard Surridge

(Cast in order of appearance)

The cast comprises 5 men and 4 women

Pete Edmonds

Noel Leonard

Roger Blake

Jane Kenyon

Ray Wheeler

Brenda Leonard

Helen Blake

Patricia Edmonds

Mark Tyler

The play is presented in three acts. A single set representing the drawing room at Noel and Brenda’s new home. Please see room layout at back of script. Other scenes for Jane’s flat and the pub snug played in front of curtains. The time is the present.

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Synopsis

Pure Nectar is a comedy requiring a cast of 5 men and 4 women. If male cast numbers are a challenge the parts of Mark and Ray can be performed by the same actor.

Age range: Four men and three women early thirties to mid fifties: One male and one female in mid/late 20's/early thirties.

Work mates from a local engineering firm (Pete, Roger, Noel and Ray) are made redundant. They meet at the local pub to bemoan their future. Pete bumps into the lovely Jane whose also lost her job and convinces her she could be a Page 3 model. He offers to take pictures of her for a portfolio but his ploy backfires when her boyfriend Mark returns home early and catches them in the act (of taking pictures!) Some months later, Roger asks Pete if he's seen the picture of Jane on Page 3. Pete's lost for words, insisting it was him that took the photograph. Jane, now a minor celebrity shows her gratitude to Pete for giving her a start in the modelling business and asks him to be her Manager. He agrees, and as a consequence his wife Pat divorces him. A couple of years later, during which time Pete and Jane have secretly married and had a son, he returns for a re-union with his old work mates. They assume he's a millionaire, but the truth is he has a gambling habit that has led him and Jane into serious debt. On the evening of the Re-union, Noel amazingly wins over £6.8m on the lottery much to everyone's amazement.

After Noel and Brenda move into their new home, Pete calls in on Noel and cons him into investing Two hundred thousand pounds in what he claims is half the business he owns with Jane. Noel is told to keep the arrangement secret especially from Brenda. With Pete back on the scene Brenda organises a dinner party in an effort to re-unite Pete with first wife Pat without knowing that he has remarried. The evening proves a disaster as they discover his deceit. In the final act however, he wins a substantial amount of money on an Accumulator, enough to repay Noel and pay off his other debts.

ACT 1
Scene 1

Suggested Music prior to curtain opening and during scene changes where appropriate - Ian Dury 'Hit me with your rhythm stick'

(Present day. Lights up. The opening scene is played in front of a curtain. The space is sparsely furnished with 2 tables placed USC and DSL each have 4 chairs. As the curtain opens PETE is playing darts and NOEL is sitting at table DSL. They are both drinking pints of beer.

Pete: *(He's in his forties. A rough and ready character full of positive thinking quotes he picked up from his departed father. He enjoys lecturing his friends believing he always knows best. He will often take an opposing view to arguments simply to be contentious):* I never thought I'd be so happy at being made redundant! Think of all those things I can do I never had time for.

Noel: *(In his thirties. Noel lacks confidence and has his life organised by his wife Brenda. He's sitting facing the audience)* I wish I saw things the way you do. It couldn't have come at a worse time for me; kids at secondary school. Doc Marten's every term...

Pete: Doc who? Never heard of him...

Noel: They're shoes! Bloody awful things, more like jack boots. Who would have thought girls would want to wear jack boots with a dress? What's it coming to?

Pete: Doc who? Jack boots! You lost me! But look, you must always look on the bright side. "Out of adversity comes Opportunity" my old man used to say.

Noel: Talks to you from the grave then?

Pete: Twenty years long gone, my dear old dad, but as you say, his wisdom still talks to me from beyond. Anyway, that new factory's opening; they're bound to have vacancies.

Noel: I'm not trained for anything.

Pete: *(PETE joins him at the table)* Get trained my son! 'You're either moving forward or you're going backwards' ...another of his sayings.

Noel: Moving forward? I was happy just getting by.

Pete: Not very optimistic my old son. So, what will your Brenda say?

Noel: Probably blame me. Get the hump and not speak for days. Just like normal really.

Pete: Ah well it could be worse. After five days on the trot of picking winners on the horses..., I put all me cash on an accumulator and...

Noel: (*Keen to interrupt*): Lost it all!

Pete: No! I won over six hundred quid!

Noel: Gordon Bennett. Just like you. If you fell into a bucket of pigs' shit you'd up smelling of tulips.

Pete: Smelling of tulips? I think you're mixing your metaphors my old son, but it's not luck, its positive thinking; knowing the form.

Noel: I say luck! But look what am I going to say back at home?

Pete: It could be worse you know.

Noel: Worse?

Pete: Tell her you've fallen in love with a young bird and are leaving her!

Noel: She'd be delighted if I told her that.

Pete: She loves you, I know she does. My old man used to say "better to get it off your chest than let it curdle in your throat for weeks on end".

Noel: He had a way with words your old man!

Pete: Inspiration to me. Look, go home, tell her you love her, and then tell her.

Noel: Tell her I love her? Then tell her what...

Pete: Tell her you've lost your job. Get it out in the open. She'll get used to it.

Noel: You don't know my Brenda.

Pete: Of course I know the lovely Brenda. They're all the same. They want security, love and affection. If you're bold and confident she'll come round quicker than if you're down and worried. A part-time psychologist, that's me!

Noel: Could be right I suppose... Won't Pat have a go?

Pete: There's only one person wearing the trousers in my house.

Roger: (*ROGER enters. A rough diamond but popular with women; in his early thirties, hears tail end of sentence*) And it's not you, that's for sure! You boys depressed then?

Pete: Not me. Best thing that's happened in years.

Roger: What is it with him, we're given the heave ho, no job to go to and he's happy! Fancy a game?

Pete: Not for me mate.

(*Roger plays darts*)

Noel: He's he's got six hundred quid in his back pocket he won on an accumulator.

Roger: No one, ever wins on accumulators?

Noel: He did.

Roger: Lucky bugger. Do you know; this is the fourth time I've been made redundant. It's like the clap. When you've had it once you get it again and again.

Noel: The clap?

Roger: (*Points at his crotch*): You know; the clap!

Noel: Oh. I see.

Roger: Somehow, I don't think you do! (*PETE and ROG laugh*)

Pete: What will Helen say about losing the job then?

Roger: Not much, don't care. Thinks I'm unemployable. I've never liked work. I started out at Matthews... you know the old engineering works. I had grand ideas of being an apprentice. No sooner I'd joined as general dog's body they announced they were closing down; out on me ear within weeks. Helen had just had the first nipper so she was well pleased. Then I got another job; lost that; got another, and well, that didn't work out; the wife of the boss fancied me you see and he knew it...

Pete: 'Turn adversity into opportunity', that's what I say.

Roger: You ought to live with my Helen for a bit...that's adversity!

Noel: What the hell am I going to say when I get home?

Pete: Take her a bunch of flowers. As I said, tell her you love her, and then tell her the news.

Noel: Give her flowers?

Roger: Give my old lady flowers and she'd probably faint. Tell her I love her and she'd know I'd been on the sniff again. Rather have a few pints.

Noel: Suppose I'd better go and face the music. See you here for a game of darts sometime, if I'm ever allowed out.

(Moves to exit SR and stops as PETE calls out)

Pete: Remember...tomorrow's the first day of the rest of your life... *(NOEL Exits and ROGER joins Pete at the table)*

Roger: Tomorrow's the what? I doubt we'll see him for a while. Mind you Helen wouldn't stop me going out for a pint, that's for certain.

Pete: He can't seem to rise above it all and see the bigger picture, if you know what I mean.

Roger: Talking of rising above it..., I wouldn't mind rising above that Jane.

Pete: Jane?

Roger: You know the one in the estimating office...

Pete: Oh yeah. I know the one you mean. She's a breath of fresh air.

Roger: I know. I can smell her perfume now if I breathe in deeply.

Pete: Oh dear, is that crude or what!

Roger: Crude? It's healthy for a man to appreciate a woman's femininity.

Pete: ..., but that's not what you had in mind.

Roger: You've often said 'the day you lose interest is the day you're dead'.

Pete: Did I say that? Very profound!

Roger: Anyway I suppose I'd better be off too. (*ROGER starts to exit SR but meets JANE on her way in*) Jane! The gorgeous Jane! We were just talking about you. See ya girl.

Jane: (*JANE enters. She is young, attractive, with a full chest but not very bright. She wears skimpy clothing and far too much make-up*) Yeah. See you Rog. Can I join ya Pete?

Pete: Course you can my love. See you Rog. Keep smiling and give your missus one for me. (*Realising his comments were crude in front of Jane*) Sorry; didn't mean for your delicate ears to hear men's talk.

Jane: Don't worry I've heard it all before. You can't work in a factory full of men and not.

Pete: Not what?

Jane: Hear all the things that men say, and the things they're going to do. It's all trouser talk. That's all. They're all the same; all they want is one thing.

Pete: Oh I see, and what's that?

Jane: Use your imagination, Pete. I didn't see you as a prude.

Pete: No, not a prude. Just wanted to know that we were talking about the same thing that's all! So, have you been made redundant too?

Jane: Yeah. I was one of the last to join so I suppose it's only fair.

Pete: That's very philosophical, a very understanding attitude if I may say so. Shame, I'd heard you were doing so well, and very popular.

Jane: I suppose I was. Better than the last one I had, never really had anything to do. My boss was a real so and so. One day he caught me bending over the coffee machine and ...well, I won't tell you what he did. Cheeky devil!

Pete: That's awful.

Jane: Not really. Just a bit too much Testarossa in his blood, that's all.

Pete: You'll soon get another one I'm sure.

Jane: What, another boss like him?

Pete: No, another job!

Jane: (*Excitedly*) I thought I might try my luck at being a hostess... on the coaches. You get a free uniform and things like that you know. You get to travel the country; meet lots of different people..., well, mainly old people with crutches and sticks, but that's OK... Have you lost your job then?

Pete: Yeah. It's fine though. I can do all those things I've been threatening for years. So, a hostess job on the coaches for you then? You'd be good at that.

Jane: I really wanted to be a model, but my boyfriend wouldn't let me, said they'd be all over me.

Pete: Who would?

Jane: You know all those photographers. (*Pronounced fotografers*)

Pete: Oh I see. That kind of model!

Jane: What?

Peter: Walking down the catwalk kind of model, fashion, clothes, Naomi Campbell. You've certainly got the figure for it.

Jane: Do you think so.... No, I'm too fat.

Pete: Rubbish. Great legs and (*Eyes Jane up and down*) well good enough to be a model anyway.

Jane: Really! I just met this bloke in the pub one night who said he was a photographer... Said he'd do the modelling session for free.

Pete: I bet he did!

Jane: What?

Pete: I bet there are lots of photographers looking for models like you, but have difficulty persuading them to take their clothes off, hence the free session.

Jane: He didn't say anything about taking my clothes off... (*Getting quite excited*) Mind you, I wouldn't have minded if he had. He was quite a dish really.

Pete: A dish? You mean you'd be happy taking your clothes off and posing in front of a complete stranger?

Jane: Not anyone! He'd have to be tasty.

Pete: Blimey, so it's more about finding a tasty bloke who happens to have a camera handy then.

Jane: I'd like to be a model, that's all.

Pete: I'm a bit of a photographer!

Jane: Are you?

Pete: Yeah. I've offered my services in the past for art classes at the college you know. Reckon I'm quite good at getting people's best angles. I've had lots of people asking me to take pictures of them.

Jane: What sort of pictures?

Pete: Posh ones of people dressed up at weddings, family pictures; people without any clothes on. Nothing really erotic though!

Jane: Erotic?

Pete: The ones they take for newspapers. Page 3, that sort of thing!

Jane: I wouldn't mind being on Page 3.

Pete: Really! Well it's not that difficult if you have the right assets; like yours.

Jane: Don't think my boyfriend would like it though. He's the violent jealous type. (*JANE looks into space*) Quite macho really!

Pete: (*Somewhat deflated*) I see!

Jane: So do you really think I could be a model?

Pete: Have absolutely no doubt!

Jane: So you can do it, can you?

Pete: Do it? (*Eyebrows pop*)

Jane: Take pictures, like the professionals?

Pete: I've been told I've got real talent, like Lord Lichfield?

Jane: Isn't he the one that went missing on a beach and they've never found him?

Pete: (*Laughs*) No. That's Lord Lucan! Mind you they're all up to something though aren't they?

Jane: So can you? Take decent pictures of me. Not indecent! (*Laughs at her joke*) You know, I don't care what my boyfriend says. I'd be prepared to ditch him if he kicked up a fuss.

Pete: Well, I'd have to check to see my tackle's working, cameras, batteries and that sort of thing. Yeah, when would you like to give it a go then?

Jane: What about Monday afternoon. We've no job to go to have we; maybe this will be the start of my new career!

Pete: Monday afternoon then... Where would you like to do it?

Jane: What about your house? (*Thinking twice*) Or does your wife get fed up with people traipsing in and out for modelling sessions?

Pete: Yeah. As you say not a good idea really! What about your place?

Jane: Well. My boyfriend works late on Monday's. He's a lorry driver you know.

Pete: We won't be disturbed then. About 1.00 o'clock or: 'thirteen hundred hours', as man my old man used to say?

Jane: I'd prefer one o'clock.

Pete: You'd better give me your address and 'phone number then. (*PETE starts to look in his pocket for a piece of paper and pen. JANE fishes out a pen from her bag; grabs his arm and writes the detail on his hand. She speaks the detail out loud*)

Jane: 'Jane...Flat A, 18 Grove Road. Telephone 467872'! (*JANE looks up at Pete*): Now don't you wash your hands will you! (*JANE laughs and PETE can't believe his luck*)

Pete: I'll see you Monday. Get plenty of beauty sleep girl.

Jane: Cheeky devil. Okay, see ya. A model! I've always wanted to be a model. (*JANE exits walking like a model*)

Pete: (*PETE gets up excitedly examining his hand and plays darts*): What have I done to deserve this?

(*RAY, late 30's. Enters SR in a downbeat mood and watches PETE play darts. He's not very bright and slow on the uptake. PETE spots him enter*)

Pete: Watcha mate.

Ray: Hi Pete. I'll never get another job. Not in a million years. Will you be able to sort yourself out?

Pete: I reckon I have already. Best day's work for some time.

Ray: You'll have some good news to tell your Pat then?

Pete: Yes ...No. Absolutely not! The least she knows the better...

Ray: Why wouldn't you tell her? It sounds as though you've done well for yourself...

Pete: I do believe in opportunity out of adversity, don't you?

Ray: So have you got another job or not?

Pete: Well let's say a new lease of life anyway. (*Chuckles*)

Ray: You talk in riddles you do. Who managed to keep their jobs at the factory?

Pete: (*PETE and RAY sit at the table*) Most of the technical lads that know about computers! ... Sign of the times I suppose.

Ray: I've got a computer at home. Well at least my boy has. A second hand one I bought for him. It's too complicated for me.

Pete: If I were you my old son, I'd want to learn a lesson or two from your lad. Computers are the future ...and (*Chuckles*) photography!

Ray: Photography?

Pete: Never mind my son. I'd better be off. (*PETE starts to leave*) I've got to sort out my tackle if I'm going to look half serious.

Ray: You off fishing over the weekend then?

Pete: (*PETE turns back to Ray*) Fishing yes...sort of. Spinning a line or two anyway!

Ray: Handled some big ones in my time! If you want another pair of hands to haul them out, just let me know.

Pete: (*Roars with laughter*) Handled some big ones...haul them out; you really crease me up Ray.

Ray: What's so funny?

Pete: I wouldn't know where to start. (*Still amused*)

Ray: (*Totally bemused*) So, I'll see you around then?

Pete: Yeah of course. I'll probably see you here on Sunday around lunch okay? (*PETE exits SR laughing*)

Ray: Yeah okay, bye.

Lights fade. Music: Chas & Dave 'Rabbit'

Quick Curtain
ACT 1 Scene 2

(The action takes place in the same snug two days later; Sunday lunch-time. PETE, RAY, NOEL and ROGER are seen playing darts and drinking beer. As the curtain opens PETE has just thrown a dart to win the game. They stand around waiting their turn)

Lights up

ALL: You jammy bugger!

Pete: Given half the chance I could have been a pro, as it is, I have to captain a third rate team who wouldn't know the sharp end of a dart.....

Roger: Being captain, at least of this team has nothing to do with skill mate!

Noel: *(Indignantly):* I've got the best average over the season.

Roger: Because you've only played in two of the nine matches. *(PAT, HELEN and BRENDA are heard off-stage and enter in that order.):* You weren't selected for the others because *your* Brenda insists on coming along and interfering all the time.

Brenda: *(A coarse woman and Noels wife. PAT - Pete's wife and HELEN-Rogers wife take a seat at the table DSL. BRENDA joins them after delivering verbal lashing to Roger)* I heard that, Roger Blake. So that's why my Noel hasn't been chosen for the team! What's the matter with a wife showing interest in her hubby's pastimes? You got something against me, or is it women in general? If you have spit it out!

Roger: *(Somewhat shocked she heard)* No offence intended Bren...it's just...well you know...

Brenda: No I don't know! You men think you can whistle a tune and we'll dance to the melody. But I'm telling you, I for one am sick to the back teeth of being treated like a second class citizen! They talk about equality for women, load of rubbish... What equality? *(BRENDA sits with the other women)*

Helen: *(Roger's wife. Quite attractive woman but doesn't make the most of herself):* You tell him Bren! He treats me like a skivvy. Never says where he's

going or who with. Men...only want one thing, and that's not very often these days! (*Gestures with her finger*) Hardly worth the effort!

Pat: (*Pete's wife. slightly old fashioned and quieter than the others*): That's where I disagree. My Pete's kind, thoughtful, considerate he even bought me a bunch of flowers on Friday after work. Just lost his job and he buys me flowers. A real treasure!

Roger: He's a bloody creep, that's what he is!

Pete: (*Feeling somewhat uncomfortable with all the attention, stares at Pat*) No point in being married if you can't be civilised.

Pat: We share everything, don't we pet. We have no secrets to hide.

Pete: (*Crossly*): Alright woman, don't go on!

Helen: You see, even when they're being praised they treat you like a door mat.

Pat: (*Looks at Pete lovingly*) He's just embarrassed, that's all. Almost ten years we've been married. Ten wonderful years!

Roger: Can we get on with this game before I throw up.

(*JANE enters SR*)

Jane: Hello all. Anyone seen my boyfriend Mark? (*All shake their heads NO.*) I wonder where he is... (*Spots Pete*) Oh hello Pete, you okay? See you Monday. I better go and find him. Bye all.

(*JANE exits SR*)

Pete: (*Nervously*): Bye, Jane.

Brenda: Monday? She's obviously forgotten that she's got no job to go to..., half baked!

Pete: (*Feeling and acting a little suspicious*): She just forgot that's all.

Roger: She was definitely giving you the come on Pete.

Ray: (*Slightly out of character comment from Ray*) Young maybe, not sure about innocent?

Roger: And you'd know would you... from personal experience?

Helen: No. but I bet *you* would!

Roger: Oh, don't go on woman...

Helen: I'm not, but she's definitely the type you go for.

Roger: Rubbish. (*In a patronising way*) when I'm happily married to you!

Pete: She a nice, polite girl that's all; and it wasn't just me she was talking to.

Roger: She's had more blokes than I've had hot dinners. She's out to attract them like a moth to light.

Helen: Hot dinners! When was the last time you had a hot dinner? I make them, but by the time you come in they're in the bin.

Roger: Gordon Bennett. A bit of innocent fun and it gets thrown straight back at you.

Pat: I know I can trust my Pete. I feel sorry for you Helen. (*Pointing at Roger*) He's always been trouble that one.

Helen: I can handle him, thank you very much...

Pat: No offence!

Helen: None taken.

Noel: Come on; let's get on with the game.

Helen: (*Gesturing to the men*): We're going in the other bar. You lot can get your own drinks before you ask! (*HELEN, PAT and BRENDA exit SR*)

Pete: I think I've had enough of darts. (*He sits down at the table. Everyone joins him except NOEL*)

Noel: Isn't anyone going to play then?

Roger: You practice alone mate, you need it! I reckon that Jane's the best looking bird the factory has seen in years.

(NOEL plays darts)

Pete: Had seen. Had seen!

Roger: I don't doubt we'll get used to being on the dole again; or what do they call it now?

Noel: Job seekers allowance.

Roger: Job seekers. It's all bullshit. Nobody *seeks* a job. You bloody well have to get one like it or lump it, just to stay alive these days. They make it sound as though you get up in the morning and look forward to it!

Pete: You prefer *hunting* rather than *seeking*, don't you Rog?

Roger: Do you blame me, when you consider what I have to go home to?

Noel: Helen's alright. It's the way you treat her, that's all.

Roger: Blood hell. He fancies my missus!

Noel: I don't.

Roger: Are you sure, 'cos I could put in a good word for you. *(They laugh except NOEL)*

Pete: Joking aside, you really should treat her better Rog. She's not that bad.

Roger: Another one fancies my old lady! Ray. Do you want an introduction?

Ray: No. Not me. But at least Pete's alright! He's sorted.

Roger: With a bird?

Ray: No. Another job...

Noel: What, have you got another job already Pete?

Pete: Job? No! Why?

Ray: I thought you said on Friday that you were sorted?

Pete: I just said ‘you had to turn adversity into opportunity’, that’s all.

Roger: How many times have I heard you say that?

Ray: I’m sure you said something about photography didn’t you?

Pete: Photography? What are you on about? Doesn’t know what he’s saying...

Ray: You definitely said something about photography when we spoke on Friday, photography and fishing.

Roger: The only photography I’d be interested in would be taking saucy pictures of that Jane. Does that qualify for a ‘Job Seekers’ allowance?

Pete: (*Stunned and bewildered by his comments*) Jane! Pictures of Jane!

Roger: Yes mate! Can you imagine what she’d look like on Page 3!

Pete: Look like on Page 3?

Roger: I can see you’re getting excited at the thought of it!

Noel: Yeah, a nice pair of legs I suppose, but a bit daft!

Pete: Oh yeah, and when did you join Mensa?

Noel: Mensa?

Pete: Exactly!

Roger: I don’t suppose Noel’s seen a pair of legs since he and Brenda started petting. (*ROGER and PETE laugh out loud*)

Pete: The only legs he knows are the ones he repaired recently on the kitchen table!

Noel: I’ve known a few!

Roger: Well, as I said, Jane would do for me. Or do I mean I’d do for Jane!

Pete: “If you think you can or think you can’t, you’re probably right!”

Roger: There he goes again. What's that supposed to mean?

Peter: *(With a big smile on his face)* Where there's a will there's a way. Get my drift?

Lights fade. Music- Rabbit

CURTAIN
ACT 1 Scene 3

(It's Monday, 13.00hrs precisely! BEFORE the curtain opens Peter is heard off-stage knocking on the front door of Jane's flat. The same set with curtains remains however when the curtain opens the room is seen to comprise a three seat sofa with a high back, two easy chairs, a coffee table, a table lamp, a modern side table and sideboard. A telephone sits on the sideboard. The room has a 'budget' appearance about it. When the doorbell rings Jane is seen sitting on the sofa reading OK magazine. She is wearing a skimpy mini skirt, tight blouse – that's easily opened, fishnet tights and red shoes with very high heels. She wears very bright red lipstick. She jumps up to answer the door LC checking her looks)

*Lights up and table lamp on
Door bell rings*

Jane: *(Off-stage. Smiling and excited)* Hello Pete! So you didn't wash your hands then?

Pete: *(He has just climbed four flights of stairs carrying a large Supermarket plastic bag containing a Polaroid camera, a small 35ml camera with additional lenses, a very large pack of sandwiches wrapped in silver foil and a flask of coffee. He is shattered, breathes heavily from the climb and appears nervous):* Washed my hands?

Both enter

Jane: With my address on!

Pete: *(Puffing and panting. Quickly puts the bag down at the side of the sofa SR before flopping down):* Cor blimey, you didn't tell me there were four flights of stairs... What's the matter with the lift then?

Jane: It's been vandalised by that gang. You poor old thing! Want a drink?

Pete: (*Said in humour but hurt she would use the expression*): What have you got then, my darling...and less of the *old* if you don't mind.

Jane: Sorry. Coke, tea, coffee, cocoa, orange juice....

Pete: (*Disappointed*) Oh, that sort of drink!

Jane: Well, you've got to keep the camera still, can't have you shaking...

Pete: No. Fair enough!

Jane: Only kidding! You can have a drink if you want. Would a beer do ya?

Pete: That would be lovely!

Jane: What about a Waggle dance?

Pete: (*Not able to believe what he's hearing but the words 'waggle' and 'dance' sound erotic*) Waggle Dance? Not much good at it myself but if you want to do one that's okay by me! (*He laughs loudly at his wit*)

Jane: (*She attempts a smile but doesn't quite get his drift*): One of those speciality beers I mean! My Mark, he loves them.

Pete: Oh yeah, of course; more a *bitter* man myself, but happy to experiment. My old man used to say "always experiment with life – rather than let life experiment with you". Cold, if you've got it.

Jane: Right. Won't be a mo. (*JANE exits to kitchen off-stage RC*)

Pete: (*In a low voice*) Waggle Dance! Get to grips man! (*Gets up and looks around the room*)

Jane: (*Off-stage*) I can't believe you're really here you know...to get me going.

Pete: Wouldn't let you down now, would I?

Jane: (*JANE enters with a beer and a Caribbean cocktail for herself. She hands him the cocktail by mistake*) Oh, silly me. 'You're the beer, not the queer!' (*She laughs. He remains silent swapping drinks*): It's what Mark says when men have a funny drink like this.

Pete: Oh, really!

Jane: Thought I'd have one, just to get me in the mood, silly isn't it?

Pete: You have whatever you want if it helps. So this is a 'Waggle Dance' is it? *(Gets up and waggles his hips in an exaggerated way; laughs loudly as he does so. Jane looks at him in an incredulous way, eyes popping)*

Jane: *(Said to humour him)*... that's really good Pete.

(PETE realises he's making a fool of himself and sits down. She joins him on the sofa. Nervous; she changes the subject) My Mark loves all those fancy beers you know. You can buy them at the supermarket.

Pete: Really? My Pat would never buy me beers, especially fancy beers. She thinks I get enough at the pub!

Jane: Perhaps if she bought some home for you you'd stay in more often.

Pete: That's probably why she doesn't buy them.

Jane: Sorry?

Pete: She thinks I drink too much at the pub you see, but certainly wouldn't want me under her feet at home. No, she certainly wouldn't buy me a 'Waggle' *(Laughs out loud Jane remains impassionate)* It's really good this. Very good!

Jane: I hope my Mark never feels that way about me, that's if we ever get together.

Pete: But you are together, aren't you?

Jane: We've lived together for almost two years. He makes promises, but I don't think he really wants to get married yet. He likes his freedom you see.

Pete: Likes his oats then?

Jane: Oats?

Pete: No I mean, if he likes his freedom maybe he see's other birds.

Jane: No, of course not. Well, I hope he doesn't, or that would be the end. I wouldn't put up with that, not for anyone. So, how's your beer?

Pete: Yeah. Good thanks.

Jane: (*Gulps her drink down leaps up excitedly*)... so, shall we have a go then? I'm feeling a bit nervous, it's my first time.

Pete: (*Looking distinctly hot under the collar and swallows hard*) Just relax..., make a start when you're ready. No hurry.

(*JANE sits down disappointed*)

Jane: I can't wait. (*Leaps up again*) So how would you like me? What would you like me to do?

Pete: Well..., I'd better get my tackle sorted out first. (*Gulps the last mouthful of beer gets up and starts to unpack his equipment from the plastic bag in a deliberate way as JANE watches over him. She expects to see an array of cameras and accessories; instead he takes out an instant Polaroid camera, a large pack of sandwiches wrapped in silver foil which he opens to see what they are and a flask of coffee*)

Jane: I imagined you'd have a big one! You know, one of those with a long extension.

Pete: (*Said rather proudly as he holds the Polaroid aloft*): No. All you need are these little beauties they're fully computerised you know!

Jane: But when you see them on TV, or in Hello magazine, or outside the Odeon in Leicester Square, they all have great big ones with flashes...

Pete: Oh, I've got a flash...look... (*Shows her the integral flash on the Polaroid camera*)

Jane: (*Very disappointed and frustrated she can't think of the correct term*) No. I mean big cameras, and you know those things you stick them on...

Pete: Tripods, you mean. No; you see they make them so much more sophisticated, much smaller today, there's no need for all that gear now. They just like to look a bit possey, that's all. So...shall we make a start then?

Jane: Don't you want to have your sandwiches and coffee first?

Pete: (*Somewhat embarrassed*) No. That's the wife, that is. Out for five minutes and she thinks I need rations.

Jane: (*Genuinely touched by the sentiment but eager to get on*) That's so thoughtful of her! So, how do you want me then? (*JANE starts to pose*)

Pete: Well...I'll take a couple using the Polaroid to see how we get on to test the ambience and all that..... Right, why don't you stand over there by the side board and perhaps lean over a bit. (*JANE rushes to the sideboard and poses*) Right! Hold it. (*PETE takes the picture and shakes the photo paper. JANE rushes over to him*)

Jane: Let's have a gander then.

Pete: Patience my darling! It takes a little while for the chemicals to mix up. (*PETE starts to peel the back and changes his mind and waves the picture furiously to dry it out*) It's amazing what technology can do today you know.

Jane: My Dad used to take Polaroid's of us kids at Christmas and that was years ago. In fact I think we got the camera free with some vouchers.

Pete: Ah yes. But this is the latest Polaroid technology. It develops that much quicker and gives better results. Really sharp images! (*Eventually peels off the back*) Bugger it. Didn't take! Look, it's all black.

Jane: (*Disappointedly*) ... not quite what I imagined. Is this what you use at home?

Pete: At home?

Jane: When people come round for a photographic session.

Pete: (*Penny drops*): Just happened to be a duff one! You do get them on occasions. Let's give it another go. Do you...well...do you want to do a different pose? I mean do you want to take another picture with less clothes on?

Jane: (*Miffed*) If the first ones anything to go by it wouldn't matter if I was wearing me birthday suit, you wouldn't see much would ya!

Pete: (*PETE laughs nervously JANE remains unmoved*) I suppose not! It's... just that I thought we ought to start taking pictures that would look good in your portfolio. The more practice you get the more natural you'll look.

Jane: (*Gets her hopes up again*) OK. Shall I stand behind the sofa looking sexy or something?

Pete: That's a good idea. Yeah, you stand over there.

Jane: *(Stands provocatively behind the sofa showing some cleavage and blows a kiss)* How about that?

Pete: Perfect, absolutely perfect. *(Takes another picture and waves it furiously in the air)* Right! Now let's see how this one turned out.

Jane: *(Again rushes over to him)*... It's quite exciting being a model.

Pete: *(Peels off the back of the picture)*... That's better; look at that.

Jane: *(Hopes dashed again)*... But I've got a drawer full of pictures Mark's taken on holiday like that. I thought you'd have all the gear to take some *real* pictures.

Pete: Now we've got the Polaroid I can move on to the 35ml with wide angle fishnet lens. Once we're done I can get them developed tomorrow at the chemist on the corner.

Jane: *(JANE'S hopes are raised once again)* Oh I see. Right! What's next then?

Pete: Well. We want some pictures of you in different poses don't we..., provocative type poses. It's what the Page 3 boys want to see... See what you've got to offer if you know what I mean.

Jane: You mean topless or nude!

Pete: It goes without saying, the more we can show them, in a sexy like way, the better chance we'll have...

(The phone rings. JANE answers it. PETE wipes his brow and sits nervously on the sofa)

Jane: Oh, hello, poppet! Yeah! Not so bad, and you? Are you? Oh, that's good isn't it... Yeah, of course I do. Well...I'm just..., well tidying up that's all... Nothing much!

(PETE realises it must be Mark and looks very worried)

Pete: *(Gets up to attract her attention, and in a whisper):* Shall I go?

Jane: (*Shakes her head to indicate NO*) Yeah, that's a good idea, why don't you? No. I'm going out soon to see Charmaine.... Okay Babe, see you this evening. Kiss, kiss.

Pete: Mark?

Jane: Loves surprising me! He's the jealous type you see, can't bear to see me even talking to another bloke. I'd go as far as to say obsessive, that's what he is.

Pete: (*Sounding very worried*) He's quite a big bloke too isn't he? Does he know I'm here? Do you think I should go?

Jane: No. Don't be silly, sit down. (*PETE sits*) Why should you go? He's miles away. Anyway we're not up to anything, are we? If I can't have pictures taken of me how can I get my portfolio together?

Pete: I know, but I wouldn't want to upset him, you know, get on the wrong side...

Jane: It's not as if you fancy me, and are after me is it?

Pete: (*Feeling totally demoralised*) No, of course not!

Jane: Right then. Now, you wanted me to take my clothes off?

Pete: Yes..., right. Well only if you...

Jane: Why are you so nervous? It's not as though I was your first model, is it?

Pete: No. Not at all!

Jane: I'm the one that should be nervous, after all it's my first time, but I'm not.

Pete: Excellent. Right! (*Abandoning his fears*) Let's get some pictures that will blow the Page 3 boys' socks off.

(JANE starts to remove her blouse, PETE begins to fiddle with his bag searching for the 35ml camera. He can hardly take his eyes off her)

There's a knock at the door.

(Quite naturally, and with little concern JANE stops what she was is doing goes off-stage to answer the door. PETE frantically puts his camera in the bag and hides behind the sofa. Jane is heard off-stage)

Jane: No thanks love... You can try next door I suppose. Okay. Thanks. *(JANE closes the front door and upon returning finds Pete missing. She calls him and we see PETE's head pop up from behind the sofa)* Pete, where are you?

Pete: I'm here. I..., I just dropped my lens cover and it rolled under the sofa.

Jane: You'll find more than you bargained for under there. Only last week I found the leftovers of a curry; must have been there for weeks. It had gone all mouldy.

Pete: Nice.

Jane: All ends up under the sofa or in the lining. *(JANE starts to undo her blouse as she speaks. Having removed it she casts it onto the sofa. She's wearing a revealing bra. PETE can't stop staring)*

Pete: *(Gaining confidence and excitedly)*... that's what they want. Right, let's see. *(He fumbles in his bag not wanting to take his eyes off Jane)* Here's the 35ml. This will do nicely.

There's another knock at the door.

(Again JANE makes no effort to dress but goes to the door to answer it. Instinctively PETE rushes behind the sofa and hides again)

Jane: *(Off-stage):* Flipping hell! Who is that now!?! *(Said nervously)*
Hello poppet!

Mark: Ha, Ha, gotcha! Didn't expect me, did ya?

(JANE and MARK enter the sitting room. MARK is tall and well built, casually dressed and wears an earring. JANE is looking extremely worried, expecting to see Pete)

Jane: No. The last person I expected! What are you doing here then?

Mark: *(They stand facing each other)*...Thought I'd surprise ya. I 'phoned from down the road. The last delivery was cancelled you see, so I got off early. *(Realising she isn't dressed)*...Are you just getting up then?

Jane: (*Thinking quickly*) Yeah. Charmaine had an headache. I stayed in bed after you left. No work to go to...

Mark: You've got some work to do now girl. (*Drags her onto the sofa and starts kissing her; JANE resists*) Do you love me girl? I really fancy you when you're in a state of undress. Do you know what I mean?

(*As they kiss and cuddle and JANE tries to fend him off PETE'S head slowly appears above the back of the sofa and disappears again*)

Jane: Mark. No. Stop it.

Mark: Come on, you little sex pot. You know you like it. Come on...

Jane: Look, no. It's not the time to be...

Mark: Not the time! Since when have you said 'no' at any time of day?

Jane: Well, not today. It's not that I don't fancy you...

(*PETE bobs up again and is then seen heading toward the door on all fours when he sneezes. MARK pushes JANE off; turns and sees PETE who turns slowly to face them. The exchange of dialogue is delivered with pace*)

Mark: (*Mark bounces up and stands motionless*): What? What's going on? What's he doing here! Isn't he that geezer from your work?

Pete: (*Getting up*) Yes..., hello Mark.

Jane: (*MARK moves toward PETE and JANE steps in between*) It's okay poppet, he's come to do me a favour...

Mark: A favour? I bet he has.

Jane: (*Nervously*) He's a photographer (*She pronounces fotografer throughout*). I asked him to take some pictures of me for my modelling career. I wanted to surprise you.

Mark: What modelling career?

Jane: I said I wanted to be a model, don't you remember?

Mark: (*Raising his voice. PETE cowers*): And don't you remember me saying 'I don't want any bird of mine taking her clothes off in front of a camera'!

Pete: (*Pathetically*) I'd better be going then.

Mark: So *that's* why you had no blouse on: he was trying to get your kit off (*Grabs PETE, JANE tries to intervene*)

Pete: I can assure you Mark it wasn't like that...

Mark: (*At close quarters*) Oh really! Shut it you.

Jane: He was just going to take some pictures of me to get me going that's all.

Mark: Get *him* going you mean! (*Tightens his grip on Pete*) I want to see the type of pictures you had in mind. (*Shoves him aside*) Go on then, take some pictures of her.

Jane: (*Pleads with Pete*)... that's alright Pete, isn't it, if Mark watches I mean?

Pete: Look. I can come back when you're not so busy.

Mark: We're not busy, not busy at all, are we babe. (*Raises his voice again*) Well go on then... (*Gets close up again*) You're worried aren't you...? Get on with it!

Jane: Come on let's just carry on from where we were.

Pete: (*Composing himself searches out the camera*) Okay... Yes, you were standing over there and were smiling at me. (*PETE's hands shake as he points the camera at Jane. JANE poses nervously pulling an inane grin*) There we are, that was a nice one. Good! Right! I'll let you two catch up...

Jane: (*Becoming more assertive. Believing attack is the best form of defence she shouts at Mark*)... You've spoilt my chances now...

Mark: Spoilt his chances you mean! I can't believe you're interested in him!

Pete: Look. This is really unfortunate...

Mark: Unfortunate I turned up you mean...

Jane: (*Getting cross*) If you can't trust me Mark Tyler, then as far as I'm concerned, we're finished.

Pete: (*Looking decidedly deflated by her comments but hopeful she has achieved the objective*) Sorry. I realise this was a big mistake.

Mark: Mistake if you thought you were going to get your way with my bird...

Jane: (*Partially offended but also realising this is her opportunity to arrest the situation*) Right. We're finished and I mean it. That's it, do you understand! I'm not having you make out I'm a tart.

Mark: Right. Well sod you. I'm out of here, and don't try and stop me. I'll get my stuff later. (*MARK pushes and prods PETE as he exits*) I'll sort you out later, mate! (*MARK rushes out, slamming the door*)

(*JANE and PETE stand motionless and silent for a moment before JANE goes dashing after Mark. JANE is heard off-stage*)

Jane: Wait a minute let me explain. Mark. Mark. I love... (*Slowly JANE returns to the living room*) He's gone! (*JANE bursts into tears*)

Pete: (*PETE puts his arms around JANE her to comfort her*) Come on darling, don't cry, worse things have happened at sea.

Jane: (*Angrily and in tears*) He's a lorry driver, not a bloody sailor. I'm sick of his jealousy. All I wanted to do is start a new career, that's all. What's wrong with that?

Pete: Nothing at all. You should feel proud of yourself for trying. I'm sure you can do better than him... The world's your oyster if you choose ..., a nice girl like you.

Jane: Bet my make-up's flooding down my face!

Pete: No. You look great. (*PETE smiles*)

Jane: Don't go. I really want to carry on. I'll put some more make-up on. It'll only take a few minutes. (*JANE exits to bathroom off-stage*)

Pete: (*PETE flops onto the sofa, takes a deep breath and facing the audience square on says quietly*): What on earth have I got myself into. Did I really think a bird like her would fancy me? I must be mad...

Lights fade. Music -Rabbit

CURTAIN
ACT 1 Scene 4

(Three months later. As the curtain opens we return to the snug at the pub. PETE and ROGER are playing darts. It's ROGER'S turn. They have pints of beer on the table Pete's is a full glass and Roger's half empty)

Lights up

Roger: Have you seen yesterday's paper?

Pete: What paper's that?

Roger: You are joking!

Pete: What paper?

Roger: Obviously not.

Pete: Not what?

Roger: *(Stops playing)*... let's start again. Did you see yesterday's Page 3?

Pete: No.

Roger: Well, yesterday's Page 3 bird was no less than that Jane that used to work in the estimating office.

Pete: *(Astounded. Can't believe his ears, says slowly)* Jane, from estimating, on Page 3!?

Roger: Do I have to repeat myself for the...

Pete: No. Have you got a copy?

Roger: Too right I have. *(ROGER fumbles in his pocket searching for the crumpled newspaper)* Here it is. *(ROGER hands it to PETE who opens it hurriedly)* Steady on mate, you'll have a heart attack.

Pete: (*Stares momentarily and says in a deliberate way*) I don't bloody well believe it!

Roger: Always thought she was gorgeous. Great pair of...

Pete: Incredible! I took that picture...

Roger: In your dreams, my son!

Pete: No. Seriously Rog, I took that picture with my own camera.

Roger: Like every other bugger around here...

Pete: I swear. That picture you see on page 3 was taken by me in her flat about three months ago.

Roger: It's hard to tell when you're serious. How could you have taken it?

Pete: Remember when we were laid off...well I got talking to her about her future and said I reckoned she had the talent..., you know, the assets to be a model. (*He sits at the table and Roger joins him*)

Roger: (*Less dismissively*): Really...?

Pete: I said I had a camera, and had taken some pictures of people in the past...

Roger: But you haven't...

Pete: I know, but I offered to take some of her for a portfolio...

Roger: A portfolio?

Pete: It's like an album of pictures agencies look at, and if they like them the models get work. Anyway, she thought it was a good idea and invited me to her flat.... I took some great pictures of her, unfortunately her boyfriend Mark turned up just as I'd persuaded her to take her clothes off.

Roger: Do you think I was born yesterday...?

Pete: (*Insistently*): You can either hear me out or I'll say no more!

Roger: Go on then...

Pete: He accused me of taking advantage of her...

Roger: Well, you were!

Pete: But I didn't you see. Anyway, they had a row and he stormed off. After a bit she decided she wanted me to carry on. At first she was a bit shy but became quite relaxed after a while.

Roger: Are you pulling my plonker?

Pete: I swear on Pat's life!

Roger: I notice you're not swearing on your own life!

Pete: I took three rolls of film and got them developed. Some were a bit 'iffy' but three of them were crackers, real crackers, and one of them is there on Page 3.

Roger: So, after you showed them to her, what happened then?

Pete: Not much really. I was a bit disappointed...

Roger: I bet you were...

Pete: No. She said thanks, took the pictures and that was it. I haven't seen her since.

Roger: Bloody Norah!

Pete: So you believe me now?

Roger: So if you took that picture, shouldn't you get some royalties or something?

Pete: (*PETE stares at the picture in the paper*) Incredible, absolutely bloody incredible!

Roger: Have you still got the negatives?

Pete: No. I gave her the wallet. I asked if I could keep a picture but then thought better of it in case Pat found it at home. Come to think about it, she never even offered to pay for the developing!

Roger: You must have been *inflatuated* with her!

Pete: (*PETE looks oddly at him*) Don't you mean infatuated?

Roger: What?

Pete: Everything I said is just what happened. Perhaps I should give her a call and congratulate her. You never know, maybe I'll get a royalty after all. I certainly got nothing else!

Roger: Mores the pity. She's a real doll. Have you got her number handy then?

Pete: It's etched on my brain! Do you really think I should call her?

Roger: Nothing to lose other than your pride!

Pete: (*PETE gets his mobile out and calls her number*) Hello...Is Jane there? It's Pete. What? No. Hello? Hello? He put the 'phone down on me.

Roger: Who did?

Pete: That bloody boyfriend of hers, Mark, the one that turned up and nearly set about me.

Roger: What did he say?

Pete: He was none too friendly, that's for sure. Said she'd moved in with a flash photographer in town somewhere.

Roger: Flash photographer! Very witty! Get it... 'Flash Photographer'!

Pete: (*Said in a deliberate way*)...Yes, I think I was able to work that one out! Perhaps the local newspaper know where she lives.

Roger: They won't give you her address, will they! Every Tom Dick and Harry will be keen to sniff her out. Every bloke that's ever been out with her will want to tell their story.

Pete: I could try her old Mum: lives just around the corner from the factory. I'll phone her later.

Roger: Get the number from directory and 'phone her now.

Pete: OK. (*PETE dials 118*) Hello. The name is Kenyon. Oh, right the only Kenyon in the book, yeah that's great. (*Turns to Roger*) They're putting me through! Look I'm going outside. The signals better. I'll be back in a minute. (*PETE exits. ROGER switches the beer mugs as Pete has more in his glass and fumbles through the paper. After a short pause PETE returns*)

Roger: (*Puts down the paper and is eager to hear the news*) Well?

Pete: She didn't want to give me her new number at first, but I explained that I was the bloke that helped her to get on Page 3.

Roger: You mean she thought there was no harm giving her number to a harmless old bugger like you.

Pete: Thank you Rog. You're a great mate, you are.

Roger: Well, have you phoned her.?

Pete: Probably better to let the dust settle before I make contact.

Roger: I thought it was your old man who used to say 'Strike while the irons hot'.

Pete: But what would I say? (*In a melodramatic voice*) Jane! Hi, it's Pete from the factory; the one that took the pictures of you; where's my royalty? She'd blow me away, especially if she's shackled up with another professional photographer.

Roger: Another *professional* photographer! (*Roger laughs*)

Pete: (*Indignantly*)...I took the picture, and it appeared on Page 3. Isn't that what *professional* photographers do!

Roger: So you say.

Pete: Look, if you don't believe me...

Roger: OK. OK. But it wouldn't be her who'd pay you a royalty would it? It would be the paper that shells out. Perhaps it's not *her* you need to speak to.

Pete: Who would I speak to at the newspaper? I can't just phone and ask for the owner can I?

Roger: The editor! He'd have something to do with it wouldn't he.

Pete: It's probably a waste of time. A complete stranger gets onto the Editor and says (*Again in a melodramatic way*) "you know that picture on Page 3 on Tuesday last..., well I took it and wondered when you'll be sending my royalty." He'd just say 'bugger off' wouldn't he?

Roger: You claim you took it.

Pete: I bloody well took it!

Roger: Let's get this clear. You gave the pictures and negatives to Jane. Jane somehow managed to get the paper to print one of them. Are they right this minute out searching high and low for a mystery 'professional' photographer...No! So what do you want? To be recognised for taking it, or the money?

Pete: I'd prefer to be recognised as an artist... no hang on! If it got out I was the artist my Pat would go ape.

Roger: So, being recognised is definitely not what you want to happen, it's the money! I should have been some kind of consultant.

Pete: Yeah absolutely right! Gordon Bennett. I can just see the reception I'd get at home...

Roger: (*Proud of his analysis of the situation*) you have to think these things through, you see.

Pete: I suppose, I'll just have to go to my grave with the secret.

Roger: It's hardly earth shattering is it? Just luck!

Pete: It's an omen telling me this is my calling.

Roger: You are kidding me?

Pete: 'If you think you can, or think you can't, you're probably right'!

Roger: You amaze me, but I have to hand it to you, you're the most positive person I know.

Pete: Well thank you Rog. You touch my heart.

Roger: I still reckon you're crazy thinking you could be a photographer.

Pete: We'll see my son, we'll see.

(NOEL enters)

Noel: What's new, fancy a drink?

Pete: We were just discussing an important subject.

Roger: Whether our old mucker and mate has the potential to be the next Lord Lichfield.

Noel: Lord who?

Roger: Never mind.

Noel: Do you remember that bird Jane who worked at the factory...?

Pete: Yeah, she was on Page 3!

Noel: Yeah, I know. I was going to say that she's coming in here soon!

Pete: In here?

Noel: Yeah, she's coming in for the Observer to take some pictures of her. You know 'local girl...

Pete: Makes good!

Noel: What is it with you two? As soon as I start saying something you dive in and repeat me.

Pete: Sorry, my son, it's a long story.

Roger: Pete claims it was him who took the picture of Jane that made it to Page 3.

Noel: Are you kidding me?

Pete: It's true. When's she coming in?

Noel: Any time, according to George.

Roger: Well, there's your opportunity, Pete.

Pete: Can you let us know when she arrives, Noel?

Noel: Sure! See you in a bit. (*Exits*)

Pete: You see; that's positive thinking at play, that is.

Roger: Well, don't pussy-foot around. Ask her straight out. Is there anything in it for you and me!

Pete: You and me! Where do you come into it?

Roger: Alright, you! But I reckon I deserve something out of it for saving your marriage!

Pete: Oh, god, if Pat finds out she'll go crazy. I'd better warn Noel not to...

(Pete starts to exit as JANE enters the room alone. She's dressed to kill)

Pete: Hello, my darling! You looked terrific; just as I said you would.

Jane: Thanks Pete. Noel said you were in here. It was you who gave me the confidence in the first place. Do you remember?

Roger: Now there's a compliment, Pete. You gave Jane a start in her new modelling career...

Pete: I would have helped anyone who asked. It was nothing.

Roger: (*Glares at him trying to help his cause*): No. no. You did a lot for Jane, she's said as much.

Pete: Jane's got what it takes, you can see that. She didn't need any help from me...

Jane: Well thanks anyway Pete...I'd better get back to the bar...my audience awaits'.

Pete: Good luck, my darling...

(JANE exits)

Roger: Bloody Norah! You went on and on about royalties, and now when you have the opportunity to say something to her..., you go all mushy.

Pete: I just couldn't bring myself to raise it.

Roger: *(Roars with laughter)* Raise it! You dog...

Lights down.

CURTAIN
Interval

ACT 11
Scene 1

(Three years later in the same bar room. During the intervening 3 years Jane's picture has appeared everywhere after a red top newspaper launched her career. Ever grateful for Pete's support she asked him to be her Manager. As the curtains open Noel and Roger are playing dominoes at a table situated DSC)

Lights up

Noel: I was saying to my Brenda this morning, three years next week we all got our redundancy money from the factory and sat here wondering what would become of us.

Roger: Yeah, I struggled to get another job, then another, then another, but I'm sorted now..., at least for the time being.

Noel: It doesn't matter how many times we've talked about Jane and Pete I still can't believe how successful they've become. There isn't a day that goes by without Jane's picture appearing in some paper or magazine.

Roger: He's a jammy old bugger. Fancy being asked to be her Manager! He must be making a few bob out of her earnings.

Noel: Pete said he thought being made redundant from the factory was the best thing that had happened to him. I reckon he was right! I bet he's worth a few bob now.

Roger: I reckon.

Noel: It's like a fairy story. Or like one of those big lottery winners. The only difference is we know them! I've never met a big lottery winner, have you?

Roger: No. I knew someone who won a hundred quid on the premium bonds.

Noel: Hardly the same though is it?

Roger: They say the unhappiest people are those big lottery winners. They get all the advice going but still end up miserable.

Noel: You graft all your life to scratch a living, dreaming of the day you make a fortune and the very thing you've wanted makes you miserable!

(RAY enters and sits with them)

Ray: Who's miserable then?

Noel: Lottery winners, the ones that win big... They lose their families and mates, end up wishing they'd never won in the first place.

Roger: We started talking about Pete and how he's made his lot.

Ray: I bet he hasn't changed; still the old philosopher.

Roger: Always had an answer for everything! He would argue black was white if he thought it would start an argument.

Noel: It'll be good to see him, even if it's only for a laugh. What was his favourite saying 'If you think you can or think you can't you are probably right'!

(PETE enters at that very moment. He's dressed up like a showman in a white suit and bow tie wearing sunglasses; his hairstyle has changed to make him look younger. He's heavily tanned from using fake sun tan oil)

Pete: 'If you think you can, or think you can't you are probably right; and here I am, the living proof! How are you, my old mates?

ALL: *(Receives an enthusiastic reception. They all get up to greet him)* Hello, Pete.

Pete: Gentlemen... Is life treating you well?

Roger: You old bugger. Just look at you; you look twenty years younger!

Noel: At least, I'd say.

Pete: Too kind!

Roger: You're still full of bull-shit then!

Pete: Now, now Rog. It's not like you to speak your mind, so what have you all been doing? Up to no good?

Noel: A bit of this and a bit of that..., you know.

Pete: By the look of you Noel your missus hasn't forgiven you for being made redundant from the factory yet!

Noel: No. She's fine now.

Roger: So how's the modelling business?

Pete: I was quite happy just to manage her, but no (*Said in a high pitched voice*) 'let's start an agency' to manage other models, she said. So we did, and haven't looked back since.

Noel: It's like a fairy story, isn't it? From humble beginnings to fame and fortune!

Ray: So, what's next?

Pete: Who knows? The world's our oyster.

Noel: So how long are you here for, Pete?

Pete: Came to see my old Mum, that's all. You lads too of course!

Roger: Staying overnight then?

Pete: Yeah, a couple of days I hope.

Roger: Let's get a few jars in then...

Pete: Just what I was going to say; but two things.

Noel: What's that?

Pete: The evening is on me, and all we drink is champagne...okay?

Ray: You're on!

Roger: Ponsey drink, champagne!

Noel: I haven't had champagne since me and Brenda got wed!

Pete: Let's hope this is a happier occasion (*Rog and Pete laugh loudly; Ray and Noel remain unmoved*)

Noel: What?

Pete: (*Says very slowly*) let's hope this is a happier occasion!

Noel: I don't get that!

Pete: I'm going to set us up for a night to remember.

(PETE exits to the bar)

Ray: He's a good old boy. I'll get the cards. We'll we'll play pontoon.

Roger: Pontoon? You really know how to celebrate don't you!

Lights fade

Quick CURTAIN ACT 2 Scene 2

(Four hours later. Same bar room. As the curtain opens the room is dimly lit. PETE, ROGER, RAY and NOEL are playing pontoon. Roger is the banker. They've been drinking champagne solidly. There are countless empty bottles on the table and on the floor. In between idle conversation there is raucous laughter)

Lights up – dimly lit with spot on table

Roger: Come on Ray. Twist or stick.

Ray: I'll twist.

Pete: Good lad, take a chance in life.

Roger: This one will bust you.

Ray: That's just what I wanted...

Noel: I can't remember having my go last time.

Roger: I bet you've never had a go, not a real go! (*Rog and Pete laugh*)

Pete: Come on, is it Noel's go, or not?

Noel: Stick.

Pete: The maestro will buy one for a quid, or shall we make it a fiver?

Roger: A quid. That's maximum.

Pete: Bust! You see, my old son, you have to take risks in life.

Roger: I can't afford to take risks.

Pete: What about that bird you went out with that lived only two doors away, now that was risky, very risky!

Roger: That was worth the risk that was.

Ray: What you have to do is always weigh up the pros and cons! Do you know what I mean?

Roger: What's he on about?

Noel: A bit on the side is okay but it's soon over, it's just a bit on the side.

Roger: You wouldn't know a bit on the side if it bit you where it hurts.
(*ROGER laughs. PETE joins him*)

Noel: I know more than you know, that's all...

Pete: Has our Noel got some furtive little secret he wants to share with his bosom mates, his muckers of many years. Eh?

Roger: Yeah. Come on Noel, tell us how deep you've sunk into depravity, come on...

Noel: You've all got me wrong.

Ray: Are we playing cards or not?

Pete: Not until our Noel tells us at least one secret...

Roger: I'll tell you something. You know that bird...

Pete: *(Stops him in his tracks)* ...Yes, thank you Rog. Anyone want another glass of this nectar? This isn't champagne of course, not real champagne as I know it, it's just the best this boozier can do.

Ray: Do you always drink champagne, Pete?

Pete: Always my son. Always! I even clean my teeth in it. I wash in it twice a day, and insist that my gardener feed it to the roses once a week.

Ray: How much do you get through a week then?

Roger: He's having you on!

Pete: Drink it sometimes 'til the cows come home. Champagne, it's the elixir of life!

Noel: We had cows in the field near us years ago, but that all changed when they built the housing estate.

Roger: What is he wittering about?

Pete: *(Said in a high pitched voice)*... those spotty days when his Mum made his bed in the mornings, cooked him bacon and eggs for breakfast, washed and ironed his socks...

Roger: His Brenda took all that on when they got spliced. Nothing's changed, has it Noel?

Noel: (*Indignant*): Actually, a lot's changed if you really want to know. My Mum used to wash my hair in the kitchen sink, but Brenda does it in the bath now.

Roger: (*Stunned and highly amused at the revelation*) Brenda washes your hair in the bath? No. I don't believe it!

Pete: Our Noel has parted with a little gem; something in his life we knew nothing about.

Noel: I bet a lot of men would give an arm and a leg to have their missus wash their hair in the bath.

Roger: They'd find it difficult to get out then.

Noel: Out?

Roger: Of the bath! If they gave their arms and legs they couldn't get out, could they!?! (*Rog and Pete can't contain themselves*)

Ray: (*In a manic laugh*) That's really funny.

Roger: What a life, to be surrounded by tasty birds all day long. How do you cope with it Pete?

Noel: If you didn't just see women as sex objects, it would be easy.

Roger: And you don't of course...!

Noel: No, I don't, as a matter of fact.

Roger: The day you stop looking and wondering, you're dead. It's as simple as that. At least that's what maestro Pete says.

Pete: True, my son. Never a truer word spoken in jest! Pass me that bottle would you Ray. (*RAY passes bottle*)

Roger: What do you call a typical day?

Pete: I get to the office about 9.30am. I sit at my desk, which has a broken leg and is supported by last year's Yellow Pages. The office itself is about the size of an outside lavvy.

Roger: You are kidding me!

Pete: I spend about half the day on the 'phone getting an ear bashing from clients because the models didn't turn up the previous evening when they should have done, and the other half paying bills.

Noel: Really?

Pete: That's about it.

Roger: So who vets all the birds then? Who arranges deals for the Paris or Milan show? (*Suddenly the penny drops*) Evenings! You're models work evenings! Strippers; kiss-a-grams, and that sort of thing!

Pete: Did I say any different?

Roger: Your agency arranges strippers, for what?

Pete: (*Rattles them off*) Clubs, pubs, stag do's, disco's, parties, hen nights..., Nurses, Policemen, Tarts, Tarzan, Jane, Vicars..., you name it, we've got it.

Roger: Bleeding hell fire. And we all thought you had a class act. Is that what Jane does?

Pete: Now she's been on Page 3 and in other magazines she's a bit snooty about doing pubs and clubs.

Ray: My youngest brother is getting wed for the fourth time, perhaps you could arrange something for his...

Pete: Wake! Getting married for a fourth time! He ought to have his head tested.

Roger: Who would have guessed you'd be in the porn business.

Pete: Not porn! It's meeting the needs of people who are socially mobile

Ray: Is it going well?

Pete: Has its ups and has its downs.

Roger: I bet it does!

Ray: And you've made a fortune doing that?

Pete: I do alright but not a fortune.

Noel: And all along we thought you were a millionaire!

Pete: Sorry to disappoint you old son.

Noel: I can hardly afford a lottery ticket these days.

Pete: I may not be a millionaire but I will be; you mark my words.

Noel: *(Looking at his watch, suddenly in a panic)* Oh. It's one o'clock. I'd better get home *(Struggling to get up)* why hasn't George called time?

Pete: Because I slipped him a few bob. Yeah, time to go.

(They all stagger out)

Lights fade

Quick CURTAIN ACT 2 Scene 3

(The following evening, the scene is the same. As the curtain opens HELEN and BRENDA are seen talking at a table. They each have a drink)

Lights up

Brenda: Noel was in such a state when he got in this morning. I gave him a right ear full. Spent most of the night throwing up, silly bugger. Drinking champagne all evening they were, according to him.

Helen: I know. Roger didn't get in until nearly 2.00am, but that's nothing new; never know where he is or what he's been up to. I've given up trying to find out. All I get is the verbal.

Brenda: It was that Pete's fault. Did you know he was back for a few days?

Helen: Yeah. Of course as far as Rog is concerned he can do no wrong. Went on and on about what a good mate he is. What is it with men? They haven't got

a clue have they? They never seem to be able to see things the way we do. Do you know what I mean?

Brenda: Yeah, I know what you mean, they never see sense. It's funny, but we have husbands who couldn't be more different, don't we?

Helen: What do you mean?

Brenda: Well. Your Rog seems to do what he likes, and doesn't give a damn about you. He's...macho, more of a man than my Noel. My Noel, well he's always apologising and he's not macho at all.

Helen: It's the way you treat him, like a little boy.

Brenda: Do I?

Helen: Yeah you do, if I'm honest. Don't doubt I'd be the same if I lived with him.

Brenda: Well, that's it then. We'll do a swop for a while. I'll try and tame your Rog and you can make a man of my Noel!

(They roar with laughter)

Helen: I don't think you'd want to have my old man.

Brenda: How do you know I haven't already!

Helen: You saucy devil. Wouldn't surprise me though! He's probably visited most of the local watering holes around here, and I don't mean the pubs, mind you he's probably visited those to.

(They can't stop laughing)

Brenda: Anyway that Pete's back to see his old Mum, Noel said.

Helen: Yeah. Bet he won't be seeing Pat.

Brenda: I feel sorry for her, you know. I see her sometimes, but it's not like it used to be when we girls would go out to bingo or go for a drink on a Saturday night.

Helen: No. I know what you mean. It does make you wonder what it's all about doesn't it?

Brenda: What do you mean?

Helen: Well, you spend most of your life looking after the kids and pandering to the old man and you get no thanks for it. Then, either your old man leaves you in the lurch and you're left on your own, or the kids leave home and you never see them again. Or you just die. It's no life, is it?

Brenda: (*Laughs*) just listen to you. It could be worse!

Helen: Believe me it can't get any worse than being married to my Roger!

Brenda: But we get by, don't we? Life's not that bad. Think of all those starving kids in the world; all those women who walk around like skeletons!

Helen: Yeah I know what you mean. Better off than Pat too, I reckon. At least we've got our men to moan about. She's she's only got the dog.

Brenda: And there's a difference! (*They laugh again*)

(*Roger enters with a pint*)

Helen: Talk of the devil.

Roger: What's up with you now?

Helen: Nothing, my handsome, loving husband.

Roger: Now I know something is up.

Brenda: Is my Noel out there?

Roger: Yeah. But for some odd reason he's only drinking lemonade. (*Laughs*)

Brenda: So you're old mate Pete treated you to an evening out, did he?

Roger: Not exactly an evening out. We were here all evening but he did pay for the drinks, yeah.

Brenda: Lot's of tales to tell?

Roger: I said nothing about nothing!

Brenda: I meant Pete!

Roger: I know what you meant.

Helen: So did he say much about his modelling business and his conquests?

Roger: Conquests! What are you on about?

Helen: You can't tell me being in the modelling business doesn't have its perks. Mind you, you don't need a modelling business to have yours, do you?

Roger: (Sarcastically): What would I want with other women, when I'm married to you!

Brenda: That's nice.

Helen: It would be, if he meant it.

(NOEL enters with his lemonade rubbing his stomach)

Noel: *(Pathetically)* Evening all.

Helen: So, did you have a good time last night?

Noel: Yeah, but I couldn't stand up this morning.

Helen: According to Bren you spent most of the night in the toilet, being sick.

Noel: Yeah. I must admit I'm not used to champagne and all those bubbles. I felt quite limp.

Brenda: What's new!

Helen: Was it good seeing Pete?

Noel: Yeah. He's in the bar, said he'd come through in a minute.

Helen: *(Sarcastically)* Something to look forward to.

Roger: Moan, moan, it's all you do these days. He's a good mate.

Helen: Has he seen Pat whilst he's been up here?

Roger: He only arrived last night.

Helen: Bet he doesn't.

Roger: According to him, she ignored him after he left. He's tried to stay in touch.

Helen: I'm not surprised, are you?

Roger: What do I know!

Noel: It's not that Pete took those pictures of Jane; it's just that he never told Pat about it. You know she found out first.

Roger: And you would have told Bren, would you?

Noel: No. I wouldn't have taken the pictures in the first place.

Helen: Love him!

Roger: You would.

(PETE enters with a glass of champagne)

Pete: Ladies. So lovely to see you again!

Helen: Still full of the verbal then.

Pete: Just trying to be civil...

Roger: Ignore it.

Pete: Not like you Helen, to shatter a man's confidence.

Helen: You can fool my husband; even charm those models of yours, but not me, O.K?

Pete: I get the feeling I'm not wanted here.

Roger: You are by me, pal.

Noel: Me too... Sorry Helen.

Pete: Despite the verbal mauling, can I buy you ladies a drink?

Brenda: Champagne, Helen, wouldn't you say?

Helen: (*Sarcastically*) All evening, I hope!

Pete: I'll go and see George. (*Exits*)

Roger: Two faced; Champagne!

Helen: That's what you were drinking all night, according to you.

Roger: That's just taking advantage.

Brenda: He offered.

Noel: I don't think I could drink champagne...

Brenda: (*Attacks Noel*): You're not going to... ever again, after the way you disgraced yourself last night. You stick to lemonade.

Roger: Do you let her talk to you like that?

Noel: I couldn't drink it anyway.

Roger: What is this world coming to when a man is told he can or can't have a drink?

Helen: See what I have to put up with!

Brenda: I'm getting the picture.

(*PETE enters with a bottle of champagne and glasses on a tray*)

Helen: I suppose champagne is all you drink now, is it?

Pete: Every day..... It's the food of life.

Brenda: If you can afford it, I suppose.

Pete: (*In a posh voice*): There are certain things in life one *has* to afford.

Brenda: Yeah, I know, like putting shoes on the kid's feet.

Helen: Or scratching to pay for the lecky and gas.

Pete: Point taken.

Helen: Seen Pat lately?

Pete: No. I haven't; you?

Helen: Rarely now. It's a real shame.

Pete: How was she...then last time you saw her?

Brenda: Why don't you call and find out how she is?

Pete: Are you ganging up on me?

Brenda: No. Just interested!

Roger: Just stirring, you mean.

Pete: So, how's life in your neck of the woods, Bren?

Brenda: I'd of thought you'd know, after last night's session.

Pete: I'm happy to go back to the bar if I'm causing trouble.

Roger: You stay Pete. They're just jealous that's all.

Helen: Jealous of what?

Roger: Someone who has the balls to do something with his life.

Helen: Like leaving his devoted wife.

Pete: (*Getting cross*) Look. I did not leave Pat. She very definitely left me O.K? I'm going back to the bar. (*Exits*)

Helen: Touched a sensitive spot there, I think.

Roger: You're a bloody cow. A man buys you champagne, and all you

can do is give him a hard time! What's he done to you?

Helen: You wouldn't understand if I spend the next three weeks trying to explain.

Roger: Bloody women!

Helen: You understand Bren, don't you?

Brenda: Of course.

Roger: I'm joining Pete in the bar, coming Noel?

Noel: Yeah. See you later girls.

(Both exit)

Brenda: Why did you attack Pete like that?

Helen: I suppose I was just trying to get through to Rog.

Brenda: To Rog?

Helen: He's always going with other women. Every time there's an opportunity to bring up the subject of marriage, relationships, faithfulness, I can't resist it.

Brenda: I didn't know it was that bad, otherwise I wouldn't have joked about him earlier being macho.

Helen: Given half the chance and he's in there. Can't resist temptation! It's living with it that gets me down. The fact is, I really love him, but can't stand the strain. Don't tell him I said that!

Brenda: Of course I won't. Are you sure he is seeing other women?

Helen: Yeah, I know he is.

Brenda: How?

Helen: He's not that clever, not very... Subtle!

Brenda: You mean, he leaves things in his trousers?

Helen: No. That's the problem. I wish he would!

(They both laugh)

Brenda: No, seriously, how do you know?

Helen: Sometimes I smell perfume; I do find things in his pockets like names and 'phone numbers. Sometimes he tells me.

Brenda: He tells you?

Helen: In as many words.

Brenda: Why don't you leave him?

Helen: How could I provide for the kids? I say one thing for him: he never leaves me short when he's got money.

Brenda: You can never quite get it right. I sometimes wish my Noel *would* have a fling, just to make life less boring, less predictable, but I know he never would.

(They laugh)

Helen: I'm going to see Pat tomorrow! Want to come with me?

Brenda: That's a really good idea.

(They hear a lot of cheering and noise coming from the bar)

Helen: I wonder what that's all about?

Brenda: Someone's scored a goal on the TV, I suppose!

(ROGER comes rushing in excitedly)

Roger: You'll never guess what's happened?

Helen: Your team has scored the first goal of the season?

Roger: Noel has only won the bloody lottery, that's all. He got the six number and bonus balls!

(RAY enters excitedly)

Ray: Noel. He's won the lottery!

Brenda: It can't be right.

(NOEL enters in a jubilant mood)

Noel: Bren..., I got all six numbers and the bonus ball.

Brenda: *(Beside herself with excitement. Grabs and hugs Noel)* My Noel's done it! He's won the lottery. I didn't even know he'd bought a ticket!

Blackout

CURTAIN

ACT 111
Scene 1

(Six months later. It's a Friday evening about 8.00pm. Noel and Brenda won £6.8 million on the lottery and have recently moved into a new house. As the curtain opens Noel is in the drawing room and is on the telephone to Pete. He's dressed in a smart double breasted sports jacket and wears a cravat. He's alone. It's a comfortable room but lacking refinement. They have used bright un-coordinated colours in both decoration and furnishing. The room comprises a three seat sofa, an easy chair, a coffee table with a few upmarket magazines placed neatly on top together with a copy of the Financial Times and the Beano. Various gaudy pictures are seen on the walls. The door to the kitchen is situated USL. The telephone is situated on the sideboard DSL. A drinks dispenser, tray and champagne bottles are evident. The set depicts windows that lead onto a visual of manicured gardens and driveway. The hallway and front door are situated DSR)

Lights up

Noel: *(Feeling uncomfortable, he constantly fiddles with his cravat. Clearly Brenda has told him what to wear. He's on the 'phone)* Yeah, we looked around for a while but settled on this house because it's not far from my Mum's. I can't believe it's been six months since we £6.8 million! Yeah. We've got 6 bedrooms and an 'aunt suite' I think they call it. Lovely garden and a double garage, yeah, I've never had a garage before. Too right, I gave up the job. What am I doing? A bit of this, and a bit of that! Yeah, it would be good. When? *(Shocked)* Ten minutes! *(BRENDA enters and fluffs up the cushions and listens to the end of the conversation. She's over-dressed and wears too much make-up. Like Noel she has little to do since the win. The children have gone to a disco at a neighbour's home)* I thought you were going to say, next week! Shall I tell you how to find us? You know. Oh right! See you soon then. *(Replaces receiver and sits on sofa)*

Brenda: So, who was that?

Noel: Pete.

Brenda: Lottery Pete, the one that advises us?

Noel: No. Pete from the factory! In modelling!

Brenda: Oh him. What does he want?

(Tugging on his cravat)

Brenda: *(Crossly)* Oh, leave it Noel. You'll pull it off.

Noel: I hate wearing it.

Brenda: What does that Pete want?

Noel: He was up seeing his old Mum and thought he'd pay us a visit.

Brenda: You haven't invited him over?

Noel: Why not? He's a mate, and I'm bored.

Brenda: You didn't ask me.

Noel: It's not often I see any of my mates anymore, since we've moved.

Brenda: You'll meet new friends at the golf club. People we can invite over for dinner parties.

Noel: (*Uncharacteristically snappy*) I don't want to play golf. Darts is my game. That's what I want to play!

Brenda: You have a dart board in the games room.

Noel: With me mates, like Ray and Rog.

Brenda: You don't have to hang around with those dead beats. There are lots of nice people, posh people, at the golf club, that you could be friends with.

Noel: Those dead beats are my mates! Why should I give up my mates for some ponsey gits at the golf club? I'm not playing any more. I can't hit the bloody thing, even if I try.

Brenda: You'll get better!

Noel: I won't, because I'm not playing any more.

Brenda: (*Getting frustrated*) It's your lack of breeding. I've seen it on the tele. They say you can't change people!

Noel: Then leave me alone. Don't try and change me.

Brenda: (*Realising she needs to be more tactful but loses it*) I'm not, my little dumpling. ...but you're not going to that pub with those layabouts. Is that clear! When's he coming?

Noel: Who?

Brenda: That Pete!

Noel: Any minute.

Brenda: You Wally! I've asked Pat and Helen to come over.

Noel: So?

Brenda: So, Pat hasn't seen Pete, nor does she want to see him ever again. What will she think if she turns up and he's here?

Noel: What difference does it make?

Brenda: Difference? Here I am, trying to console the poor woman who still hasn't got over that worthless marriage wrecker, although I can't think why, and you invite him over.

Noel: You can go in the kitchen. There are enough rooms in this house to get lost in!

Brenda: You, my lad will go into the kitchen or the games room and not be seen or heard.

Noel: I'm having him in here...

(Doorbell rings)

Brenda: You will not.

Noel: I am.

(Exits SR to open the door. BRENDA exits to kitchen SL huffing and puffing)

Pete: *(Heard off-stage):* Lovely place Noel. A very noble establishment!

Noel: *(They enter):* Thanks Pete. Sit down, my old mate.

Pete: *(PETE looks far less smart than the last time, in fact he looks scruffy)*
You look extremely smart, my old son. Dressed up for me, did you?

Noel: No. Brenda decides what I wear. It's easier. No point getting dressed in the morning in what you want to wear and then have to change when the wife see's you. Take a seat.

Pete: *(Sits in chair):* Dear, dear! She'll have you joining the golf club next.

Noel: I'm already a member! *(Sits on sofa)*

Pete: *(Chuckles):* Enjoy it, do you?

Noel: No. I hate it. Ponsey lot.

Pete: Why go then?

Noel: Brenda wants me to meet people to invite round for dinner, you know.

Pete: What next?

Noel: I've told her in no uncertain terms that I'm not going any more. I'd rather see my old mates at the pub again.

Pete: You must stand up for yourself otherwise you won't be recognisable in a few months. You'll be talking posh, and grouse shooting. So, have you heard at all from Ray and Rog?

Noel: I'm not allowed to see them..., yet Bren invites their missus around. That's not fair, is it?

Pete: Not fair at all. But look you've got everything.

Noel: Means nothing.

Pete: That's women for you. No offence to your Bren, but a bit of lolly, well a lot of lolly in your case, and they want to change you, mould you into something you're not. Give you an air of respectability.

Noel: Are you saying I'm not respectable?

Pete: Not at all...

Noel: Not at all, respectable?

Pete: No. No. Look. Women try to change you into something you're not. We men get a bit of money and we want to buy cars and things like that; women want to buy relationships; move up in the world.

Noel: She won't change me. I'm going to see my mates whether she likes it or not.

Pete: That's that's my boy. Fighting talk!

(BRENDA enters)

Brenda: What's fighting talk?

Pete: *(Gets up)* Hello Bren, very nice house. Are you happy, my darling?

Brenda: Flying visit, is it?

Pete: Just thought I'd call in to see my friends, see if you're OK?

Noel: I appreciate that, Pete!

Peter: One should never turn ones back on one's friends, don't you agree?

Brenda: Not your mates! But it's OK to turn your back on your wife though is it?

Pete: I thought I'd explained that the last time..., I did not leave Pat, she left me.

Brenda: That's not what I heard.

Pete: Ask Pat. Get it straight from the horse's mouth..., no offence to Pat, of course.

Brenda: I did.

Pete: And?

Brenda: You left her in the lurch, on her own with that dog!

Pete: Technically I didn't leave her she chucked me out over the pictures of Jane. That's what happened.

Brenda: Well, you won't convince me! Noel, do up your cravat! (*Exits*)

Pete: What do I have to do to get my side of the story across?

Noel: They gang up on us. Once women start talking we haven't got a chance. I'd forget it, if I were you.

Pete: (*Pretends to be emotional*) I wanted to get back with her, I really did. I still do in a way. I tried to speak to her but she always puts the 'phone down. What can I do?

Noel: It'll be O.K.

Pete: You're a good mate. I know I could always rely on you in a moment of need.

Noel: You can trust me, you know that Pete. By the way Pat's coming round...

Pete: (*Uncomfortable to hear she's coming round*) Sorry?

Noel: Pat's coming round with Helen. If you wanted to speak to her, this could be your chance.

Pete: Well I...

Noel: Bren invited her and Helen around a few days ago, to have a drink and see the house.

Pete: (*Somewhat worried*) So, she's coming here?

Noel: You could have a word?

Pete: About what?

Noel: You know, after all the water that's....

Pete: Passed under the bridge...

Noel: Yeah.

Pete: We'll see. (*Changing the subject*) More importantly how are you my old son?

Noel: Fish and water come to mind.

Pete: Fish and water?

Noel: (*Thinking he may have the expression wrong*) Horses and water!

Pete: Fish, horses and water? You do worry me my old mate.

Noel: I don't think I've been the same since we won the lottery. It's been a bit of a shock: moving house; getting the kids into a new posh school, giving up work. That was the best bit, giving in my notice.

Pete: But what are you doing with yourself during the day, apart from playing golf?

Noel: Mess around the garden, read the paper, play darts and billiards on me own, boring stuff.

Pete: You don't like billiards!

Noel: Don't like gardening either! Or come to that, reading the paper. I can't understand what they're on about...

Pete: You just have to look at the pictures like you've always done.

Noel: Take over this; take over that, ratio's! It's all Chinese to me.

Pete: What are you reading?

Noel: The Financial Times and the Economist.

Pete: (*Laughs*) No wonder! They have no pictures. Why are you buying those?

Noel: Bren thought I should read them now we've got a few bob.

Pete: She's going to change your life and for good, if you're not careful. I can see why you're not a happy bunny. The Financial Times and the Economist!

Noel: Just columns of funny names and figures, don't understand it if I'm honest, but the bloke from the lottery said it was a good idea to follow our investments.

Pete: It's not you though is it!

Noel: We spoke about it in the pub once, me and Rog, that is. The papers say the most miserable people are often those that win the lottery. I know what they mean now. Look, don't tell Bren what I've said; she really enjoys it all.

Pete: You have my word, and my word is bondage. (*Chuckles at his own joke*) Bondage! My word is my bondage, get it? (*NOEL looks blankly*) but women enjoy it you see. It's an opportunity for them to escape; to pretend they are something they're not. No offence to Bren, of course. In fact men are like it too sometimes but not you Noel.

Noel: Every day, she goes shopping and comes home with bags full of stuff we don't want or need. She buys clothes for all of us and not many get worn.

Pete: It can be a disease, you know.

Noel: A disease?

Pete: When some people come into a bit of loot they go bananas and can't stop spending. It's a bit like Rog and the birds. Once you've tasted the nectar you want more and more.

Noel: Champagne!

Pete: I'd murder for one.

Noel: You remember that evening in the pub when we drank champagne all evening, you said that champagne was 'Pure Nectar'.

Pete: Yes..., so where were we?

Noel: Nectar? Champagne?

Pete: I'd love one! Do you have any, Noel?

Noel: In the fridge. I'll get some then. (*Exits SL to kitchen*)

Pete: What on earth was that all about!?! (*He walks around the room looking at the pictures etc. NOEL returns with a bottle of champagne and two crystal glasses on a silver tray*)

Noel: Nectar! (*Pours the drinks*)

Pete: Cheers!

Noel: Cheers!

Pete: So, Pat's coming around then?

Noel: Yeah. In a while! I really like champagne, well on special occasions.

Pete: That's very kind of you to think my visit is a special occasion. You know if you drink it every day it'll put hairs on your chest.

Noel: I hope not otherwise Brenda will just tweezer them out, she doesn't like hairy chests.

Pete: Really? (*Laughs momentarily*) You know, it was very kind of you to say what you did Noel: I'm flattered that you think of me as a special friend.

Noel: You are.

Pete: Good! I have something very interesting to say, and I'd only say it knowing that we hold each other in such high esteem.

Noel: High esteem, yeah.

Pete: Well, I have a little proposition to put to you.

Noel: What's that then?

Pete: I thought: how nice it would be if we became partners. Business partners! What do you think?

Noel: Business partners! Doing what?

Pete: In the modelling business! It's a growth industry, you know. See plenty of them in the 'Financial Times'.

Noel: A partner in your business! I don't know.

Pete: Chance in a lifetime, my old son.

Noel: I'll have to have a word with my financial adviser.

Pete: What Financial Adviser?

Noel: The one the lottery people gave us. They're there to help make decisions about investments and business and all that sort of thing.

Pete: Noel my son, Financial Advisers are there to earn a crust for themselves. Would you want to share the rewards of our partnership with a faceless person that means nothing to you? This is you and me, not any Tom, Dick or Harry.

Noel: He said, I was always to discuss things with him first, otherwise I could make mistakes.

Pete: So, if you want to go to the bog, you'd have to ring him first?

Noel: Just things to do with investments!

Pete: Give them half a chance and they'll run your life for you. Is that what you want?

Noel: No. I let Bren do that.

Pete: I really must help you make decisions for yourself. If you don't, you'll go to your grave regretting it. You will, believe me!

Noel: I'm alright.

Pete: You're not, my son. Life could be better for you, but you have to take control. You said things were boring.

Noel: Well, they have been so far.

Pete: Make me a promise here and now.

Noel: What's that then?

Pete: You must let me, your old mate, sort you out! Let me guide you, provide you with opportunities...

Noel: (*PETE looks dejected*): No offence, but it's not just me it's Bren too.

Pete: You don't have to tell the lovely Brenda everything. It makes a marriage richer, more interesting, when certain things are kept private. You take a tip from me.

Noel: That's what you did with Pat and look where it got you!

Pete: I can understand your thinking that, but that was different you see...

Noel: Well, what's involved?

Pete: That you become my business partner.

Noel: But how would it work?

Pete: I give you half of my share in the modelling business for say, two hundred grand.

Noel: Two hundred grand, that's a lot.

Pete: Not really when you take the growth prospects into account, inflation, the state of the pound against the dollar, yen and Euro it's a very fair offer, believe me.

Noel: Is it?

Pete: Very fair. It couldn't be fairer.

Noel: I don't know, Pete.

Pete: What is it that you don't know?

Noel: I'd like time to think about it.

Pete: What do you want to think about?

Noel: I don't know.

Pete: You don't know, and you'd like time to think about it. But in thinking about it, you don't know what it is you should be thinking about. Is that it?

Noel: Umm.

Pete: Make a decision Noel: do you want in, or out?

Noel: *(Mumbles and hesitates for a moment or two)* O.K., Pete, it sounds good to me.

Pete: *(Excitedly, can't believe his luck):* That's the best decision you've made, and perhaps ever will. Look, I'll have a little paper drawn up and call you toward the end of the week. You, Noel, will need to arrange a bank draft, made out to my very good self for the very reasonable sum of two hundred grand. I'll be off then. I'm expecting a very important business client to ring shortly about an assignment...*(Jumps up to make a speedy exit)*

Noel: Don't you want to stay to see Pat?

Pete: Another time, perhaps. Thanks mate, or should I say, partner! See you later in the week. *(They both exit SR. NOEL shows PETE to the door. A moment or two elapses before BRENDA puts her head around the door, seeing no one is there she enters with HELEN and PAT)*

Brenda: And this is our lounge or should I say 'drawing room'.

Helen: You've done it really nice.

Pat: Did you choose everything yourself or did Noel help?

Brenda: (*Chuckles*) No, he spends all his time at the golf club. No, we had a design consultant in. Didn't like what she came up with, so I did it myself.

Helen: Just like you! So, Noel plays golf now.

Brenda: Yeah, he loves it. He's met a lot of really interesting people up there. Suppose we'll end up having to entertain them for dinner one evening. If he's given half the chance they'd be here this weekend. He's a real snob these days.

Helen: Can't imagine Noel liking golf!

Pat: Well, you can afford it now.

Brenda: I suppose we can. Mind you we haven't got money to throw around. We spent almost £2 million on the house alone. What with the ponies, the upkeep of the stables, the golf club, the shooting club, the fitness club, Noel and my cars, school fees, the holidays and our clothes, it soon goes.

Helen: (*Turning to Pat*) I bet it does. We haven't had a holiday for well..., since we got married...it feels like a century ago!

Pat: Good luck to you Brenda. I don't envy anyone good fortune.

Helen: No, nor do I. I didn't mean...

Brenda: No, it's alright, I was bragging a bit.

Helen: But no, it's really nice, you've done a good job.

Brenda: Would you like a drink?

Helen: Thought you'd never ask?

Pat: What have you got?

Brenda: What about champagne? I reckon we deserve it, don't you?

Helen: Living with Rog, I deserve champagne every day.

Pat: That would be lovely.

(BRENDA exits to kitchen SL)

Helen: It could have been me and my Rog that won. Think what we'd be doing now.

Pat: So, what would you be doing?

Helen: Arguing, I suppose! And there's no doubt he'd have a fast sports car to impress the women... No. Maybe nothing does change when you're a millionaire.

Pat: I wonder what I'd be doing if I were still with Peter?

Helen: You miss him, don't you?

(BRENDA enters with a bottle of champagne and glasses)

Brenda: Who do you miss?

Helen: Peter.

Brenda: Really! Why? *(Pours and hands out the drinks)* There you are.

Pat: We got on pretty well really, almost all the time. Never argued! I know he goes on a bit with his positive thinking and all his sayings, but he was a good husband, at least I thought so.

Brenda: You've changed your tune.

Pat: It's just as time passes you start to think about things, the times you had, the companionship.

Helen: From what you've said, and what I've heard him say, I think you should both try and get back together.

Pat: Too much water under the bridge!

Helen: You should talk, at least.

Brenda: No, come on, let's toast to Pat and Pete getting back together.

Pat: I don't know about that.

Helen: It's a good excuse to have a few more drinks at Bren's expense!

Brenda: I agree! To Pat and Pete!

Lights fade

Quick CURTAIN
ACT 3 Scene 2

(Four days later. It's the afternoon. The scene is the same. As the curtain opens NOEL is seen entering the sitting room with PETE who is carrying a briefcase. The backdrop portrays a manicured garden through bow window)

Lights up

Pete: Have you been busy since Monday?

Noel: Been pottering about in the garden, that's all!

Pete: And what a lovely garden it is too, my son.

Noel: Wouldn't know the difference between a rose and a marigold...

Pete: The fact that you let them grow in your garden is a statement in itself.

Noel: Is it? Why?

Pete: Shows how generous you are.

(BRENDA is heard off-stage)

Brenda: Would you two like a cup of tea?

Noel: Do you want some tea, Pete?

Pete: What have I done to deserve tea?

Noel: Is that a 'yes' then?

Pete: Six sugars!

Noel: Yes please, and six sugars for Pete!

Pete: (*In a hushed voice*): Have you told her?

Noel: (*Somewhat concerned*) No. You said not to tell her, so I haven't and if I did she'd only ask if I'd got permission from the bloke at the lottery.

Pete: No that's right. Better Bren doesn't know until you're creaming it. So everything's OK then?

Noel: Couldn't get the lawnmower working yesterday.

Pete: Lawnmower?

Noel: Yeah, just wouldn't go.

Pete: Oh, I see. (*Looking somewhat puzzled*)

Noel: Had to call them in to fix it, apparently there was something wrong with drive shaft.

Pete: I meant everything OK with the banker's draft?

Noel: Oh right. I got it from the bank yesterday afternoon. It took a while because they had to transfer funds.

Pete: Of course. That's good.

Noel: Do you want it?

Pete: Look. Shall we wait until the lovely Brenda has brought in the tea. Don't want to let the cat out of the bag do we.

Noel: Yeah, I see what you mean.

(*BRENDA enters with the tea*)

Brenda: Tea for two! Six sugars on the right!

Pete: (*Laughs at his wit but Brenda and Noel remain unmoved*)

Tea for two cha, cha!

Brenda: Quite a regular visitor these days.

Pete: I said I would pop back to see Noel with info about lawnmowers.

Brenda: We've already got one.

Noel: Wasn't working.

Pete: Lovely day Bren! You been doing the washing?

Brenda: No. I have someone who comes in and does for me.

Pete: What a treat that is!

Brenda: Let me know if you want anything else. (*Exits*)

Pete: Bren seems especially cordial toward me after our last meeting, any reason?

Noel: No. I thought it was a bit odd too.

Pete: Better to have Bren as a friend than an enemy.

Noel: So long as they are not from that golf club.

Pete: What about the golf club?

Noel: Friends!

Pete: You have friends at the golf club?

Noel: Not if I can help it.

Pete: (*Again looks oddly at him*): I see. Well. Shall we transact our business then?

Noel: Yeah. The coast's clear now! (*Pulls a crumpled bankers draft from his trouser pocket and hands it over*)

Pete: (*Hurriedly grabs the draft and stuffs it in his pocket*) Blimey, that was painless; need a receipt then?

Noel: Do I need one?

Pete: Not if you don't want one.

Noel: We're mates, no need.

Pete: You don't have to do anything you don't want to, Noel.

Noel: So what's next, Pete?

Pete: Next?

Noel: In the business? What do I do?

Pete: Nothing, my old mate - Partner! You just put your feet up and let me do the grafting.

Noel: But that was one of the reasons why you thought I should get involved, to give me something to do.

Pete: (*Said to placate him*) I'll tell you what I'll work up a schedule for you in the next week or so. I'll let you know.

(*BRENDA enters*)

Brenda: So what have you two been talking about?

Pete: Boys talk mainly.

Brenda: Boys talk!

Noel: About the past and what *may* happen in the future.

Brenda: Very philosophical I'm sure! You just need to start networking. You'll soon adjust to new people and new things won't he.

Pete: You will Noel.

Brenda: Pat was here the other day.

Pete: Yeah, Noel said.

Brenda: I think I owe you an apology.

Pete: You owe me an apology?

Brenda: I was convinced that you'd left Pat; she told me she'd chucked you out over the Jane thing...

Pete: That means a lot to me Brenda to have you on my side.

Brenda: I didn't say I was on your side! I got the impression Pat wouldn't mind trying again, you know, getting back together.

Pete: Never saw you as a match maker, Brenda.

Brenda: I don't mind helping out if I can.

Pete: Well I'm really touched that you would want to bother.

Brenda: Pat's always been a good friend, why wouldn't I want to help her out? (*Has a sudden brainwave*) I know. We could invite Pat around tomorrow evening for dinner, with you as well.

Pete: That's very kind of you...

Brenda: So, we'll see you here at 8.00pm sharp.

Pete: I can't, I'm afraid.

Noel: You said last time Pete that you'd like to see Pat again.

Pete: Yeah, I know but...

Brenda: No butts, you'll be here at 8.00pm! (*She exits SL to kitchen*)

Noel: When she gets a bee in her bonnet, she won't let go.

Pete: Look mate..., I really don't know if I can.

Noel: What else have you got on that's so important?

Pete: I've got people to phone, things to organise, got to keep the oil of commerce ticking.

Noel: Well, if you're that busy let me help you; we're partners.

Pete: No. No. I can manage.

Noel: You'd better get here tomorrow night otherwise all hell will be let loose. Brenda I mean.

Pete: Right, I'd better be off.

(NOEL shows PETE out SR and returns soon after BRENDA enters)

Brenda: He's getting very friendly all of a sudden. Why?

Noel: So are you toward him.

Brenda: I'm only doing it for Pat's sake. Don't trust him an inch. If you've got any sense you'll steer clear of him and make new friends at the golf club.

Noel: *(Feeling a little anxious as he conceals his arrangement with Peter)*
There's no-one I'd rather have as a friend. I trust him.

Brenda: Now we've got money he'll try and worm his way into our lives, that's what he'll do. He's only out for himself. Anyone who goes into a sleazy modelling business is a bit suspect.

Noel: It's not sleazy!

Brenda: And how would you know?

Noel: Well, I don't know much, but I'm sure it isn't.

Brenda: I'm going to the corner shop to get a few things. You can get my car out of the garage in case I scratch it.

Noel: *(After Brenda has exited)* I told you not to buy a bloody big Mercedes!

Lights fade

CURTAIN
ACT 3 Scene 3

(It's the following evening. The scene is the same. As the curtain opens Noel is sat seated on a sofa reading the Beano with great concentration. As he hears

the door open he hurriedly swops the comic for the Financial Times. He's wearing a white dinner jacket, flamboyant waistcoat and bow tie)

Lights up

(BRENDA enters)

Brenda: *(Dressed as though she were going to a Ball):* You look like a real someone. I like to see you reading the Financial Times, it makes you look intelligent.

Noel: I feel like a penguin. Do I have to wear it? *(Tugging at his bow tie)*

Brenda: It's what people in our position wear when they entertain. You look very smart. How do I look?

Noel: A bit done up, but I don't think...

Brenda: *(Snaps at him)* I didn't ask you to think, I asked how I look!

Noel: It's only Pat and Pete coming over, not one of those snotty gits from the golf club.

Brenda: *(Exasperated):* You always do this! I'm trying to make a life for us, improve our lot and all you can do is moan. You look like *a real somebody* dressed like that, especially when you're reading the Financial Times, and then within a few minutes you're acting up!

Noel: But, Bren...

Brenda: Bren nothing, you're wearing that outfit whether you like it or not.

The doorbell rings.

(BRENDA goes off-stage to open the door SR)

Pete: *(PETE is heard off-stage. He is dressed very scruffily in torn jeans and a short-sleeved shirt with trainers. He hasn't shaved):* You look a real treat, Bren. Almost didn't recognise you.

(BRENDA and PETE enter)

Brenda: Wish I could say the same for you. We *are* having dinner you know!

Pete: (*Immediately see's Noel*) Gordon Bennett, look at you! (*Laughs uncontrollably*) You look like a film star, the one that plays the piano, Humphrey what's it's?

Brenda: Just the kind of comment I'd expect from you!

Noel: I look ponsey, that's what he's saying.

Pete: (*Realising he's on dangerous ground with Brenda*): You look a treat, you really do! (*Laughs again*) Sorry, Bren, but he does look like a dog's dinner!

(*BRENDA exits SL to kitchen in disgust*)

Noel: I do look like a dogs dinner don't I, dressed like this?

Pete: Look, Noel, you're a man of means now, so there's nothing wrong in dressing the part. Did Bren insist?

Noel: Yeah! But you're doing alright, but you don't have to dress up like a twit.

Pete: I'm not married to the lovely Brenda now, am I?

Noel: It's just not me. Golf club, fancy clothes, ponsey friends, fast cars, ponies, holidays in the Bahamas, it's not me! Why can't we just be normal again?

Pete: You're a notch above now, and have to act the part. I mean look... (*Points to the table*) on that table you have the opposite ends of the spectrum.

Noel: What?

Pete: You've got the Financial Times at one end and the Beano at the other. Now, I would put money on the fact that 'a', they are both yours, and 'b', you've only read one of them and it's not the Financial Times! Right or am I right?

Noel: I flicked through it...

Pete: I bet you could tell me every story in the beano, but I doubt you could quote me one share price!

Noel: I've always read the Beano, ever since I was a lad! Bren wanted to cancel it, but I put my foot down.

Pete: If you like reading the Beano then why not! 'You can take the man out of the boy, but you can't take the boy out of the man'...

Noel: That's what I said to Bren in a roundabout way... Do you want a drink?

Pete: Does a fish like water? Of course I do, I thought you'd never ask!

Noel: Champagne, alright?

Pete: Wonderful. *(NOEL exits SL. PETER talks to himself)* Oh dear, Noel, you need looking after and not by the lovely Brenda. *(He sits on the sofa and reads the Beano and laughs. NOEL returns with a bottle of champagne and glasses)*

Pete: I can see why you read this Noel.

Noel: Don't like to miss an edition.

Pete: So, what time is Pat due?

Noel: Anytime, I think... So Pete, what do I have to do as a partner? I know you're going to work something out for me, but do I have to go to Board meetings and that sort of thing?

Pete: Sit back and relax, enjoy your new life and let me get on and make us a pot.

Noel: But I want to help if I can.

Pete: I know, my son, and you will.

(Doorbells rings)

Noel: Sounds like Pat's arrived.

Pete: *(Hesitantly):* Yeah.

(BRENDA enters with PAT. She's smartly dressed but in no way compares to Brenda)

Brenda: *(Said to Pete and Pat)* I don't need to introduce you two, do I?

Noel: *(In a sincere way)* Of course you don't.

Brenda: *(Snaps at Noel)* I wasn't talking to you.

(PAT and PETE nervously shake hands Pat sits on chair and Pete on sofa)

Pat: Hello, Pete.

Pete: Hello, Pat, you look nice.

Pat: Thanks.

Pete: Long time no see.

Pat: I suppose. You Okay Noel?

Noel: I suppose. 'If I'm honest though...

Brenda: *(Pounces on him verbally):* Don't you start! I'm sure Pat doesn't want to hear about your moans and groans. Get Pat a drink.

Noel: Drink, Pat? Champagne? It's the food of life! *(She nods in the affirmative. Surprises himself that he's used one of Pete's expressions! PETE looks up and smiles to himself. NOEL hands the drink to Pat)*

Pete: Keeping well, Pat?

Pat: I can't complain.

Pete: How's Caesar?

Pat: He's alright. Got a bit of arthritis that troubles him!

Pete: I miss him, you know.

Brenda: I bet there's lots of things you miss, aren't there Pete?

Pete: Lots of things?

Brenda: Yeah, lots of things. *(Referring to Pat)*

Noel: Darts, drinking down the pub with the lads...

Brenda: Noel! Have you poured those drinks?

(There's an embarrassing silence as NOEL tops up their glasses)

Pat: Are you up here for long, Peter?

Pete: I'm going back tomorrow.

Pat: So, how's the business doing?

Pete: Has its up's and down's, you know.

Noel: I thought you told me it was..., *(Stops mid flight fearful he may give something away about his involvement)* no, well.

Brenda: What were you going to say?

Pete: *(Jumps in quick to save him)* I was just joking with him earlier, that's all.

Brenda: Joking about what?

Pete: Nothing, really!

Brenda: Why is it always so hard to get a straight answer out of men? You never know what they're up to, do you?

Pat: I know what you mean!

(BRENDA grabs Noel by his arm and leads him out)

Brenda: You can help me in the kitchen. *(Heard off-stage)* Why can I never get a straight answer out of you?

Noel: *(Off-stage)* I didn't mean to be difficult.

Pete: A bit of money, nice house, but you don't change people do you?

Pat: Have you changed, Pete?

Pete: *(Awkwardly)* Just the same!

Pat: We used to get on pretty well, didn't we?

Pete: We did. Noel gets a hard time from the lovely Brenda.

Pat: You didn't get a hard time from me. At least, not before things went wrong.

Pete: Just look at the way she's got him dressed up. *(They laugh)*

Pat: Long time since we laughed together. So, how are things?

Pete: OK.

Pat: How's Jane? Is she still modelling?

Pete: She keeps pretty busy.

Pat: I understand that you're partners?

Pete: *(Acting a little coy):* Well I managed her, and then we set up the agency together.

Pat: Oh, I see.

Pete: *(Changing the subject):* Are you keeping busy?

Pat: The dog gets me out.

(There's a short silence)

Pete: Nice of Bren to ask us over.

Pat: She's matchmaking. Thinks we should be back together.

Pete: *(Feeling incredibly uncomfortable):* She's a one, she is!

Pat: What do you think, Pete?

Pete: Think?

Pat: Obviously not that interested.

(NOEL returns with another bottle of champagne)

Pure Nectar

Noel: Pure Nectar!

Pete: I have to say champagne is *the* best drink in the world!

Pat: I bet you drink it all the time now!

Pete: 'til the cows...

Noel: (*Finishing his sentence*) ...come home!

Pete: You got it, Noel!

(*BRENDA enters and walks to sideboard to pick up her spectacles*)

Brenda: Bring your glasses; we can carry on using them.

Noel: (*NOEL lets PAT and PETE go through but walks in front of BRENDA who pretends to kick him and shakes her head*): After you. (*Off-stage*): Sorry, Bren, I wasn't thinking.

Lights fade.

Quick CURTAIN ACT 3 Scene 4

(*As the curtain opens BRENDA and PAT are sitting on the sofa, talking*)

Lights up

Brenda: There's something a bit odd with him, isn't there? Pete I mean. The meal didn't work out as we thought it might.

Pat: He obviously doesn't want to get back together. I'm not that desperate to beg a man.

Brenda: That's what you wanted though wasn't it?

Pat: I don't know now.

Brenda: But there is something odd about the way he is tonight.

Pat: As if he had something else on his mind!

Brenda: Noel's too thick to understand these things. Yeah, he seems on edge as though he's hiding something.

Pat: Do you mind if I leave the car here tonight? I think I'll get a taxi. I've had too much to drink.

Brenda: I'll ring for one in the hall; they're only 2 minutes away. *(She exits)*

(PAT sits on the sofa looking unhappy and stares into space)

Noel: *(Enters SL from kitchen laughing and slightly drunk)* He's a one, that Pete of yours, joke after joke. Just wish I could remember them. Want another drink, Pat?

Pat: No, thanks, Noel. I've just asked Brenda to get me a taxi.

Noel: Not going yet, are you?

Pat: I'd rather be going.

(PETE enters SL from kitchen slightly drunk)

Pete: Any more Nectar?

Noel: Pat's going. Bren's phoning for a taxi.

Pete: That's a shame!

Noel: Tell her to stay a bit longer, Pete.

Pat: *(Insistently):* We're divorced Noel.

Noel: But it's still early.

Pete: If Pat wants to go, then she must be allowed to go.

Pat: You want that too, don't you Pete, for me to go?

Pete: *(Feeling uncomfortable)* I don't mind, if you want to go...

Pat: Better, I think.

(BRENDA returns)

Brenda: A couple of minutes.

Noel: We're all having such a good time.

Pete: Looking after the dog, that's what's on her mind!

Pat: You don't know what's on my mind!

Pete: Isn't it the dog?

Pat: (*Showing her frustration*)... No. It's you!

(*Doorbell rings*)

Brenda: That's quick. (*BRENDA exits*)

Pat: (*Gets up ready to leave kisses Noel on the cheek*) Thanks Noel for a lovely evening and I know you meant well. Bye, Pete.

(*It's JANE at the door*)

Brenda: (*Off-stage*): Aren't you that Jane?

Jane: (*Heard off-stage*): That's right. Is he here?

Brenda: Yeah, but...

(*JANE and BRENDA enter in that order JANE pushes past PAT*)

Jane: (*Casually but provocatively dressed. She is extremely angry at seeing Pete. He is absolutely stunned to see her. The following dialogue is delivered at pace*): What the bloody hell are you doing here?

Pete: (*Not knowing how to react*) How did you know...

Jane: They told me at the pub! Do you know how long I've taken to track you down? So where have you been these past few days?

Brenda: What's going on...?

Noel: Glass of Nectar, Jane?

Jane: A re-union is it?

Brenda: (*Harshly*): Don't come into my house shouting the odds...

Pete: I was invited to dinner, that's all.

Jane: (*Referring to Pat*): You said you had no contact...

Pat: And what's it got to do with you whether he has contact with me or not...

Pete: Look, Jane, why don't we go somewhere private... Noel?

Jane: I've got nothing to hide, have you?

Brenda: Like what?

Jane: I need to know three things: why can't I get a cheque cashed at the bank: how come you've booked a single one-way flight to Rio leaving tomorrow night, and where have you been these past few nights?

Brenda: She sounds more like a wife than a business partner!

Jane: Oh, I see, you haven't told them. You haven't told them we're married.

(They are all speechless)

Pat: He's married to you...

Brenda: Bloody hell, I knew there was something odd...

Noel: Blimey, you kept that secret, Pete.

Jane: And we have a son, called Jason!

Pete: I think we'd better be going.

Pat: (*Completely shocked*): Our daughter has a half brother!

Pete: (*Totally beside himself not knowing what to say or do*) I meant to tell you Pat, but you wouldn't listen.

Jane: I want to know the answers to my questions.

Brenda: Like the one-way ticket to Rio?

Jane: For starters.

Noel: I don't understand, but what about our partner.....(*tails off realising he's letting the cat out of the bag*)!

Brenda: What's that? I keep telling you to make friends at the golf club.

Pat: I think I'd better walk down the drive to meet the taxi...

Brenda: I'll see you out.

(BRENDA and PAT exit)

Noel: But what about our partnership Pete?

Jane: What's he on about?

Pete: Look. I can explain.

Noel: You, me and Pete in the modelling business!

Jane: Did you say a 'partner' 'Partner' in *my* modelling business?

Noel: I paid Pete the money yesterday.

Jane: How much did you give him?

Noel: Two hundred grand.

Jane: Two hundred grand!

(BRENDA returns)

Brenda: What's going on?

Jane: You gave him Two hundred grand for a share in *my* modelling business. He doesn't own a single share!

Noel: Can you explain it to her, Pete!

(PETE is speechless. He stands there like a condemned man)

Brenda: Have you given him money, Noel? Tell me!

Noel: (*Pathetically*): You keep telling me to look at investments.

Brenda: (*Attacks*): Look at your investments in the papers, not throw money to the wind! An investment in what though? A business he doesn't own! Are you right off your rocker?

Noel: I don't understand!

Brenda: (*Explodes*) Are you totally stupid, Noel? He's off to Rio, *or was off to Rio* tomorrow on a one way ticket with our money! Understand now?

Noel: (*A moment of assertiveness*): Don't call me stupid Bren. I may look it dressed like this...

Brenda: He's got you to give him that money for a bogus share in a business he doesn't own.

Noel: (*Desperate for Pete to tell him it's not true*) Perhaps he was going on holiday and forgot to tell us all. Pete?

Jane: (*Addressing Brenda*): Your old man is stupid if he thinks that...

Pete: I really don't know what I've been doing...

Jane: Liar! He's sponged every penny off me to gamble on the horses, dogs, roulette, you name it, he's he's hooked. He wasn't content to bleed me dry, he's had money off everyone we know; and some of them are not 'nice people', if you know what I mean...

Pete: (*Pours his heart out*) I know I've got a problem, and I'm trying to settle my debts...

Brenda: You used Noel, my trusting Noel, to get money to pay off your debts. How could you live with yourself?

Noel: So, I haven't got a share in the business after all?

Pete: Look, I'm really sorry! You have no idea what I've been going through...

Brenda: Other people's money by the sounds of it... your swan song was to con us and then fly off to Rio!

Pete: I needed to think, that's all. I would have paid you back in time...

Jane: And what about me and Jason?

Pete: I just needed time to clear my head.

Jane: You've been conned hook, line and sinker.

Brenda: Come on, where's our money?

Pete: I'll have it later. I just know I will!

Brenda: *(To Noel)* Call the Police. Let them sort it out.

Pete: Look. I put the money on a bet; an Accumulator. I wasn't going to Rio.

Jane: A bet. How much?

Pete: Ten grand.

Brenda: What!

Jane: Ten grand on a bet, are you insane!?

Noel: He won six hundred quid last time on an Accumulator. I'm sure he can do it again! Is it on the tele? Which channel?

Jane: Is that all you can say? He stole your money!

Brenda: Call the police Noel, now!

Noel: Look, I reckon if he's placed the bet we might as well watch it come in.

Pete: It's on the radio. I really appreciate you taking it this way, Noel.

Brenda: Noel. Do as you're told!

Noel: I won't!

(Stunned by his assertiveness Brenda flops onto a chair)

Jane: How could you steal money off this innocent and plan to leave me and little Jason stranded?

Pete: Jane, I really want to make it up to you and little Jason, irrespective of whether this horse wins or not.

Noel: What's the name of the horse, then?

Pete: Pure Nectar!

Noel: I reckon it'll win with a name like that. I'll get the radio? (*Gets radio on sideboard*)

Pete: Hurry, Noel.

Noel: Don't fret, here it is. Which station? (*Switches on the radio and fiddles with the dial until he finds it*)

Pete: It must have started by now...

Audio recording

And so as they turn into the final straight with three furlongs to go Fire Fly leads from The Duchess with Pure Nectar running a close third...

Pete: (*Excitedly*) Come on, Pure Nectar!

Noel: Come on...

It looks as though this is a three horse race as The Duchess makes progress near the rails.

Noel: I know it will win...

Pete: Come on you beauty, just do it for me, come on!

Jane: (*shouts realising it could be to her advantage*) 'Hit the bloody thing with a whip, go on!

Fire Fly is holding ground as Pure Nectar is running wide. Its two furlongs to go and all three are battling it out in fine style. As they approach the final

turn, The Duchess moves into the lead with Fire Fly holding strong in second place...

Pete: This can't be happening. Come on, Pure Nectar. If it comes in I can pay you back Noel.

(Even Brenda gets caught up in the excitement)

Brenda: Go on hit it; hit it!

What a race, all three are now neck and neck as they approach the line.

Noel: Think positive, Pete.

Well it looks like a photo between Fire Fly and Pure Nectar, the rank outsider.

Pete: *(Throws his head into his hands)* A photo! I don't believe it...

Noel: I just know it's a winner.

Jane: Not with his luck.

What a wonderful finish to the last race of the day....we now have a result...first, Pure Nectar, at 30:1, Second, Fire Fly, at 7 to 4 and third, The Duchess at 3:1

Pete: *(In a state of absolute excitement. He hugs Noel and Jane and tentatively approaches Brenda who also gives him a hug)* I did it, I bloody did it. My god, I've won a fortune.

Noel: I knew you'd do it mate.

Jane: You jammy bugger. This is the last race you'll ever gamble on, do you hear!

Pete: I don't need to bet any more, not with this win. You'll have your money back tomorrow Noel. Sorry Brenda.

Jane: I don't know what I would have done to you if it had lost.

Noel: Now it has won, will you forgive him?

Jane: I just wish he'd never started gambling. It all went pear shaped when he did.

Noel: That deserves a toast, that does, well done mate!

(NOEL passes the drinks around)

Pete: Truly, am lost for words.

Noel: Well, here's to Pete and Jane and little Jason!

Pete: I always said it was the stuff of life, Champagne; Nectar! Now it's the stuff of dreams! Down the hatch!

(They all toast the win) Blackout

FINAL CURTAIN

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Furniture and Properties List

ACT 1

Scene 1

Pub snug room basic ambience

2 Tables

8 Chairs

Beer Glasses

Dart Board and Darts

Scene 2

As Scene 1

Scene 3

High back sofa

1 Easy Chairs

Coffee Table

Table Lamp

Modern Sideboard

Telephone

Scene 4

As Scene 1

ACT 11

Scene 1

As Act 1 Scene 1 but modernised slightly

2 tables

8 Chairs

ACT 111

Scene 1

Noel and Brenda's drawing room in their new home

Bright unco-ordinated colours and decor

3 Seater Sofa,

Easy Chair,

Radio

Coffee Table – Financial Times, Economist, Beano

Sideboard plus Champagne and glasses, drinks dispenser

Vase and flowers

ACT 111

Scene 2, 3, 4

As Scene 1

Lighting Plot

ACT 1 S1

Cue 1: Lights up Page 3
Cue 2: Lights fade Page 13

ACT 1 S2

Cue 3: Lights up Page 13
Cue 4: Lights fade Page 18

ACT 1 S3

Cue 5: Lights up table lamp on Page 18
Cue 6: Lights fade Page 29

ACT 1 S4

Cue 7: Lights up Page 29
Cue 8: Lights fade Page 34

ACT 2 S1

Cue 9: Lights up Page 38
Cue 10: Lights fade Page 42

ACT 2 S2

Cue 11: Lights up-dimly lit spot on table Page 42
Cue 12: Lights fade Page 48

ACT 2 S3

Cue 13: Lights up Page 48
Cue 14: Blackout Page 57

ACT 3 S1

Cue 15: Lights up Page 59
Cue 16: Lights fade Page 72

ACT 3 S2

Cue 17: Lights up Page 73
Cue 18: Lights fade Page 78

ACT 3 S3

Cue 19: Lights up Page 78
Cue 20: Lights fade Page 85

ACT 3 S4

Cue 21: Lights up Page 85
Cue 22: Blackout Page 94

Effects Plot

Prior to curtain opening Ian Dury 'Hit me with your rhythm stick'

ACT 1 S1

Cue 1: Music Chas & Dave 'Rabbit'	Page 13
Cue 2: Pat,Helen, Brenda heard talking off stage	Page 13

ACT 1 S2

Cue 3: Music 'Rabbit'	Page 18
Cue 4: Doorbell rings	Page 18
Cue 5: 'Phone rings	Page 23
Cue 6: Knock at door	Page 25
Cue 7: Knock at door	Page 26
Cue 8: Music 'Rabbit'	Page 29

ACT 2 S1

Cue 9: Cheering from bar	Page 57
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ACT 3 S1

Cue 10: Doorbell rings	Page 61
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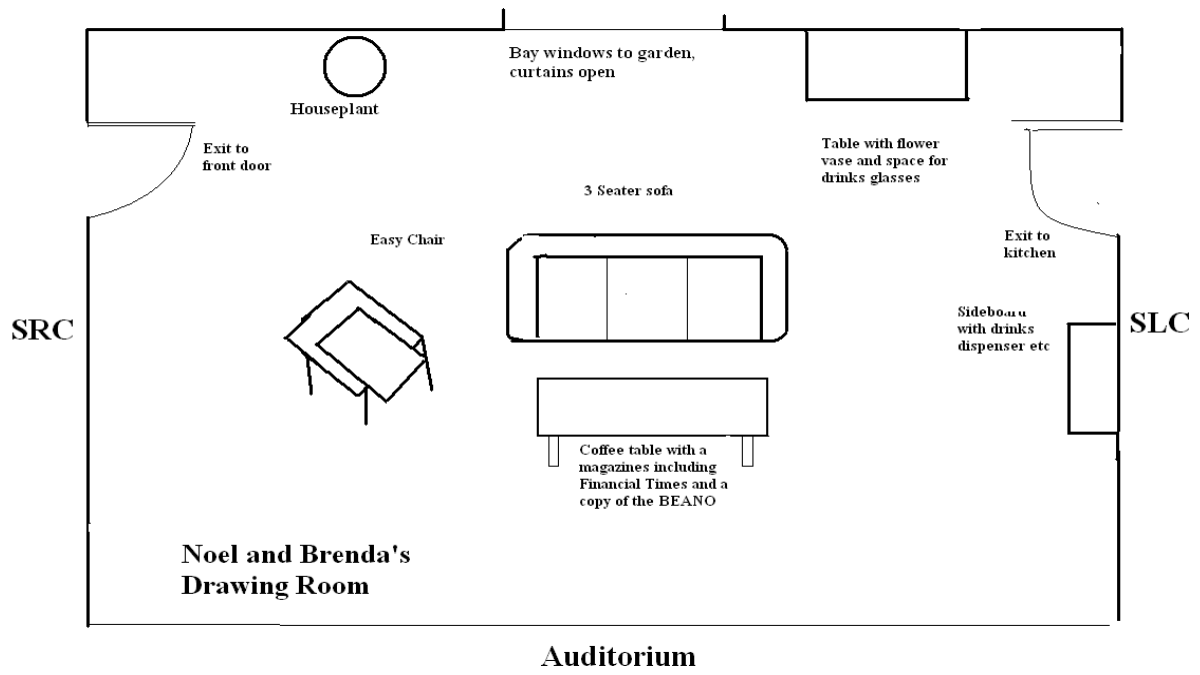
ACT 3 S3

Cue 11: Doorbell rings	Page 79
Cue 12: Doorbell rings	Page 81

ACT 3 S4

Cue 13: Doorbell rings	Page 87
Cue 14: Audio of horserace	Page 92/93

STAGE SET ACT 3



ACT 1 and 2 use curtains to mask set for Act 3

Pure Nectar

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