Nothing on script

Sound of ringing phone as lights up.

Mrs Clackett (Entering from service quarters) It's no good you going on. I can't open sardines and answer the phone. I've only got one pair of feet (Puts sardines down on the telephone table by the sofa and picks up the phone) Hello…yes, but there's no one here love…No, Mr Brent's not here…He lives here, yes, but he don't live here now because he lives in Spain…. Mr Phillip Brent, that's right…The one who writes the plays, that's him, only now he writes them in Spain…No, she's in Spain, too, they're all in Spain, there's no one here…Am I in Spain? No, I'm not in Spain, dear. I look after the house for them, only I go home at 1:00 on Wednesday, so that's where I am…No, because I've got a nice plate of sardines to put my feet up with, and they've got colour here, and it's the royal what's it called-the royal you know-where's the paper then…(She searches in the newspaper)…And if it's to do with letting the house then you'll have to ring the house-agents, because they're the agents for the house…Squire, Squire, Hackham and who's the other one?…No, they're not in Spain, they're next to the phone in the study. Squire, Squire, Hackham, and hold on, I'll go and look. (She replaces the receiver). Always the same, isn't it. Soon as you take the weight off your feet, down it all comes on your head.

(Sound of a key in the lock)

Roger (Entering through the front door with a cardboard box)…my housekeeper, yes, but this is her afternoon off. (Vicki enters through the front door) So we've got the place entirely to ourselves. (Brings in a flight bag and closes the door). I'll just check. (Opens door to maid's quarters) Hello? Anyone at home? (Closes the door) No, there's no one here. So what do you think?

Vicki Great. And this is all yours?

Roger Just a little shack in the woods, really. Converted posset mill. Sixteenth-century.

Vicki It must have cost a bomb.

Roger Well, one has to have somewhere to entertain one's business associates. Someone coming at four o'clock, in fact. Arab. Oil. You know.

Vicki Right, and I've got to get those files to our Basingstoke office by four.

Roger Yes, we'll only just manage to fit it in. I mean, we'll only just do it. I mean…

Vicki Right, then.

Roger (Puts down box and opens flight bag) We won't bother to chill the champagne.

Vicki All these doors.

Roger Oh, only a handful, really. Study. Kitchens, and a self-contained service flat for the housekeeper.

Vicki Terrific. And which one's the…….?

Roger What?

Vicki You know…

Roger Oh. Through here. (Opens the downstairs bathroom for her)

Vicki Fantastic.

(Exit Vicki. Enter Mrs Clackett from the study without the newspaper)

Mrs Clackett Now I've lost the sardines…

(Mutual surprise. Roger closes bathroom door and slips champagne back into the bag)

Roger I'm sorry. I thought there was no one here.

Mrs Clackett I'm not here. I'm off, only it's the royal you know, where they wear those hats and they're all covered in fruit, and who are you?

Roger I'm from the agents.

Mrs Clackett From the agents?

Roger Squire, Squire, Hackham, and Dudley.

Mrs Clackett Oh, which one are you, then? Squire, Squire, Hackham, or Dudley?

Roger I'm Tramplemain.

Mrs Clackett Walking in here as if you owned the place! I thought you was a burglar.

Roger No, I just dropped in to …go into a few things. Well, to check some of the measurements, do one or two odd jobs. (Bathroom door opens. Roger closes it) Oh, and a client. I'm showing a prospective tenant over the house.

Vicki (From off) What's wrong with this door?

Roger She's thinking of renting it. Her interest is definitely aroused. (Enter Vicki from bathroom)

Vicki That's not the bedroom.

Roger The bedroom? No, that's the downstairs bathroom and WC suite. And this is the housekeeper Mrs Crockett.

Mrs Clackett Clackett, dear, Clackett.

Vicki Oh, hi.

Roger She's not really here.

Mrs Clackett Only it's the colour.

Roger It's the royal you know.

Mrs Clackett It's black and white at home.

Roger (To Mrs Clackett) Don't worry about us.

Mrs Clackett (Picks up the sardines) I'll have the sound on low.

Roger We'll just inspect the house.

Mrs Clackett Only now I've lost the newspaper. (Exits into the study carrying the sardines)

Roger I'm sorry about this.

Vicki That's all right. We don't want the television, do we?

Roger Only she's been in the family for generations.

Vicki Great. Come on, then. (Starts upstairs) I've got to be in Basingstoke by four.

Roger Perhaps we should just have a glass of champagne.

Vicki We'll take it up with us.

Roger Yes. Well…

Vicki And don't let my files out of sight.

Roger No. Only…

Vicki What?

Roger Well…

Vicki Her?

Roger She's been in the family for generations.

(Enter Mrs Clackett from the study with the newspaper but without the sardines)

Mrs Clackett Sardines…Sardines…it's not for me to say, of course, dear, only I will just say this: don't think twice about it-take the plunge. You'll really enjoy it here.

Vicki Oh. Great.

Mrs Clackett Won't she, love?

Roger Yes. Well. Yes!

Mrs Clackett And we'll enjoy having you. (To Roger) Won't we, love?

Roger Oh. Well.

Vicki Terrific.

Mrs Clackett Sardines, sardines. Can't put your feet up on an empty stomach, can you. (Exits to service quarters)

Vicki You see? She thinks it's great. She's even making us sardines!

Roger Well…

Vicki I think she's terrific.

Roger Terrific.

Vicki So which way?

Roger (Picks up the bags) All right. Before she comes back with the sardines.

Vicki Up here?

Roger Yes, yes.

Vicki In here?

Roger Yes, yes, yes. (Both exit into mezzanine bathroom)

Vicki It's another bathroom. (They reappear)

Roger No, no, no.

Vicki Always trying to get me into bathrooms…

Roger I mean in here. (Exits first door second floor, Vicki leading)

Vicki Oh, black sheets! (Produces one)

Roger It's the airing cupboard. (Throws sheet back) This one, this, one, this one. (Drops the bag and box and struggles nervously to open the second door)

Vicki Oh, you're in a real state!

Roger Come on, then.

Vicki You can't even get the door open. (They exit into bedroom)

(Sound of key in lock and front door opens. Philip enters carrying a cardboard box)

Philip Yes, but then this is Mrs Clackett's afternoon off. (Enter Flavia) We've got the place entirely to ourselves. (Brings in flight bag and closes door)

Flavia Look at it.

Philip Do you like it?

Flavia I can't believe it!

Philip The perfect place for an assignation.

Flavia Home.

Philip Home.

Flavia Our little secret hideaway.

Philip The last place on earth anyone will look for us.

Flavia It's rather funny creeping in like this.

Philip I'm damned serious! If Inland Revenue find out we're in the country, even for one night, bang goes our claim to be resident abroad-bang goes most of this year'' income. I feel like an illegal immigrant.

Flavia I'll tell you what I feel like.

Philip Champagne? (Takes a bottle out of the box)

Flavia I wonder if Mrs Clackett's aired the beds.

Philip Darling!

Flavia Well, why not? No children. No friends dropping in. We're absolutely on our own.

Philip True. (Picks up bag and box and ushers Flavia to the stairs) There's something to be said for being a tax exile.

Flavia Leave those!

Philip (Drops bag and box and kisses her. She flees upstairs, laughing, and he after her) Sh!

Flavia What?

Philip Inland Revenue may hear us!

(They creep to the bedroom door. Enter Mrs Clackett from service quarters carrying a fresh plate of sardines)

Mrs Clackett (To herself) What I did with that first lot of sardines I shall never know.

Philip/Flavia Mrs Clackett!

Mrs Clackett (Jumps up) Oh, you give me a turn! My heart jumped right out of my boots!

Philip So did mine!

Flavia We thought you'd gone!

Mrs Clackett I thought you was in Spain!

Philip We are! We are!

Flavia You haven't seen us!

Philip We're not here!

Mrs Clackett Oh, like that, is it? The income tax are after you?

Flavia They would be, if they knew we were here.

Mrs Clackett All right, then, love. You're not here. I haven't seen you. Anybody asks for you, I don't know nothing. Off to bed, are you?

Philip Oh…

Flavia Well….

Mrs Clackett That's right. Nowhere like bed when they all get on top of you. You'll want your things, look. (Indicates bag and box)

Philip Oh. Yes. Thanks. (He comes downstairs and picks up the bag and box)

Mrs Clackett Oh, and that bed hasn't been aired, love.

Flavia I'll get a hot water bottle. (Exits into mezzanine bathroom)

Mrs Clackett I've put all your letters in the study, dear.

Philip Letters? What letters? You forward all the mail, don't you?

Mrs Clackett Not the ones from the income tax, dear. I don't want to spoil your holidays.

Philip Oh my God. Where are they?

Mrs Clackett I've put them all in the little pigeonhouse.

Philip In the pigeonhouse?

Mrs Clackett In the pigeonhouse in your desk, love. (Exit Mrs Clackett into kitchen and Phillip into the study)

Roger (Entering from bedroom tying his tie) Yes, but I could hear voices!

Vicki (Entering from bedroom in her underwear) Voices? What sort of voices?

Roger People's voices.

Vicki But there's no one here.

Roger Darling, I saw the door-handle move! It could be someone from the office checking up.

Vicki I still don't see why you've got to put your tie on to look.

Roger Mrs Clockett.

Vicki Mrs Clockett?

Roger She's been in the family for generations.

Vicki (Looking over bannister) Oh, look, she's opened our sardines. (Vicki moves to go downstairs. Roger grabs her)

Roger Come back!

Vicki What?

Roger I'll fetch them. You can't go downstairs like that.

Vicki Why not?

Roger Mrs Crackett.

Vicki Mrs Crackett?

Roger She's irreplaceable.

Mrs Clackett (To herself) Sardines here, Sardines there. It's like a Sunday school outing. (Roger pushes Vicki though the first available door, which happens to be the linen cupboard.) Oh, you're still poking around, are you?

Roger Yes, still poking-well, still around.

Mrs Clackett In the airing cupboard, were you?

Roger No, no. (The linen cupboard door begins to open. He slams it shut) Well, just checking the sheets and pillowcases. Going through the inventory. (He starts downstairs) Mrs Blackett…

Mrs Clackett Clackett, dear, Clackett. (She puts down the sardines beside the other sardines.)

Roger Mrs Clackett. Is there anyone else in the house, Mrs Clackett?

Mrs Clackett I haven't seen no one, dear.

Roger I thought I heard voices.

Mrs Clackett Voices? There's no voices here, love.

Roger I must have imagined it.

Philip (From off) Oh my God!

Roger (With his back to her, picks up both plates of sardines) I beg your pardon?

Mrs Clackett (Mimics Philip) Oh my God!

Roger Why, what is it?

Mrs Clackett Oh my God, the study door's open. (She crosses and closes it)

Roger (Looks out window) There's another car outside! That's not Mr Hackham's, is it? Or Mr Dudley's? (Exits through the front door, holding both plates of sardines.)

Flavia (Enters from mezzanine bathroom, carrying a hot water bottle. She sees the linen cupboard door swinging open as she passes, pushes it shut, and turns the key) Nothing but flapping doors in this house. (Exits into the bedroom)

Philip (Entering from the study, holding a tax demand and its envelope) '…final notice….steps will be taken…distraint…proceedings in court…'

Mrs Clackett Oh yes, and that reminds me, a gentleman come about the house.

Philip Don't tell me. I'm not here.

Mrs Clackett He says he's got a lady quite aroused.

Philip Leave everything to Squire, Squire, Hackham, and Dudley.

Mrs Clackett All right, love. I'll let them go all over, shall I?

Philip Let them do anything. Just so long as you don't tell anyone we're here.

Mrs Clackett So I'll just sit down and turn on the…sardines, I've forgotten the sardines! I don't know- if it wasn't fixed to my shoulders, I'd forget what day it was. (Exits to the service quarters)

Philip I didn't get this! I'm not here. I'm in Spain. But if I didn't get it, I didn't open it.

Flavia (Entering from bedroom, holding the dress that Vicki arrived in) Darling, I never had a dress like this, did I?

Philip (Abstracted) Didn't you?

Flavia I should never buy anything as tarty as this…Oh, it's not something you gave me, is it?

Philip I should never have touched it.

Flavia No, it's lovely.

Philip Stick it down. Put it back. Never saw it. (Exits into the study)

Flavia Well, I'll put it in the attic with all the other things you gave me that are too precious to wear. (Exits along the upstairs corridor)

Roger (Enters through the front door, still carrying both plates of sardines) All right, all right…Now the study door's open again! What's going on. (He puts the sardines down-one plate on the telephone table, where it was before, one near the front door-and goes toward the study, but stops at the sound of urgent knocking overhead. (Knocking)) Knocking! (Knocking) Upstairs! (Runs upstairs. Knocking) Oh my God, there's something in the airing cupboard! (Unlocks and opens it. Enter Vicki from cupboard.) Oh, it's you.

Vicki Of course it's me! You put me in here! In the dark! With all black sheets and things!

Roger But, darling, why did you lock the door?

Vicki Why did I lock the door? Why did you lock the door!

Roger I didn't lock the door!

Vicki Someone locked the door!

Roger Anyway, we can't stand here like this.

Vicki Like what?

Roger In your underwear.

Vicki OK, I'll take it off.

Roger In here, in here! (Ushers her into the bedroom)

Philip (Enters from study, holding the tax demand, the envelope, and a tube of glue) Darling, this glue. It's not that special quick-drying sort, is it, that you can never get unstuck…? Oh, Mrs Clackett's made us some sardines. (Exits into study with tax demand, envelope, tube of glue, and the plate of sardines from the telephone table)

(Roger, with Vicki, entering from the bedroom, holding the hot water bottle)

Vicki Now what?

Roger A hot water bottle! I didn't put it there!

Vicki I didn't put it there.

Roger Someone, in the bathroom, filling hot water bottles. (Exits into mezzanine bathroom)

Vicki You don't think there's something creepy going on? (Exits into mezzanine bathroom)

Flavia (Enters from upstairs corridor) Darling, are you coming to bed or aren't you? (Exits into the bedroom)

Roger (With Vicki, entering from mezzanine bathroom) What did you say?

Vicki I didn't say anything.

Roger I mean, first the door handle. Now the hot water bottle…

Vicki I can feel goose-pimples all over.

Roger Yes, quick, get something round you.

Vicki Get the covers over our heads.

Roger (At bedroom door, stops) Just a moment. What did I do with those sardines? (He goes downstairs. Vicki makes to follow) You-wait here.

Vicki You hear all sorts of funny things about these old houses.

Roger Yes, but this one has been extensively modernised throughout. I can't see how anything creepy would survive oil-fired central heating and…

Vicki What? What is it? (Roger stares at the telephone table in silence. The bedroom door opens, and Flavia puts Vicki's flight bag on the table outside without looking around. The door closes again) What's happening?

Roger The sardines. They've gone.

Vicki Perhaps there is something funny going on. I'm going to get into bed and put my head under the…(She freezes at the sight of the flight bag)

Roger I put them there. Or was it there?

Vicki Bag…(She runs down the stairs to Roger who is directly underneath the gallery)

Roger I suppose Mrs Sprockett must have taken them away again…What? What is it?

Vicki Bag!

Roger Bag?

Vicki Bag! Bag!

(Enter Flavia from bedroom with box of files. She picks up the flight bag as well, and takes them both off along the upstairs corridor. As she does so, Vicki drags Roger back upstairs)

Roger What do you mean bag, bag?

Vicki Bag! Bag! Bag!

Roger What bag?

Vicki (Seeing the empty table outside the bedroom door) No bag!

Roger No bag?

Vicki Your bag! Suddenly! Here! Now-gone!

Roger It's in the bedroom. I put it in the bedroom. (Exits into the bedroom)

Vicki Don't go in there!

Roger (Entering from bedroom) The box!

Vicki The box?

Roger They've both gone!

Vicki Oh! My files!

Roger What on earth's happening? Where's Mrs Spratchett? (He starts downstairs. Vicki follows him) You wait in the bedroom.

Vicki No! No! No! (She runs downstairs)

Roger Well, get dressed, then!

Vicki I'm not going in there!

Roger I'll fetch your dress out here. (Exits to bedroom. Enters from bedroom) Your dress has gone.

Vicki Oh!

Roger (Goes downstairs) Don't panic! Don't panic! There's some perfectly rational explanation for all this. I'll fetch Mrs Splotchett and she'll tell us what's happening. You wait here…you can't stand here looking like that…you wait in the study…study, study, study! (Roger exits into the service quarters.)

Vicki (Opens the study door. There is a roar of exasperation from Philip, off. She turns and flees) Roger! There's something in there! Where are you? (Vicki exits blindly through the front door)

Philip (Enters from study, holding the tax demand in his right hand, and one of the plates of sardines in his left) Darling, I know this is going to sound

silly, but…(He struggles to get the tax demand unstuck from his fingers, encumbered by the plate of sardines)

Flavia (Enters from upstairs corridor, carrying various pieces of bric-a-brac) Darling, if we're not going to bed I'm going to clear out the attic.

Philip Darling, I can't come to bed! I'm glued to a tax demand!

Flavia Darling, why don't you put the sardines down?

Philip (Puts the plates of sardines down on the table, but when he takes his hand away, the sardines come with it.) Darling, I'm stuck to the sardines!

Flavia Darling, don't play the fool. Get that bottle marked poison in the downstairs loo. That eats through anything. (She exits along the upstairs corridor)

Philip I've heard of people getting stuck with a problem, but this is ridiculous. (He exits into the downstairs bathroom)

(A pane of glass shatters in the mullioned window, and an arm comes through and releases the catch. The window opens, and through it appears an elderly burglar. He has great character, but is in need of extensive modernisation)

Burglar No bars, no burglar alarm. They ought to be prosecuted for incitement. (He climbs in) No, but sometimes it makes me want to sit down and weep. When I think I used to do banks! When I remember I used to do bullion vaults! What am I doing now?-I'm breaking into paper bags! (Pours himself a drink) I know they're all in Spain, 'cause the old turkey in the kitchen told me so…and I know she's out, 'cause I've just seen her come out of the front door in her swimming costume…Where is the front door…? (Peers shortsightedly, then opens the front door ready for his departure) Right, get the van loaded up. No rush. I've only got all flaming afternoon! Right, what are they offering? (Peers at the television) One microwave oven. (Unplugs it and puts it on the sofa) What? Fifty quid? Hardly worth lifting it. (Picks up his drink and inspects the paintings and ornaments) Junk…Junk…If you insist…(Pockets some small item) Where's his desk? No, they all say the same thing-it's hard to adjust to retirement. (Exits into the study, holding his drink).

Roger (From the service quarters, followed by Mrs Clackett, who is holding another plate of sardines)…and the prospective tenant naturally wishes to know if there is any previous history of paranormal phenomena.

Mrs Clackett Oh, yes, dear, it's all nice and paranormal.

Roger I mean, has anything ever dematerialised before? Has anything ever flown about?

Mrs Clackett (Puts the sardines down on the telephone table, moves the television set back, plugs it in, and closes the front door) Flown about? No, the things move themselves on their own two feet, just like they do in any house.

Roger I'll tell the prospective tenant. She's inspecting the study. (Opens study door. Closes it again.) There's a man in there!

Mrs Clackett No, no, there's no one in the house, love.

Roger (Opens study door) Look! Look! He's…searching for something.

Mrs Clackett (Glances briefly) I can't see no one.

Roger You can't see him? But this is extraordinary! And where is my prospective tenant? I left her in there! She's gone! My prospective tenant has disappeared! (He closes the study door and looks around the living room. He sees the sardines on the telephone table) Oh my God!

Mrs Clackett Now what?

Roger There!

Mrs Clackett Where?

Roger The sardines!

Mrs Clackett Oh, the sardines.

Roger You can see the sardines, can you?

Mrs Clackett I can see the sardines. (Roger touches them cautiously, then picks up the plate) I can see the way they're going, too.

Roger I'm not letting these sardines out of my hand. But where is my prospective tenant? (He goes upstairs, holding the sardines)

Mrs Clackett I can see I'm going to be opening sardines all night, in and out of here like the cuckoo on a clock. (Exits into service quarters)

Roger Vicki! Vicki! (Exits into the bedroom)

Burglar (Entering from study carrying Philip's box and bag. He empties contents behind the sofa and loads the silverware into the box.) I said, 'I may be seventy, but I've still got all my wits about me.' He didn't have any answer to that.

Roger (entering from bedroom, still holding sardines) Vicki! Vicki! (Exits into linen cupboard)

Burglar Or if he did, I didn't hear it. (Exits into the study, not having heard Roger)

Philip (Entering from downstairs bathroom, right hand stuck to the tax demand, his left to the plate of sardines) Darling, this stuff that eats through anything. It doesn't eat through glue…It just eats through trousers! Darling, if it eats through trousers, you don't think it goes on and eats through…Listen, darling, I think I'd better get these trousers off. (Begins to do so, as best he can) Darling, quick, this is an emergency! Have we got any stuff that stops the stuff that stops the stuff? I mean, if it eats through absolutely anything…Darling, I think I can feel it! I think it's eating through…absolutely everything!

Roger (Entering from linen cupboard, still holding the sardines) There's something evil in this house

Philip (Pulls up trousers; aside) The Inland Revenue!

Roger (Frightened) He's back!

Philip No!

Roger No?

Philip I'm not here.

Roger Oh my God.

Philip I'm abroad.

Roger He's walking abroad.

Philip I must go.

Roger Stay!

Philip I'm not staying.

Roger Speak!

Philip Only in the presence of my lawyer.

Roger Only in the…? Hold on. Hold on. You're just an intruder, an ordinary intruder!

Philip Well, nice to meet you. (Waves goodbye with his right hand, sees the tax demand on it, and hurriedly puts it away behind his back) I mean, have a sardine. (Offers sardines with his left hand, causing his trousers to fall down.)

Roger No, you're not! You're some kind of sex criminal! You've done something to Vicki! I'm going to come downstairs and sort you out! (He comes downstairs and dials 999)

Philip Oh, you've got some sardines. Well, if there's nothing I can offer you…

Roger (Into phone) Police!

Philip I think I'll be running along. (Runs, with trousers around ankles, through front door)

Roger Come back…! (Into phone) Hello-police? Someone has broken into my house! Or rather someone has broken into someone's house…Yes, a sex criminal! And a young woman is missing!

Vicki (Entering through a window) It's in the garden now, and it's a man!

Roger (Into the phone) Sorry-the young woman has reappeared. (Hand over phone) Are you all right?

Vicki No, he almost saw me!

Roger Into phone) He almost saw her…No, but he's a burglar as well! He's taken our things!

Vicki (Finds Philip's bag and box) The things are here.

Roger (Into phone) The things have come back. So, we're just missing a plate of sardines.

Vicki (Finds plate of sardines left near the front door by Roger) Here are the sardines.

Roger (Into phone) And we've found the sardines.

Vicki This is the police? You want the police here- in my underwear?

Roger (Into phone) So what am I saying? I'm saying, Let's say no more about it. (Puts phone down) I thought something terrible had happened to you!

Vicki It has! I know him!

Roger You know him?

Vicki He's dealt with by our office!

Roger He's just an ordinary sex criminal.

Vicki Yes, but he mustn't see me like this! You have to keep up certain standards if you work for Inland Revenue!

Roger Well, put something on!

Vicki I haven't got anything!

Roger There must be something in the bathroom! (Picks up box and bag and leads up to mezzanine bathroom) Bring the sardines! (They exit into the mezzanine bathroom)

Burglar (entering from study carrying a tape recorder) 'What?', I said. 'When have I ever needed to run off in the middle of a job to have a Jimmy Riddle?' (Puts tape recorder down by front door) 'Except when some stupid berk goes and starts talking about it…?' Oh my God! Where is it?

Roger (Entering from mezzanine bathroom carrying box and bag) Just stay in there. (Enter Vicki holding short white nightdress) And don't come out till you've got dressed. (Exits into bedroom)

Vicki But I can't go around in front of our taxpayers wearing this! (Exits into bedroom)

Burglar I knew I shouldn't have brought the subject up. (Exits in though the open door of the mezzanine bathroom)

Philip (Entering from front door) Darling! Help! Where are you? (Enter Vicki, followed by Roger, from bedroom. Exit Phillip into downstairs bathroom)

Roger Just put it on! It's a start, at any rate! I'll find a bottom-I'll find a top-I'll find something. (Exit Roger to bedroom and Vicki to mezzanine bathroom)

Vicki (Entering from mezzanine bathroom) Someone in there! It's him! (Exits quickly into downstairs bathroom)

Flavia (Entering from along upstairs corridor, carrying an old biscuit tin) Oh, darling, I'm finding such lovely things! (Vicki screams from in downstairs bathroom) Do you remember this old biscuit tin…(Enter Vicki from the downstairs bathroom. Vicki stops at the sight of Flavia)…you gave me on the first anniversary of our…? Who are you?

Vicki Oh my God! It's his wife and dependants. (She puts her hands over her face)

Philip (Enters from downstairs bathroom, holding tax demand, sardines, the nightdress, and somehow, his trousers up.) I've taken your dress off you! (Flavia gasps. Philip looks up at the gallery and sees her.) Where have you been? I've been going mad! Look at the state I'm in! (Lifts arms up to show her, and his trousers fall down. Flavia drops the tin to the living room floor below. Vicki flees to upstairs linen cupboard, as Philip starts upstairs) Darling, I was just trying to explain to her about Inland Revenue being after us, and my fingers got stuck! (Exit Flavia, with a cry of pain, along upstairs corridor.)

Roger (Enters from bedroom. Philip holds nightdress in front of his face) Don't keep waving that thing in front of my face! I'm trying to find something! I'll look in the other rooms. (Exits along upstairs corridor. Philip turns to go back downstairs, and hears mezzanine lavatory flush. He stops)

Burglar (Enters from mezzanine bathroom, holding a pair of gold taps) On e pair gold taps, anyway…(Stops at the sight of Philip) Oh my Gawd!

Philip Who are you?

Burglar Me? Fixing the taps.

Philip Tax? Income Tax?

Burglar That's right, governor. In come new taps- old go the old taps. (Exits back into mezzanine bathroom)

Philip Tax inspectors everywhere!

Roger (Off) Oh my God!

Philip The other one! (Exits into bedroom holding nightdress in front of his face)

Roger (Enters from along upstairs corridor) Tin boxes flying about! There is something funny going on here! Are you dressed yet? (Exits into mezzanine bathroom)

Philip (Enters from bedroom, with nightdress over his head) Darling, I've got it stuck to my head now! (Exits into bedroom)

Roger (Entering from mezzanine bathroom) A man!

Burglar (Entering from mezzanine bathroom) Just doing the taps governor.

Roger Attacks? Not attacks on women.

Burglar Try anything, governor, but I'll do the taps on the bath first. (Exits into the mezzanine bathroom)

Roger Sex criminals everywhere! Where is Vicki? Vicki! (Exits into downstairs bathroom)

Burglar (Entering from mezzanine bathroom, heading for the front door) People everywhere! I'm off. A tax on women? I don't know, they'll put a tax on anything these days.

Roger (Enters from downstairs bathroom. Burglar makes a U-turn and heads back toward mezzanine bathroom) If I can't find her, you're going to be in trouble, you see.

Burglar W.C.? I'll fix it. (Exits into mezzanine bathroom)

Roger Vicki…? (Exits through the front door)

(Philip enters from the bedroom, nightdress still on his head, but now arranged like a burnous, and he is wrapped in a white bed sheet. Vicki enters from linen closet, enrobed from head to foot in a black bed sheet. They close the doors behind them and the sound makes them see each other and start back, as Roger enters from the front door)

Roger Sheikh! I thought you were coming at four? And this is your charming wife? So you want to see over the house now, do you, Sheikh? Right. Well. Since you're upstairs already…(Goes upstairs)

Flavia (Enters from along upstairs corridor, carrying a vase.) Him and his floozie! I'll break this over their heads!

Roger …let's start downstairs. (Roger, Philip and Vicki go downstairs)

Flavia Who are you? Who are these creatures?

Roger (To Philip and Vicki) I'm sorry about this. I don't know who she is. No connection with the house, I assure you. (Mrs Clackett enters from service quarters with another plate of sardines. Roger advances to introduce her) Whereas this good lady with the sardines, on the other hand…

Mrs Clackett No other hands, thank you, not in my sardines, cause this time I'm eating them.

Roger …is fully occupied with her sardines, so perhaps the toilet facilities would be of more interest. (He ushers Philip and Vicki away from Mrs Clackett toward the mezzanine bathroom.)

Flavia Mrs Clackett, who are these people?

Mrs Clackett Oh, we get them all the time, love. They're just Arab sheets.

Roger I'm sorry about this. (He opens the door to the mezzanine bathroom) But in here…

Flavia Arab sheets? (Exits into bedroom)

Roger (As Burglar enters from mezzanine bathroom) In here we have…

Burglar Ballcocks, governor. Your ballcocks have gone.

Roger Oh, we have him.

Flavia (Enters from bedroom) They're Irish sheets! Irish linen sheets off my own bed!

Mrs Clackett Oh, the thieving devils!

Roger In the study, however…

Mrs Clackett You give me that sheet, you devil! (She pulls on the black sheet, which unravels to reveal Vicki) Oh, and there she stands in her smalls, for all the world to see!

Roger It's you!

Flavia It's her! (She comes downstairs menacingly, as Philip exits discreetly into the study)

Burglar It's my little girl!

Vicki Dad! (Flavia stops. A double for Philip returns from the study and stands in amazement)

Burglar Our little Vicki, that ran away from home, I thought I'd never see again!

Mrs Clackett Well, would you believe it?

Vicki (To Burglar) What are you doing here like this?

Burglar What are you doing here like that?

Vicki Me? I'm taking our files on tax evasion to Inland Revenue in Basingstoke. (Philip clutches heart and collapses, unnoticed by the others)

Flavia So where's my other sheet?

Sheikh (Enters from front door resplendent in robes and burnous) Ah! A house of heavenly peace! I rent it!

All You!

Flavia Is it?

Sheikh Is me? Certainly is me? Who else? (They fall upon him)

Roger You walk in asking to view a house like this, when you're nothing but a trouserless tramp! (He pulls up the Sheikh's robes)

Sheikh What?

Mrs Clackett You take all the clean sheets! (Tries to pull the robes off him)

Vicki You snatch my nightdress! (Tries to pull burnous off him)

Sheikh What? What?

Flavia You toss me aside like a broken china doll! (She hits him)

Sheikh What? What? What?

Burglar And what you're up to with my little girl down there in Basingstoke I won't ask. But I'll tell you one thing, Vicki.

Vicki What's that, Dad?

Burglar When all around is strife and uncertainty, there's nothing like…(He takes Mrs Clackett's plate)…a good old-fashioned plate of sardines!

(Blackout)