

GET TO BED!

written by

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A stage play

(C)

Continued / Aside - Off stage *

LIGHTS UP:

ACT 1

Setting.

MAURICE'S STUDIO

Portraits of half naked women that are painted in oil decorate the studio. There is an easel situated down centre. There is a green chaise longue set perpendicular to the easel. A fluorescent light hangs precariously above.

A sink unit set in the back wall, next to a clothes rail where garments hang. A door to the left leads off. A drinks trolley to the right of stage with a carafe of red wine and two wine glasses.

Scene one

Sporty northern actress and model DORIS 50's; a brunette with long wavy hair and thin facial features. she has a sharp nose, thin lips and high cheek bones.

She lies back upon the chaise longue, her peignoir hangs loosely around her slim frame to reveal her pert breasts.

At the easel, handsome Parisian artist MAURICE 30's, stands with paint brush in hand. He wears a blue chequered shirt.

He steps forward.

MAURICE

(poetically)

Have thou a body? Oh beautiful
Goddess!

DORIS looks at him and cackles.

DORIS

Oh, Maurice, you're insanely
romantic.

He returns to the easel and continues to paint.

A protracted silence, before the fluorescent light begins to flicker.

He sighs his frustration and throws up his hands in despair.

MAURICE /

Oh, this is simply hopeless,
Doris! I am sorry, but I cannot
continue to work with this light
going on and off. You know I am
beginning to see double.

She shifts uncomfortably.

DORIS

Oh.

(tuts)

Would you like me to go, then,
Maurice? I'm happy to come back
later if you like?

MAURICE

Actually, just give me a few
minutes to sort my head out.

*He puts down his brush and marches over towards the sink
unit where he washes his hands.*

DORIS

Are you sure? I don't mind.

MAURICE

If you leave now, Doris, my
inspiration will leave with you.

She climbs off the chaise and buttons her peignoir.

DORIS

Well you knew I was coming today,
didn't you? You've had all week
to change the light bulb,
Maurice, haven't you?

He turns to face her as he sips a glass of water.

MAURICE

I know. I know that, Doris. But I
have enough to think about...
what with my exhibition just
around the corner.

DORIS

Well, I don't mean to be rude,
but don'tcha think you're
overstretching it a bit?

MAURICE

Actually, it is practically finished.

DORIS

Can I see it, then?

MAURICE

Of course.

DORIS

Awesome!

He joins her at the easel.

MAURICE

I just have to put the finishing touches to it, you do understand, I hope?

She nods continuously in bemused agreement as she studies her portrait closely.

DORIS

I see.

MAURICE

You know, I almost lost my vision completely.

DORIS

Hmm.

MAURICE

Hmm.

DORIS

(dismayed)

I see.

MAURICE

You know, you have the most amazing definition for a woman of your age, Doris.

DORIS

(bashfully)

D' you really think so?

MAURICE

I do. You are my muse, non?

DORIS

Oh, am I, Maurice?

MAURICE

Oui.

(pauses)

I am a very lucky artist to have you in my studio.

DORIS

Oh, you don't really mean that. You're just being nice, that's all.

MAURICE

No, no, Doris. I do... most sincerely.

She turns her attention back to the portrait and scratches her head.

DORIS

She looks nothing like me though, does she?

MAURICE

(aback)

She is every inch of you, Doris.

DORIS

Well she's not what I expected, I must say.

MAURICE

This is because you are standing too close to her. Move back and you will see her more clearly.

DORIS

Oh.

MAURICE

Here.

He gently moves her back a couple of steps.

MAURICE /

Any better?

She sighs her disappointment as she shakes her head.

DORIS
(irritatedly)
 But my eyes are not that shape,
 Maurice, are they?

MAURICE
(chuckles)
 Of course they are not, Doris.
 What do you think? It is not a
 portrait. It is an illusion.

DORIS
 Is that why my noses are pointed?

MAURICE
 Illusion is the first of all
 pleasures, Doris.

DORIS
(dispassionately)
 Is it?

Short silence.

MAURICE
 Well, it is most definitely you.
 Just look at her left nipple...
 not to mention your twisted right
 ear lobe.

She takes a closer look.

DORIS
 Hmm.

MAURICE
 It is the same form of art that
 Picasso adopted during one of his
 many periods.

DORIS
 Is that why I'm yellow and green?

MAURICE
 Of course not, Doris.
(chuckles)
 Maybe you should try looking at
 her from a different angle.

DORIS
 OK.

She shifts to her left.

MAURICE

What do you see now?

DORIS

A mirror image.

MAURICE

At last!

DORIS

Oh! Now I know what you meant when you said you were seeing double. How silly of me.

MAURICE

Oh Doris, you are so unearthed. You really need to get out more.

She looks at him dolefully.

MAURICE /

Visit some art galleries. It will widen your knowledge of the arts.

A protracted silence as she gazes at him.

DORIS

So, is this how you really see me, Maurice?

MAURICE

Look, Doris. I see you in many, many different lights. This is just one of those fascinating lights that I am exploring with at the moment.

DORIS

Oh.

MAURICE

I will paint an exact image of you if it makes you feel happier. But then you will have to pay me for it. And I do not come cheap at the price.

Short pause.

DORIS

She looks to me like she's had
cosmetic surgery.

MAURICE

(sighs)

Now you are just being
ridiculous.

DORIS

But she hasn't got any of my
features at all. You could've
hired anyone to lie on that
flipping chaise for you. You
didn't need me at all really, did
you, Maurice?

MAURICE

Not true, Doris. In fact...

DORIS

...You could've gotten some old
bag lady. It wouldn't have made a
blind bit of difference, would
it?

MAURICE

(irately)

Now you are being silly.

DORIS

My face isn't that round either.
Everyone says I've got a longish
face. In fact, there isn't one
single aspect of her, apart from
the larger nipple that resembles
me in the slightest, is there?

MAURICE

(riled)

Well, I couldn't paint a witch.

DORIS

Well, if that's what you wanted,
Maurice, all you had to do was
ask. I would've brought my
alewife and broomstick.

MAURICE

(imploringly)

Oh, Doris. I am reinventing the past.

(pauses)

Please do not take it so personally? This portrait has been particularly crafted for my upcoming exhibition.

DORIS

(sardonically)

If only Horace could see me in one of those fascinating lights of yours. He would feast in flipping fervour.

He follows her towards the clothes rail.

She slips off the peignoir, then slides into a pair of denim hot pants and a black vest.

MAURICE

Doris, remember I see you through the eyes of an artist.

She looks imploringly into his big blue eyes from close proximity.

DORIS

Oh do you, Maurice?

MAURICE

Oui, Madam. And what if I had chosen another way? It surely would incite a temptation between us, non? And then what would your Horace say? That Maurice is an unscrupulous artist who went to far with his adorable wife? An artist not worthy of his own time?

She cackles.

DORIS

Oh, you're so funny, Maurice. But Horace sees me through the eyes of a pig.

She mimics the sound of a pig.

DORIS /

Ha! 'ark at me. That's the effect he has on me.

MAURICE

(*unamused*)

Clearly.

DORIS

Oh, I'm sorry, Maurice. I didn't mean to have a go at you... but I'm just so frustrated with everything at the moment.

MAURICE

It is absolutely fine, Doris. You are forgiven.

DORIS

So when is this exhibition of yours, then?

MAURICE

Next month.

She walks around the studio and engages with his artwork.

DORIS

Are all these paintings going to be exhibited?

MAURICE

Absolutely.

DORIS

So, are we invited to this exhibition of yours? Horace says without art the world would be a dull place indeed.

MAURICE

And he is absolutely right, of course.

(*pauses*)

Anyway, what do you think, that I would not invite my muse and her pig to my exhibition?

She cackles.

DORIS

But what if someone recognises me
as the woman in the painting?
What should I say to them?

MAURICE

Engage them, Doris. You never
know who you might meet at an art
exhibition.

DORIS

OK then, I will.

A protracted silence as he washes his brushes.

MAURICE

Will you have time to pop back in
the morning for about half an
hour?

DORIS

Only if you fix that poxy light
bulb.

MAURICE

I will do it.

DORIS

As long as you pay me, I don't
mind at all. I've only got to pop
out in the morning. I'll come
here first if you like, is that
cool? Is there really much more
to do then?

MAURICE

Hardly.

DORIS

OK.

*She bursts into unrecognisable operatic melody as she sits
down and slips on her knee length boots.*

MAURICE

Tell me, Doris, how does Horace
keep up with that constant
energy?

She cackles.

DORIS

I put up with him more like. Oh, I wish he found me as interesting as you do, Maurice. He doesn't even look at me these days, unless I've got my tits shoved in his face.

She cackles.

DORIS /

'ark at me.

MAURICE

Oh, I'm sure deep down somewhere in his heart, there is a man bursting with love and an incisive passion for muscle tone... and animal noises, let us not forget.

She cackles.

DORIS

You know, I've not had one flipping call from my agent in months. They've got this new girl answering the phones now.

She mimics the girl's pathetic voice.

DORIS /

He's busy at the moment. Sorry, can you call back later?

(pauses)

Piss off!

MAURICE

I can see where you get your acting skills, Doris.

DORIS

I need to have a word with him, actually. If she tells me once more that he's too busy, I'm going to go down there and knock her flipping block off!

(pauses)

Old trollop!

She cackles.

MAURICE

Can you not change your agent, or something?

DORIS

Nah.

(pauses)

He's usually all right. But with that tart on the phones, I can't even get a sniff.

MAURICE

What about Horace? Can he not help you with your career? He is a dramaturg, non?

DORIS

You must be flipping joking. The only thing he responds to is his ego boosted.

(pauses)

Twerp!

She cackles.

He rolls a cigarette and lights up, then picks up a carafe of wine from the drinks trolley and carries it towards Doris.

MAURICE

A quick one before you go?

DORIS

Aw. Yeah. Just a small one though. I don't want to get pissed before I get home.

She gets to her feet. He fills a glass with win and hands it to her.

MAURICE

Enjoy.

She takes a sip.

DORIS

Hmm. Nice. Where's it from?

MAURICE

Tesco.

She cackles.

DORIS

No! Which region, silly?

MAURICE

Oh. The Loire Valley.

Short silence.

DORIS

No. You're right. I really should talk to him. I mean, we're just not getting anywhere at the moment. He comes home from work and hardly says two flipping words to me all night. He just sits there tapping away on that flipping laptop as if I wasn't even there. I don't know why I even bother. And he wonders why I sit glued to the television all night.

MAURICE

Let us raise a toast.

DORIS

OK. What to?

MAURICE

My exhibition, what else?

DORIS

Oh. All right, then.

They toast.

MAURICE

My exhibition.

DORIS

Your exhibition.

He hands her an envelope from his back pocket.

DORIS

Oh, thanks. I could really do with this extra cash at the moment. I've had nothing at all in months. And he doesn't give me anything. I have to support myself, you know.

(irked pause)

I don't know what I would do if I didn't have this model-thing-shit.

She cackles.

MAURICE

You are incomparable, Doris.

DORIS

Ha! Get off! I bet you say that to all your muses.

MAURICE

I only have one muse, Doris.

DORIS

D' you really mean that?

MAURICE

Oui.

She steps forward and puts her hand lightly upon his chest as she looks wantonly in his eyes, before she goes to kiss him.

He pulls away, thus leaves her aghast and perplexed.

DORIS

Oh, I'm sorry. It's the wine. It's gone straight to me flipping head.

MAURICE

No it is fine, Doris. It's absolutely fine.

DORIS

No I'm really sorry.

MAURICE

Don't be. It's fine.

She hands him her empty glass.

DORIS

I better go.

MAURICE

Thank you, Doris.

DORIS

But do you really mean what you said?

MAURICE

Oui, madam.

DORIS

Then kiss me.

MAURICE

But you are a married woman.

She ignores the remark, instead throws her arms around his neck and kisses him passionately. He stands frozen to the spot.

DORIS

Now I've got to go home and
listen to that boring old fuck
pig.

She cackles.

MAURICE

Oh.

DORIS

(chirpily)
Bye, Maurice.

She blows him a kiss as she exits stage left.

He sighs his relief as he stands with his back towards the door.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP:

Setting.

The split stage consists of a winding staircase upstage right.

DOWN: *Open plan living space consists of a four seater dining table situated up against the back wall. A two seater sofa and armchair down centre, along with a small coffee table and a TV set on a stand. Stage left: A door that leads off and a drinks cabinet.*

UP: *A fully furnished bedroom that consists of a double bed and a mirrored wardrobe and chest of drawers.*

Scene two.

THE APARTMENT

Overweight and bespectacled HORACE (50's) lies stretched out upon the bed, his laptop beside him. He sports a red cravat and navy paisley dressing gown, and clutches a glass of brandy in his right hand. His holds his iPhone to ear with his left hand.

HORACE

(on phone)

Ha,ha,ha,ha,ha. Now that would be just my luck, wouldn't it-? I should reach Paris Nord around nine thirtyish, I guess- Will you pick me up, or shall I jump in a cab like the last time-? I'll do whatever you want, my darling- I'll leave it up to you then

Down: *DORIS enters through door stage left. She clutches a shopping bag.*

She hears the bellow of his voice and shakes her head in annoyance as she looks up at the bedroom.

HORACE /

(knowingly)

Rightyo then, Stephen. Just let him know that I rang him, will you-? That'll be fine- Ciao for now, buddy.

He ends the call then picks up his laptop, before he climbs off the bed and checks himself in the mirrored wardrobe.

She exits stage right.

He descends the stairs with brandy glass in hand, and his laptop secured under his arm.

DORIS *

You're in, then.

He slumps down in the armchair with his laptop and brandy.

HORACE

(casually)

Either that, or it's another figment of your imagination, Doris.

DORIS *

So, who was that you were just speaking to on the phone?

HORACE

Stephen. I rang Gordon, but I just missed him. He'd popped out.

DORIS *

Liar.

HORACE

Who, me or Gordon?

DORIS *

You, who else?

HORACE

Gordon, maybe?

He gets up and stomps over to the drinks cabinet and pours himself another brandy, before he slumps back down in the armchair.

HORACE /

Anyway, what's got into you this evening? Had another bad day lying on your back for Eugene Delacroix?

Doris enters and shows him the finger.

DORIS

Swivel on this.

He spots her and roars with laughter.

DORIS /

Tell me, how come every time I walk in the sodding door, you're on that phone upstairs to Stephen? I'm not stupid, Horace. So don't take me for a fool.

HORACE -

(quietly)

Debatable.

(knowing pause)

So you think Stephen doesn't really exist, then?

DORIS

Probably not, for all I know.

HORACE

Well, I'll prove it if you like?
I'll ring him back and tell him
that my wife thinks he doesn't
really exist.

He opens his laptop and switches it on.

DORIS

Do what you like. I don't really
care.

HORACE

Fine. I won't then.
(enlightened pause)
You might be interested to know
that I was offered a part in a
play this afternoon.

*She becomes excited and sits down on the sofa as he begins to
tap away on his computer.*

DORIS

Oh, really?

HORACE

Yes. They're doing a production
of War and Peace over at the
Globe.

DORIS

Well, what did you say to them?

He looks at her suspiciously.

HORACE

I turned it down, naturally.

DORIS

(animatedly)
You did what?!

HORACE

That's right, I turned it down.
I'm far too busy with my own
project.

DORIS

You turned it down! You turned it down! You big nincompoop!

HORACE

That's right, Doris.

DORIS

But why?

HORACE

Because it wasn't big enough if you really must know.

DORIS

You big twerp!

HORACE

It wasn't worth my while. It was only a small part.

DORIS -

Twerp!

HORACE

For your information, Gordon and I have been putting our heads together. We've come up with an idea to stage a play of our own. I haven't told you this, but we've been running a play competition to find a resident writer. And it seems we've found our man already. We're really excited about it.

DORIS

(sighs)

I need a flipping drink.

She gets to her feet and exits stage left. He taps away on his laptop.

A long silence.

She returns with a glass of Chardonnay and looks at him with utter contempt.

HORACE

I mean, well... if they would have offered me the part as Nikolai Rostov, or Pierre Bezukhov I might've reconsidered. At least with Rostov you get to marry the beautiful Maria Bolkonskaya. Hmm. Now that would have been a worthwhile challenge, I'd say.

He knocks back a mouthful of brandy, then continues to tap away on his laptop.

DORIS

Oh, I wish I could get a flipping audition. I haven't had anything in months. D' you know if they're still auditioning? Didn't you think to ask for me?

HORACE

No. They already have someone for Napoleon, I'm afraid.

She snarls and turns away in disgust.

DORIS

Oh get to bed, you twerp!

He roars with laughter as she slumps down on the sofa.

HORACE

Well you know what I mean, Doris. You're no Helen Mirren, are you?

DORIS

(fractured)

Cantcha see I'm flipping desperate, Horace? I can't go on like this. I need to flipping work!

HORACE

(sighs)

I've told you a dozen times - change your agent.

DORIS

But I can't. I've been with him flipping years. Are you sure they're not auditioning for other parts?

HORACE

You're not what they're looking for, Doris... unless you can grow another beard in the next two weeks.

DORIS

Bollocks!

HORACE

Find another career. You're not cut out for theatre. And anyway, you're too old to play Maria. They're looking for someone with a fresh face.

DORIS

Oh, but you're always saying things like that. I don't know what you mean. What'd you mean, a fresh face? I look young under the lights. And they can do wonders nowadays. Maurice said I look twenty years younger than my age.

HORACE

Well he would do, wouldn't he? He wants to get inside your knickers... if you wear any.

DORIS

You're just selfish. You don't care about me. I might as well not even be here.

She gets up and exits stage right.

HORACE -

I rest my case.

Sound of flushing toilet.

DORIS *

I'm classically trained, you know.

HORACE -
Hysterically trained, more like.

She reenters with a face like thunder, and another glass of Chardonnay. She takes her seat on the sofa.

DORIS
Oh, shove it up your arse, twat!

HORACE
I'll have a go. Not sure if It'll fit though.

DORIS
Oh get to bed, twerp.

HORACE
Look, haven't you got anything better to do? Change the sheets or something. Polish the tables for once. This place is gathering dust faster than your knicker drawer.

DORIS
No! Why should I? You do it? I'm not your flipping slave!

HORACE
I work, Doris.

She begins to channel surf the TV.

DORIS
And so do I.

HORACE
Lying on your back is not work, Doris.

DORIS
Is that what you think I do all day?

HORACE
One of them.

DORIS
You think I'm cheap, don'tcha?

HORACE

No, I don't think anything,
Doris.

DORIS

Just because you can't get it up,
you think I'm getting it
elsewhere, don'tcha?

HORACE

(*irked*)

Oh give me a break, will you?

DORIS

Mo! You started it.

HORACE

Then let me finish it, for
heaven's sake.

A long silence as he continues to stare at his computer.

HORACE /

Anyway, we're changing our
perspective, Gordon and I. Gordon
wants to present new work that
matters to our audience from now
on. Contemporary plays that mark
out new territory in performance
and subject matter. We have plans
for the future, Doris... you
could well be a part of them if
you get off my back and give me
some space.

DORIS

I don't want anything from you.

HORACE

You know your trouble?

DORIS

No. Enlighten me.

HORACE

You're ungrateful.

DORIS

Ha! I'm ungrateful?

HORACE

I don't know why you have to be so bloody bitter.

DORIS

I'm not bitter. I'm angry.

HORACE

Get better, not bitter, Doris.

DORIS

Bollocks.

HORACE

Well, for your information, I'm going to be directing this new production of ours. So if you want to come along and have a sneak preview, do so.

DORIS

Is there a part in it for me?

HORACE

There might well be.

DORIS

Then I will.

HORACE

No, I'm serious, Doris. There's all sorts happening in this play we're going to put on. We've got witches, whores, murderers, gipsies, tramps and thieves, the bloody lot. I'm sure we can find you something before we have to start scraping the barrel.

DORIS

Stuff it! Stick it up your backside! I don't want anything from you!

She gets up and exits in a fury.

DORIS * /

Are you ashamed of me?

She returns with another glass of Chardonnay.

HORACE

Only slightly... nothing to worry
yourself over.

She grabs a cushion from the sofa and lobs it at him.

DORIS

You bastard!

*He spills brandy over his laptop and jumps to his feet in a
fury.*

HORACE

BLOODY CHRIST! WHAT THE HELL IS
WRONG WITH YOU, WOMAN?! YOU
BLOODY STUPID COW!

He quickly exits stage left.

DORIS

Serves you right, for winding me
up.

HORACE *

WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR BLOODY
SENSE OF HUMOUR?!

DORIS

Nothing. I still have mine.

She turns up the volume on the television.

He reenters and pours himself another brandy.

HORACE

AND TURN THAT BLOODY THING DOWN!

DORIS

Oh get to bed.

HORACE

I SAID TURN - IT - DOWN!

He grabs the remote from her and switches off the TV.

DORIS

Give that back, you twerp!

HORACE

No!

DORIS

Fine!

A protracted silence as he slumps back down.

HORACE

While we're at it, there's something you should know.

DORIS

What's that?

HORACE

I'm going to Paris in the morning. Gordon has asked me to check out a play festival in Montmartre.

She consumes his statement with a suspicious frown.

DORIS

It's a bit short notice.

HORACE

Yep.

(pauses)

I'll be leaving in the morning.

DORIS

Can I come?

HORACE

No. You'll just get in the way.

DORIS

No, I won't.

HORACE

Take no for an answer, will you?

DORIS

(pleadingly)

Oh, let me come. I'll visit the Sacre Coeur while you're at the festival.

HORACE

Anyway, I'll be too busy talking to people. You'll just get bored. Stay here and give Maurice a ring. See if he wants you on your backside again.

DORIS

But I don't want to ring Maurice.
I'd rather come to Paris with
you.

HORACE

(tormented)

Take no for a bloody answer, will
you?!

She turns away in disappointment.

HORACE /

I'll be back Thursday. I'll take
you out for dinner when I get
back. I know a nice little vegan
restaurant that's just opened
next to the inner city farm.

DORIS

I'll believe that when I see it.
(reflects)
I hardly see you these days. We
might as well be flipping
divorced for all you care.

HORACE

Well, maybe if you didn't spend
so much time lying on your back
things might be different.

DORIS

Maurice pays me for my time. I
don't sit for free you know.

HORACE

If you say so, Doris.

DORIS

At least he's not a pig.

HORACE

Why do you have to boost his
bloody ego?

DORIS

He doesn't have one.

(pauses)

And if it wasn't for my model-thing-shit, I'd probably have to work in some shitty pub somewhere. I'm not going to have this figure for ever, am I?

HORACE

What figure?

DORIS

Oh get to bed, you wanker!

She exits stage left. The land line telephone rings.

He picks up the receiver and listens.

HORACE

9112...? Look, she doesn't want anything. Now just fuck off and leave her alone!

He slams the receiver down as she reenters with her mascara smudged.

DORIS

Who was that?

HORACE

Who'd you think?

DORIS

How dare you speak to my friends like that.

HORACE

Then tell him not to ring here and I won't have to, will I?

DORIS

But he's just a friend.

HORACE

Then tell him to get lost!

DORIS

You horrible man.

HORACE

Look, just tell him to leave you
alone!

DORIS

Take me with you and I will,
then.

A long silence as he knocks back his brandy.

She stares at him with scorn.

HORACE

Oh, I almost forgot to tell you.

DORIS

What?

HORACE

What I discovered today.

DORIS

What's that?

HORACE

You're married to the fifth most
important person in British
theatre.

DORIS

Whoopy do.

HORACE

Seriously, Doris. It's official.

DORIS

Who are the other four?

HORACE

Alan Mckenzie. Scott Richardson.
Timothy Shaw. Gordon, and then
me. I'm in the ascendancy, Doris.

DORIS

Good for you.

HORACE

It's all the way up from here on,
Doris.

(gloating pauses)

My endeavours haven't gone
unnoticed. And it's about time.

(pauses)

I've given my life to theatre.
All these years of blood, sweat
and tears. I deserve a little bit
of gratitude, I think?

(expectant pause)

Well, aren't you going to
congratulate me, then?

DORIS

Why should I?

HORACE

Your time will come, Doris,
you'll see. You just have to be
patient. Stick at it like I have.

DORIS

I'll believe that when I sodding
see it.

(scathingly)

Actually, Maurice has written a
play for you to read.

HORACE

Is there a ten pound note stuck
behind every page?

DORIS

Oh, don't be ridiculous.

HORACE

Well he does fuck my wife behind
my back. What'd you expect?

DORIS

No he does not, you complete
imbecile!

HORACE

Well, you've practically spent
every day with him over the last
two weeks. It won't be long
before he's sticking his tongue
down your throat, will it?

DORIS

Oh, don't be so silly. He's an artist.

HORACE -

Fantasist.

(*irately*)

And I want you to stay away from him from now on.

DORIS

Take me to Paris and I will.

HORACE

I can't, Doris. I'll take you next time.

DORIS

In that case, as you were, then.

HORACE

I wouldn't be surprised if he was having you at every opportunity.

DORIS

Oh get to bed!

HORACE

Still, I'd rather have my brain power thank you very much.

DORIS

You just cannot cope with the fact that I get my kit off for him, can you?

He throws his brandy glass at the wall in abject torment.

HORACE

THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO AND FUCK HIM THEN?!

DORIS

YOU BASTARD!

She unleashes her wine in his face, then exits in tears.

HORACE

I BET HE'S HAD YOU IN EVERY POSITION KNOWN TO MANKIND.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP.

THE STUDIO

MAURICE *twiddles the strings on a guitar as he sits upon a stall beneath a brighter fluorescent light.*

DORIS *appears stage left wearing a fake fur coat, fully unbuttoned to reveal a shapely thigh, black French knickers, black stockings and suspenders.*

His eyes light up when he spots her, and he jumps off the stall, puts down the guitar, then quickly rushes towards her with an outstretched hand.

MAURICE

(aback)

Ohmondieu! Doris! But what is going on? Why are you dressed like a showgirl?

He checks his watch.

MAURICE /

And on time too. Come in, come in, before you catch a cold, Mon Cherie.

DORIS

(provocatively)

Oh do I, Maurice? Do I, really?

MAURICE

(bemused)

Do you what, Doris?

DORIS

(in fervour)

Just say I do, Maurice. Just say I do.

MAURICE

OK. You do, Doris. You do.

She falls into his arms and cackles, before he takes her in his arms like Cupid & Psyche.

DORIS

Do you like it, Maurice? Tell me you love it.

MAURICE

I simply adore it. But you do mean the coat, non?

He lifts her back to her feet, then guides her towards the chaise.

DORIS

Yes of course, silly. What else is there to like?

MAURICE

Everything, Doris, everything.
(*excitedly*)
Quickly. Park yourself down on the chaise.

Her fur coat falls to the floor beneath her feet, before she lies on the chaise in a sensual pose.

He kneels down beside her and begins to stroke the fur coat. She looks at him and cackles.

DORIS

(*perplexed*)
Oh, what are you doing now, Maurice?

MAURICE

(*smitten*)
Does it bite?

DORIS

No, silly. I couldn't afford to buy real fur. It's imitation beaver actually. Anyway, I wouldn't be seen dead wearing real fur, would I?

MAURICE

May I stroke it? It feels so soft and warm.

DORIS

Yes, but be careful, it's moulting.

MAURICE

Moulting? But I thought you said it was...

DORIS

...Yes moulting, Maurice. So be careful with it, please.

MAURICE

You mean, losing hair, Doris?

She cackles.

DORIS

(bashfully)

Oh, yes, Maurice! You know what I mean, silly.

MAURICE

Are you sure, Doris?

She cackles.

DORIS

Yes!

(pauses)

Oh, what are you like, Maurice?

MAURICE

But it feels so soft and warm. I can barely keep my hands from stroking it.

She cackles.

DORIS

'ark at you! Oh, come on now, Maurice, stop it, you're making me feel hot. And I haven't got all day. I've got to be at the chiropodist in half-an-hour flat.

MAURICE

Oh well.

He climbs to his feet and steps over to the easel.

A protracted silence as he paints.

DORIS

You will finish me this morning, won't you, Maurice?

MAURICE

Oui Madam.

DORIS

Good.
(*exaggerated pose*)
Like this?

MAURICE

Exactly.

DORIS

Apologies for Horace being so
rude to you on the phone last
night.

MAURICE

Ah, forget about it.

DORIS

He's gone to Paris today. He can
go and fuck himself while he's at
it, for all I care.

MAURICE

What is he doing in Paris?

DORIS

Checking out new talent,
apparently.

MAURICE

Really?

DORIS

Yeah, but I don't give a shit. He
can do whatever he flipping well
likes for all I care. I've had
enough of his bullshit to last a
lifetime.

MAURICE

Oh.

DORIS

Yeah, well, he didn't want to
take me with him, did he?
(*bitter pause*)
I begged him as well. Pig.

MAURICE

Why not?

DORIS

Because he doesn't like taking me
anywhere, Maurice. I embarrass
him.

MAURICE

(*aback*)

He said that?

DORIS

No, he just said I'd get bored...
which proves he doesn't even know
his own flipping wife.

MAURICE

Oh dear.

DORIS

Yeah I know. I don't believe a
word of it, though.

MAURICE

So what will you do while he is
in Paris today?

DORIS

Let my hair down. I'm not just
going to sit around waiting for
him to come home like some
flipping puppy dog waiting for
its owner to come back.

MAURICE

Well, I am not doing anything
else today.

DORIS

D' you want to meet up for a
drink, later, then?

MAURICE

Why not? I will wear my
outrageous suit.

DORIS

Ha! In that case I'll put on my
outrageous frock... and just for
you, Maurice. I haven't worn it
in years.

MAURICE

It is not too outrageous, I hope, is it? I mean... it will have some material, non?

DORIS

Ha! Yes of course, silly. I'm only undressing for you these days. I don't even get undressed in front of him anymore. I can't even remember the last time we had flipping sex.

MAURICE

But what would he say if he knew we were out together?

DORIS

Well he's not here, is he? And I don't give a flying fuck anyway.

(angry pause)

And d' you know he had the flipping temerity to tell me that he was offered a part in a play. But when I asked if they were still auditioning, he just belittled me.

Short silence.

MAURICE

So when the cat's away...

DORIS

...the mice definitely come out to play tonight, Maurice, so be prepared to get your rocks off.

She cackles.

DORIS /

'ark at me. I sound like I'm gagging for it. Ha!

Short silence.

DORIS /

You know, I think he's having an affair with some slut in Paris.

He shows her a look of concern.

DORIS /

Yeah, I went through his pockets this morning. I found a telephone number on a napkin. It was written in red lipstick.

(*scowls*)

So I eavesdropped on a phone call he made to Gordon - He's a work colleague. They were laughing about some tart he was going to meet up with when he gets there.

(*fractured pause*)

I mean, what can I say to him... who's that flipping tart you're shagging over in Paris?

(*sighs*)

And what if I'm wrong? What if she is just a work colleague, and they were just being little boys?

MAURICE

Ask him. You should.

DORIS

Maybe I should just flipping knife him to death in his sleep when he gets back.

She cackles.

DORIS /

I've seen this sort of thing happening to other people I know. I just can't believe it's actually happening to me.

MAURICE

Confront him. You must

DORIS

He's got this flipping old pistol his great uncle left him when he passed away. I was gonna take it out of the cupboard and shoot him while he was snoring. I was going to stick it right up his flipping nose and pull the trigger.

She cackles.

MAURICE

Ohmôndieu! Now this is far too extreme, Doris.

DORIS

Oh, I know. But I can't believe he would do this to me... especially as he's so jealous of you.

MAURICE

(aback)

Me?!

DORIS

Oh yeah...

MAURICE

But why? He is the one having the affair, non?

DORIS

I know, Maurice, I know.

Long silence.

DORIS /

I see you've got yourself a new light bulb, finally.

MAURICE

Hmm.

DORIS

You're so funny, Maurice. Nothing seems to bother you, does it?

MAURICE

You must joking! It takes me forever to do anything.

DORIS

Aww, my neck is bleeding killing me. Are we almost done, Maurice?

MAURICE

It is finished.

She climbs off the chaise and glides over towards the easel.

DORIS

Oh, that's much better.

MAURICE

I am happy it is finally finished.

DORIS

I love it.

MAURICE

Thank you, Doris. It means a lot.

DORIS

Well, if you ever get bored of looking at it, you know where to find me.

MAURICE

If it fails to find a buyer at my exhibition, it is yours.

She notices the time on the wall clock and quickly slips on her coat.

DORIS

Shit! Look at the time. I better go, or I'll be late for the chiropodist.

MAURICE

But it is only a quarter past.

DORIS

I know, but I have to be there fifteen minutes before my appointment. D'you think I'll make it?

MAURICE

Dressed like this... you'll be arrested first, Doris.

DORIS

No, silly. I've got to go home and change first.

MAURICE

Well, hurry then, or you will be late.

DORIS

Will I see you later?

MAURICE

Oui.

DORIS

Fantastic!

MAURICE

I will call you.

She bursts into non-operatic melody upon her exit stage left. He takes his brushes to the sink and begins to wash them.

HORACE enters stage left. He is dressed in a black overcoat and French beret. He pulls a black trolley case behind him.

MAURICE turns his head to see him standing there with a vexed frown upon his face.

MAURICE

(aback)

Horace! What are you doing forcing your way into my studio like this?

HORACE

Where is she?

MAURICE

She has gone home to change her clothes. You have just missed her actually. She left just one minute ago.

HORACE

I thought I'd better see for myself exactly what goes on in here.

MAURICE

Par-don?

HORACE parks his trolley case, then begins to search the studio for his wife.

HORACE

Well, don't look so surprised to see me, Maurice. Where is she? Washing herself in the bathroom, is she?

HORACE /

Doris! Doris, come out wherever
you are!

MAURICE

(*chuckles*)

Ha! You will not find her here,
Horace.

He stomps towards right and up stage.

HORACE

(*snarls*)

Doris! Doris, I know you're in
there! I've come to take you
home! I'm not angry with you any
more.

MAURICE *guffaws as he rolls a cigarette.*

MAURICE

She is not here.

HORACE *stands dementedly.*

HORACE

Just what are you sniggering at?

MAURICE

What are you doing, Horace? I
could have you arrested for
forcing your way into my studio
like this.

HORACE

Call the police, and I shall tell
them you've got hashish stashed
away in here.

MAURICE

Hashish?

HORACE

What's that wretched smell then?

MAURICE *shows him the burning cigarette.*

MAURICE

I smoke these.

HORACE

Smells like hashish to me.

MAURICE

Would you like me to roll one for you?

HORACE

No. I don't smoke.

MAURICE

Are you sure it's not your cologne that you can smell?

HORACE

Are you trying to be funny, matey?

MAURICE sniffs the air and shows his distaste.

MAURICE

Phew! Fly killer! Disgusting!

HORACE

Yeah alright, matey. Did Doris tell you I would be in Paris today?

MAURICE

Actually, she did mention it.

HORACE

Well, my flight was cancelled, due to the fog. I could have taken the Eurostar out from St. Pancras if it wasn't for the blockade on your side of the channel.

MAURICE

I apologies for my country.

HORACE

I'm just saying.

MAURICE

Actually, she is on her way to see the chiropodist. If you leave now you might catch her.

Short silence as they make eye contact with one another.

HORACE

You look quite excited about something. Has she told you something about us?

MAURICE

Non.

HORACE marches around the studio where he eyes the scattered artwork.

HORACE

I wonder who's running your country sometimes. It certainly isn't your Government, is it?

MAURICE punches the air triumphantly.

MAURICE

Vive la France!

HORACE

Vive my arse!

(pauses)

So which university did you attend, then?

MAURICE

Sorbonne. Why?

HORACE

I went to Cambridge, me.

(pauses)

You obviously dropped out. I can see that. And did you?

MAURICE

Actually, it is none of your business. Now what do you want? I am very busy.

HORACE

Why did you need her to come back this morning? You had her yesterday. Couldn't you have finished painting her then?

MAURICE

I could not work with the bad light. Ask her yourself.

HORACE

You see more of her than I do these days. Are you screwing her?

MAURICE

Screwing? You mean like turning a screw into a small hole?

HORACE

Just answer the bloody question! Are you fucking my wife, or not?

MAURICE

I do not fuck her! What do you think I do here? I am an artist. I paint her... that is all. And I pay her for her time.

(pauses)

Here. I will show you exactly what I do with her. See for yourself. Come.

He leads him towards the easel.

HORACE

I'm not interested in your artwork, matey. I just want to know what's going on with you and my wife, that's all.

MAURICE

Oh c'mon, Horace.

HORACE

All right. But don't expect any accolades from me.

MAURICE

So what do you think?

HORACE roars with laughter as he leans back to gauge a better angle of the painting.

MAURICE looks at him in bemusement.

HORACE

You've certainly got her character right, I'll give you that.

MAURICE

How do you mean?

HORACE

I bet she loves it. And does she?

MAURICE

Actually, I find your comments insulting. Constructive criticism I can take. You have gone down in my estimation. I thought you had more of an artistic background than you are portraying.

HORACE

I do. But you're no Picasso. Look at her. She's all over the place.

MAURICE

You are just not used to looking at abstract art. I am reinventing the past.

HORACE

Look, I don't want to disparage you, matey, but to me it looks like the work of a juvenile.

MAURICE

Now I know you are just being vindictive. It is not possible in my world to make such a stupid comment if you have any artistic values.

HORACE

In your solipsism I think you mean.

MAURICE

Pardon?

HORACE

Oh never mind. But it's definitely her, I'll give you that. I can tell by the right earlobe. It sticks out.

(snarls)

Same as her nipple.

MAURICE

Is that all you see?

HORACE

It is. And why do you have to paint her half naked?

MAURICE

Because I like the flesh of a real woman.

HORACE

Do you only paint naked women, then?

MAURICE

Of course not. It is what you want to see that is of the essence with this kind of art. It is the illusion that tells the story. And you see her naked... Interesting... But I see her in many different lights, and so it is not just her beauty I engage with, but something much more ambiguous. Just look at her muscle tone for example. How many women of her age do you know have this kind of definition? Visualise her sensuality within her mirrored confinement.

(pauses)

It is the versatility within the reflection of her character that is paramount to the perception of the premise, and thus how you are going to connect with her upon first sight.

HORACE

What is that premise?

MAURICE

Undiscriminating beauty.

HORACE

Hm. Well. I suppose it's got its advantages. But she's got quite a temper when riled, I can tell you that for nothing.

MAURICE

Hot blooded, eh? Maybe you are her teacher.

HORACE

Yes. You've got it in one, matey.
I can be a horrible human being
when pushed.

MAURICE

I am not the Devil's advocate,
Horace. I just paint for a
living.

HORACE

Look, I won't beat about the bush
with you any longer. I want you
to stay away from her. No more
painting her, right?

MAURICE

Why not? There is nothing going
on, except what you see in the
painting.

HORACE

So why are you all hot and
bothered, then?

MAURICE

Obviously, because we Parisians
perspire much more than you super
cool Englishmen.

He shows the extent of his perspiration.

MAURICE /

The mark of a real man.

HORACE

Primitive man, more like.

(pauses)

Just stay away from my wife.

MAURICE

But there is nothing going on
between us. Ask her yourself.

HORACE

Not yet there isn't, maybe. But I
have a sixth sense when it comes
to these matters. Ask anyone who
knows me well. They'll tell you
Horace Nugents can smell a rat a
mile away. I'm perspicacious.

MAURICE

And I am a rat?

HORACE

No. You're a reptile. But you never know.

MAURICE

I find you so insulting.

HORACE

Then stay away from her.

MAURICE

But you will have to tell her, and maybe she will not like this. I know it because she adores to be painted.

HORACE

Rest assured, I'm going to speak to her too.

MAURICE

Are you going to support her?

HORACE

What do you mean?

MAURICE

I pay her for her time. She does not sit for free.

HORACE

Are you suggesting that I don't support my wife? That I choose to ignore her well-being?

MAURICE

Could be.

HORACE

Right then. First of all it's none of your g'ddam business. And secondly, I pay my share of the rent. Doris is a vegan, so she doesn't cook my meals, since she cannot stand the smell of meat or dairy products.

MAURICE

Oh.

HORACE

I take my laundry to the launderette, because she cannot stand the smell of washing powder. We live a baseless kind of existence... which is not entirely my doing. So, if she behaved like my wife, she'd be treated as a wife... But she chooses to live a detached life from me. You can ask her yourself if you don't believe me, but only if and when I say so.

MAURICE

Fine.

HORACE

Right then.

HORACE *collects his trolley case and exits.*

MAURICE -

(knowingly)

We will see.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP.

ACT 2

THE DINNER PARTY

In high spirits HORACE sets the dining table. He sports a safari suit and cravat.

DORIS enters stage right. She wears hot pants, and a red blouse, and carries a glass of Chardonnay at all times.

DORIS

I can't see why we couldn't have gone out for dinner. You said...

HORACE

(intolerantly)

...Yes. Yes. Yes. I know, Doris, but...

DORIS

...you cocked it up, again.

HORACE

I suggested Johnny Allen's, but they were fully booked tonight. And anyway, it'll be a lot easier here. It'll give me a chance to get to know our new resident playwright without being constantly interrupted by intrusive waiters.

DORIS

It's a lot of work for me though, isn't it? And who is this resident playwright? You still haven't told me his name.

HORACE

His name is Yusimi Yusimi. He's Turkish and here studying literature, according to Gordon. He knows him more than I do.

DORIS

Oh.

HORACE

His writing style slightly reminds me of Jacques Prevert - A French playwright and poet, well known for his excellent wit and poor grammar.

DORIS

So what's his play about, then? I remember you saying it has all kinds of things going on, and that there might be a part for me.

HORACE

It concentrates on the life and death of a French William Shakespeare.

She chokes on a mouthful of wine.

DORIS

(splutters)

Sorry, it went down the wrong hole.

HORACE -

That makes a change.

DORIS

Oh get to bed.

HORACE

I know it sounds absurd. But it'll have audiences falling off their seats.

She passes him a wry look, then exits.

She quickly returns with a salad bowl which she places down on the dining table, as he stands back to oversee her.

HORACE /

You know, you've been very efficient tonight, Doris. I'm quite impressed.

(checks watch)

They should be here any minute now. I feel quite excited.

He exits, then returns with a basket of bread.

DORIS

Gordon should be doing this, not us.

HORACE

I know. I know. Don't keep on, Doris.

DORIS

He farts and you sneeze.

HORACE

Look, he would have if my flight hadn't been cancelled. I shouldn't even be here. It was very much a last minute thing.

DORIS

So what about your whore in Paris? And don't think you're getting off with it that easily, Horace Nugents. You're not off the hook just yet. I want to hear it from the whore's mouth that nothing's going on between you and her.

HORACE

I've told you there's nothing going on between us. She's an actor. Gordon wants her in this play because she's French, and that's all it is.

(pause)

She caught me at a low ebb. I let my guard down, slightly.

DORIS

I don't want to hear excuses.

HORACE

Leave it at that will you?

(pauses)

Anyway, this could really benefit your career... providing you don't get silly drunk like you did the last time Gordon came for dinner.

DORIS

I better not have anymore to drink, then. Another glass of this and I'll be all over the flipping place.

She cackles. He pours himself a brandy.

HORACE

Promise you won't show me up tonight, Doris. I want to create a nice pulse to the evening.

DORIS

I know. I'm not stupid.

HORACE

And no grovelling either. Just let Gordon and I to talk to Yusimi Yusimi without butting in.

DORIS

Fine.

Doorbell.

HORACE

(kerfuffled)

Right. He's here.

He brushes himself down and steps towards the door left of stage.

DORIS *exits stage right.*

He opens the door to Parisian, MONIQUE (30's). She is a sultry brunette dressed in a black slinky dress, seamless stockings and black stiletto heels.

HORACE gasps and grabs the door frame for support as his legs buckle beneath him.

HORACE /

(aback)

Monica! What are you doing here?

MONIQUE

(distressed)

You didn't come. I waited for you, but you didn't come. Why not?

HORACE

Ssh. Keep your voice down.
Doris'll hear you.

MONIQUE

What happened to you?

HORACE

(tuts and sighs)

You can't come here, Monica.
You'll get me shot.

He checks his shoulder.

MONIQUE

I had to see you, Horace. I thought something happened to you. I was worried.

HORACE

Appreciated... but you have to go.

DORIS *reenters and brings two bottles of wine to the table.*

HORACE *shuts the door on himself. DORIS looks over with concern before she steps forward.*

DORIS

Horace, who's that at the door?

HORACE

(to Doris)

No one, dear. I'm dealing with it.

MONIQUE

But when will I see you again?

HORACE

I can't say at the moment. Didn't you get my message? All the flights were cancelled due to the fog. I sent you a direct message. Didn't you read it?

DORIS

(suspicious)

Horace, what's going on? Who's there?

HORACE

(to Monique)

I'll call you tomorrow.

MONIQUE

No! Let me in, or I will scream.

DORIS *peers over his shoulder.*

DORIS

(furiously)

Who the fuck is this?

HORACE

(squirms)

It's okay, Doris. I've got it covered.

DORIS

Let her in!

HORACE -

Oh shit.

He steps aside. MONIQUE enters.

MONIQUE

(to **Doris**)

Merci beaucoup.

DORIS

I know who you are. What are you doing here?

MONIQUE

What do you think?

HORACE

(*interjects*)

I think I can explai...

DORIS

(to **Monique**)

...Just tell me what the fuck is going on?

MONIQUE

(to **Horace**)

Tell her.

DORIS

Tell me what?

MONIQUE

Tell her, or I will.

HORACE

Look, I can explain every...

DORIS

...OH SHUT UP, YOU TWERP.

(To **Monique**)

Did he invite you here?

MONIQUE

No he did not. I came to take him back to Paris with me.

DORIS

(*aback*)

Did you?

HORACE

I'm not going anywhere. I have a very important guest about to arrive.

DORIS

(to **Horace**)

So you are together, then?

MONIQUE

(interjects)

He said his marriage was over.

He turns away and squirms.

DORIS

That's news to me. Are we over, Horace?

HORACE

No, of course not.

(pauses)

It just seemed that way at the time.

DORIS

And now?

MONIQUE

He said you were having an affair with an artist.

He wipes his sweaty brow and sits deflatedly at the dining table.

DORIS

That was just an excuse to get you into bed. I'm not having an affair.

HORACE

I never actually said that, Monica. All I said was that she could be...

MONIQUE

(angrily)

...Menteur!

HORACE

Look, can we just all calm down?

MONIQUE *sits down at the table opposite him.*

An awkward silence.

HORACE

Would you like a drink, Monica?

MONIQUE

Est-il Francais?

HORACE

Italian.

MONIQUE

Merci.

He pours Monique a glass of Italian red.

DORIS grabs the bottle of Chardonnay and pours her own.

HORACE

Olive, Monica?

MONIQUE

Sont-il bourres?

HORACE

Yes they are.

MONIQUE

Merci beaucoup.

He slides the bowl across the table. She picks one and pops it inside her mouth.

DORIS

No speaking French! Or you can both sling your hook right now!

HORACE

OK, Doris, calm down.

(pauses)

Look, Monica, I'm sorry you've come all this way, but quite frankly I'm staying here.

MONIQUE

(angrily)

Why?

HORACE

I thought Doris was having an affair. It turns out that I was wrong. I imagined the whole thing. I was deeply chagrined. I felt slightly insecure. I just needed someone to listen to me.

MONIQUE

You used me.

HORACE

Not true, Monica. I did not.

MONIQUE

...But in bed you said you loved me, remember? When you were fucking me doggy.

DORIS *dives across the table.* HORACE *moves quickly to block her.*

DORIS

YOU DIRTY BITCH! GET OUT! GET OUT RIGHT NOW!

MONIQUE *jumps out of her seat and steps away from the table.*

HORACE

Doris, just hold on! She's come a long way.

DORIS

HOW DARE YOU LET THAT SLUT IN HERE TO INSULT ME. GET HER THE FUCK OUT BEFORE I KILL THE BITCH!

HORACE

Monica, you can't say things like that. She's very sensitive.

Telephone rings.

Short silence.

HORACE /

Shit!

They stare at the phone.

DORIS
 (to **Monique**)
 Please, just leave, now.

HORACE
 She'll go in a minute, Doris. For
 goodness sake calm down.

DORIS picks up the phone receiver.

DORIS /
 (to **Horace**)
 It's Gordon. He wants to speak to
 you.

*She smacks the receiver into his groyne. He yelps, then puts
 the receiver to his ear.*

HORACE
 (*irked*)
 Where are you then...? But we are
 waiting for you... Can it not
 wait...? Well thanks a bunch...
 I'll have to, won't I...?

He slams down the receiver in anger.

DORIS continues to give Monique the evil eye.

DORIS
 (to **Horace**)
 What's wrong now?

HORACE
 Gordon can't make it. I bloody
 knew he'd do this to me at the
 last minute. I can read him like
 a book.

DORIS
 Now get her to leave before I do
 something I might not regret.

HORACE
 Will you just shut up and let me
 think, Doris!
 (*pauses*)
 Right, so Gordon can't make it
 which means there'll be a spare
 seat at the table.

DORIS

No fucking way!

HORACE

I need her to stay for dinner,
then she can leave immediately
afterwards.

DORIS

If she stays, I go.

HORACE

Think about it, Doris. It makes
utter sense.

DORIS

You get to bed! She's not
staying! Get her out now, or I'm
off!

MONIQUE

(dejectedly)

It's fine. Call me a taxi. I will
leave.

HORACE

No wait! Doris, Gordon has left
me to speak to Yusimi Yusimi. If
she stays it will make a four.

A protracted silence.

DORIS

*(to **Monique**)*

If I hear one fucking word about
your sordid affair with my
husband I'll swing for you, I
promise.

HORACE

Right, sorted.

(contented pause)

I need to take a leak. I trust
you won't claw each other's eyes
out while I'm gone.

DORIS

It's fine. Go.

He exits stage right.

An awkward silence as they sit back at the table.

DORIS

This is your chance to leave.
I'll tell Horace you left of your
own accord. He'll understand.

MONIQUE

No. I am not leaving here without
him. I have nowhere to go.

DORIS

Well you can't stay here, luv!

MONIQUE

Why not? I will sleep on your
couch, then leave in the morning.

DORIS

Listen cloth ears. D' you think
for one moment I'm going to let
you take my husband away from me?

Toilet flush.

*Short silence before he reenters and takes his seat at the
table.*

Doorbell.

HORACE

Right! This'll be him. Now please
behave yourself, Doris, just this
once.

MONIQUE -

(snarls)

Ridiculous.

HORACE

Doris, just please, be nice.

*He snarls as he opens the door to Maurice who smirks while
dressed in a red suit and white beret.*

MAURICE

(jazz hands)

Ah ha!

HORACE

(snarls)

What'd you want?

MAURICE

Er. Well. Actually I...

HORACE

...I thought I told you to stay
away from my wife. Piss off!

*He attempts to slam the door shut. MAURICE slips his foot
inside the gap.*

MAURICE

Wait. Not too hasty. I have come
to...

HORACE

...I've said all I've got to say
to you. Now go away before I
knock your block off.

DORIS rushes to the door. MONIQUE climbs to her feet.

DORIS

Maurice, is that you?

MAURICE

It is moi, Doris. Please tell
your pig to let me in.

DORIS

But I left you a message. I
couldn't make it tonight.

He grabs his own crotch and squirms.

MAURICE

I need to use the toilet.

HORACE

No! Just fuck off before I lose
my temper.

DORIS steps between them.

DORIS

For Christ's sake let him use the
toilet. What's wrong with you?

HORACE

Just tell him to get lost before
I'm arrested for GBH.

DORIS

Of course you can use our toilet, Maurice. But we're expecting a very important guest so I'm afraid you can't stay. I'm really sorry but I did leave you a Whatsapp message.

He enters as HORACE contorts with anger.

MAURICE

I'll try to be quick.

HORACE

Just hurry up about it. I'm going to time you. You've got one minute, or I shall personally come in there and throw you out.

MAURICE'S attention quickly turns towards Monique as she stands surprised to see him.

MAURICE

(shocked)

Monique. Mais qu'est-ce que tu fais ici?

They throw their arms around each other and kiss.

MONIQUE

Oh mon Dieu! Maurice! Oh mon Dieu! Que fais-tu ici?

DORIS

(aback)

Shit.

DORIS quickly exits stage right. HORACE looks on aghast.

MAURICE

I cannot believe my eyes, Monique. Ohmondieu!

HORACE intervenes.

HORACE

Alright! Alright! Alright! What d' you think this is, the Folies Bergere?

MAURICE guffaws.

MAURICE

Monique used to be my fiancée.

MONIQUE

We were going...

HORACE

...This is turning out to be a proper unforgettable evening. Would you like us to leave so you can be alone?

MAURICE *gently releases himself from her grasp on him.*

MONIQUE

(to **Horace**)

Maurice is the artist I was telling you about, remember?

DORIS *reenters and brings a pot of food to the table.*

DORIS

(to **Monique**)

In the bed, doggy, was it?

MONIQUE

I was not in the bed, Doris. It was in the car.

HORACE

(to **Monique**)

He screws my wife behind my back.

DORIS *slaps his face.*

DORIS

How dare you!

MAURICE *sniggers.*

HORACE

Well look at him standing there like he's just won the lottery.

(*grimaces*)

He gatecrashes our apartment then to top that he and Monica are past lovers. You really couldn't make it up.

(*bitterly*)

I suppose you want her back now you've finished with my wife.

DORIS

(to **Horace**)

Oh get to bed, you twerp.

She exits stage right. MONIQUE follows her.

MAURICE

You are being ridiculous, Horace.

HORACE

I don't know how I never saw this coming.

DORIS brings a pot of fondue to the table. MONIQUE brings a tray of cooked aubergines.

DORIS

C'mon, let's eat before it goes cold.

MAURICE rubs his hands together and licks his lips in salivation.

MAURICE

Hmm. Magnifique! Where shall I sit?

HORACE

You're not sitting anywhere, matey. Use the toilet and fuck off!

MAURICE

Oh please...

HORACE

The table is set for four and you are not one of them, so leave while you still have your teeth intact.

MONIQUE grabs MAURICE'S arm. She is joined by DORIS as she grabs his free arm.

DORIS

If Maurice goes, I go.

MONIQUE

Me too.

HORACE
 (dispiritedly)
 I see. Like that is it?
 (to **Maurice**)
 Well, you are popular, aren't
 you?

MAURICE *shrugs his shoulders.*

HORACE /
 (to **Maurice**)
 Are you sure you can fit them
 into your single bed?

DORIS
 (interjects)
 If not, I can always fit them
 into our double.

HORACE *reluctantly pulls a chair out. He sits down at the
 table next to DORIS.*

MAURICE *takes a seat opposite HORACE and next to MONIQUE.*

HORACE
 I'm supposed to be having dinner
 with Yusimi Yusimi. How on earth
 has this happened?

MAURICE
 It just happened, non?

He ignores the remark and they begin to tuck into the food.

MONIQUE
 (to **Maurice**)
 Il se comporte comme un cochon.

DORIS
 No speaking French at the table!

MONIQUE
 Oops. Sorry, I forgot.

HORACE
 It's all right, Doris. It's no
 different to what you call me
 really.

MAURICE

(to **Horace**)

So whatever way you look at it,
then, you are a pig, non?

HORACE *jumps out of his seat with a raised fist.*

HORACE

THAT'S IT! OUT!

MAURICE

It was just a joke. Where is your
English humour?

HORACE

OK. LET'S HAVE IT OUT! GET UP!
COME ON GET UP!

MAURICE

Oh but I do not want to fight
with you, Horace. This is so
silly.

MAURICE *reluctantly raises his fist.* HORACE *marches towards
the door and opens it wide.*

HORACE

Out! Before I have you removed.

MAURICE

Ohmôndieu! Doris, tell him it was
only banter.

DORIS

I'm not getting involved. I'm too
flipping hungry.

HORACE

They can call me whatever they
like. But you keep your filthy
mouth shut, right?

DORIS

(*interjects*)

Well, I'm qualified to do that.

MAURICE

I think you should just calm down
Horace.

HORACE

Anymore of your quips and you're out the door. That's your final warning, matey.

DORIS

Horace, sit down and eat. You'll feel much better once you've eaten something.

They sit back at the table and eat and HORACE tops up their glasses with wine.

MAURICE

Red please.

HORACE refrains.

HORACE

I'm not your servant.

MAURICE

Fine. I'll do it myself, then.

MAURICE picks up the bottle and pours his own.

They tuck in.

MONIQUE

This is really nice, Doris.

DORIS

Thanks.

MONIQUE

The aubergine is perfectly baked.

DORIS

It's a Jamie Oliver recipe. I got it off the internet.

MAURICE

Hm... the olives. I adore olives with garlic and aioli.

HORACE

(proudly)

I made them myself.

(pauses)

There's nothing to it really.

MAURICE

My compliments.

DORIS

You can buy them from the
supermarket.

HORACE

True. But not as good as mine.

DORIS -

Debatable.

HORACE shows *her* a warning stare. MAURICE *sniggers*.

DORIS /

So, Monique, it looks like you've
found yourself a bed for the
night. You must be over the moon.

MONIQUE

Thank you, Doris.

DORIS

Not here! Maurice has got his own
studio.

HORACE *throws down his utensils in torment*.

HORACE

No way! She can stay at Mal
Maison. It's just down the road.
I'll take her over there myself
later.

MAURICE

(to *Monique*)

No, no, non! Vous pouvez dormir
avec moi!

HORACE

(to *Maurice*)

You've got to be joking, matey!
She's not staying with you, so
forget it!

MONIQUE

Actually, I will sleep with Maurice. After all we are not strangers. We have slept together many times.

(giggles knowingly)

Beaucoup de fois.

They burst into laughter.

HORACE

(to **Monique**)

You are not going to sleep with him, are you?

DORIS

Oh, get to bed! She can sleep with whoever she likes.

HORACE

Just stay out of this, Doris.

MAURICE

Monique is old enough to make up her own mind where she wants to spend the night, papa.

HORACE rips off *his napkin and gets to his feet.*

HORACE

That's it!

MONIQUE

(imploringly)

Ah... Ce soir je veux danser juste et oublier toute la douleur de l'amour.

MAURICE

Super...

MONIQUE

I just love to be in London. It is so beautiful at night.

DORIS

Horace, sit down, you're crowding my space.

He sits down again, but with a threatening stare at MAURICE.

MAURICE

Actually, I know a quaint little French club in Piccadilly. Do you know the one, Horace?

HORACE

No.

(pauses)

I can't go anywhere. I'm still waiting for Yusimi Yusimi to show up.

(checks watch)

Where the hell is he gotten to?

DORIS

Maybe he heard all the shouting and changed his mind.

HORACE

What the hell would you know?

MAURICE wipes his hands on a napkin and takes a deep breath before he gets to his feet.

He looks down at HORACE who throws an olive into his mouth.

MAURICE

(grins)

Well, he is here.

HORACE looks up at Maurice as he sucks the olive.

HORACE

What did you say?

MAURICE

He is here.

HORACE

Sit down.

MAURICE

I'm Yusimi Yusimi.

(smirks)

Do you see me now, Horace?

The olive gets stuck in HORACE'S throat as he digests Maurice's statement.

MAURICE /

(gasps)

Shit!

MAURICE moves quickly and give him the Heimlich Manoeuvre.
The women jump out of their seats in shock and horror.

MONIQUE

Oh mon Dieu! What is happening?

DORIS

He's only choking. It's nothing
to worry about, Monique.

MAURICE

Pour some water! Quickly!

The olive extracts from his mouth and flies across the table.

DORIS fills a glass with water and gives it to him.

MONIQUE

He's pourpré.

MAURICE

He'll be fine in just a moment.

HORACE drinks the water.

DORIS

Horace, are you okay?

He clears his throat. They sit back down at the table.

MAURICE

Phew! That was close. We were
very worried, Horace. You could
have choked to death.

HORACE

(bitterly)

I should have seen that coming.

(sips water)

Very clever. Very clever indeed.

MAURICE

Yusimi Yusimi is my pseudonym.

HORACE

I can see that. I'm not stupid.

(ruminates)

You must think I'm a fool. And do
you?

MAURICE

Non.

HORACE

Is that the play you gave to
Doris?

MAURICE

Oui.

HORACE

But I don't understand why you
did that when Gordon had already
sanctioned your play to be staged
at our theatre.

MAURICE

I know. But I wanted to surprise
you.

HORACE

No you did not, Maurice. You just
wanted to humiliate me, didn't
you?

MAURICE

Non! That is not true either. I
just thought...

HORACE

...So tell me what inspired you
to write a play about the rise
and fall of Willam Shakespeare?
You can't even spell his name
right. He wasn't French. He was
quintessentially English.

MAURICE

Yes. True. But that does not mean
that he cannot be reincarnated as
French, non?

HORACE

Fair point.

(pauses)

So do you want my assessment now
that you're here?

MAURICE

Oui.

HORACE

OK then, I'll give it to you. And
then you can fuck off back to
your little studio.

DORIS

(angrily interjects)

Horace! Maurice just saved you from choking to death. Give him a break.

MAURICE *throws up his arms in despair.*

MAURICE

Oh c'mon, man.

HORACE *takes a sip of water.*

HORACE

To be honest it is a well-drafted play. I particularly enjoyed its contemporary theme. I thought it was poignant, well paced and thought provoking. Your characterizations are quite remarkable which for me create a surreal, yet enchanting tempo throughout each act. The dramatic exploits of the main protagonist is momentous. The central premise, that eerie question, is there life after death? Reincarnation is a very interesting theme to put out there, even in a comedic sense of the word.

He stares coldly at Maurice.

MAURICE

Is that it?

HORACE

I haven't finished.

MAURICE

Oh.

HORACE

Maybe the removal of places of rest would be beneficial for certain wider societies, I don't know. The Dead Playwright's social, spiritual and cultural well-being included.

MAURICE *leans across the table with added enthusiasm.*

MAURICE

Oh, I love it.

HORACE

Your play, Maurice, is written with a profound pitch and penetrating skill which asks fundamentally important questions about family values and respect for the dead, no matter their moral status. Your work has good structure without being polemical, so delivering an excellent pleasantry and plot. You have yourself a decent play. Now you can fuck off!

MAURICE

(*aback*)

Pardon? But I cannot wait to get started.

HORACE

Gordon and I haven't quite decided on that yet.

MAURICE

But I won the competition fair and square.

A silence as HORACE sits in his seat with a blank expression.

HORACE

You're quite a man, aren't you, Maurice?

MAURICE

Pardon?

HORACE

You have what you came for, now you can fuck off!

DORIS

(*interjects*)

Horace!

HORACE

Well... look at him sitting there all chuffed with himself.

MAURICE

I just want...

HORACE

...Over my dead body, matey!

MONIQUE *puts a comforting arm around Maurice.*

HORACE /

D' you want everything I own. Maurice? The shirt off my back for instance, before you take these two cock starved fans of yours out clubbing, and then to my bed? Or maybe you'd prefer to wait until I'm completely out of your way? I'll just kip on the sofa shall I, and think about how I might direct your play, and even who I might cast... Doris and Monica for instance? Is that what I should do, Maurice? Tell me because I'm completely discombobulated by your audacity to come here and gloat at my expense.

MAURICE

Oh c'mon, Horace.

MONIQUE

Horace, I think you are just being ridiculous.

HORACE

Am I, Monica? Am I really?

DORIS

Actually, I thought you gave Maurice an excellent overview of his play. It was really good. Just stop being so flipping churlish.

HORACE

(defeatedly)

Three against one.

MAURICE

Oh, be reasonable.

HORACE

Why should I? I don't owe you anything, matey. You gatecrash my dinner, then ask me to be reasonable? You've got some balls, I'll give you that.

MAURICE

Gordon said that you were expecting me.

HORACE

I wasn't expecting you. I was expecting Yusimi Yusimi.

Short silence.

MAURICE

Oh c'mon, Horace. It will be fun working with you.

Short silence.

HORACE

It's not going to happen, matey. In fact, I'd prefer it if you just left now.

MONIQUE

Oh this is so crazy.

HORACE

Is it Monica? So what are we going to do, then, sack the director?

DORIS

Oh Horace. Give him a break. He's worked really hard to please you.

MONIQUE

(to **Horace**)

What has he done to you?

HORACE *ignores her and stares blankly at the wall.*

DORIS

(*clicks fingers*)

Horace!

MONIQUE

Why is he acting like this?

DORIS

Ha! Horace Nugents, lost for words. I thought I'd never see it in my lifetime.

MAURICE *climbs out of his seat despondently.*

MAURICE

I think I should go?

DORIS

No. Wait a moment, Maurice.

Short silence.

DORIS /

Horace, come on.

Short silence.

DORIS /

Horace, please stop this bullshit silence!

Short silence.

MAURICE

Maybe he needs more water.

DORIS

He can have this then!

Without hesitation she picks up the jug of water and soaks him. He gets up and climbs the stairs.

DORIS

Oh, he'll be alright in a few minutes. He just needs some space to think.

DORIS *fills their glasses with more wine.*

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP.

BEDROOM

HORACE *sits on the foot of the bed and stares at his miserable reflection in the mirrored wardrobe.*

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP.

LOUNGE

DORIS *glides over to the CD player and turns up the music of Saint Germain.*

MONIQUE *smiles and gets to her feet.*

MONIQUE

(*poetically*)

Oh I just want to dance.

MAURICE

(*To Doris*)

So what will happen now?

DORIS

Oh don't worry, Maurice. I'll speak to him when he decides to get over himself.

MAURICE

But you heard what he said.

DORIS

It's not up to him. He's just the organ grinder's monkey. He thinks he's more important than he actually is.

MONIQUE

Let's dance.

DORIS *looks up towards the bedroom with a raised glass.*

DORIS

Come in number five! Where the fuck are you?!

DORIS *cackles.*

MONIQUE *turns up the volume on the CD player. A party atmosphere begins to take shape.*

MONIQUE

I want to dance like crazy. Whoa!
Whoa!

DORIS

He won't spoil our fun, will we?
Miserable old fuck-pig.

DORIS cackles.

MAURICE *sits soberly at the table and looks on as they let their hair down to the music.*

MONIQUE

I love the music.

DORIS

Yeah, me too. It's brilliant!

DORIS *stares at her with concern.*

DORIS /

It is over, isn't it?

MONIQUE

Completely. Finished. Caput. Au revoir Horace Nugents!

DORIS cackles.

DORIS

Ha! Brilliant! I love it!

MAURICE *climbs out of his seat and walks towards the entrance door.*

MAURICE

I have something for you, Doris.

He exits through door left, then returns with the painting wrapped in brown paper.

They stop dancing as he hands her the painting.

MONIQUE

What is this, Maurice?

DORIS

(excitedly)

Is that for me?

MAURICE

You can have it now.

DORIS

Oh, Maurice, thank you so much!

She pecks his cheek.

DORIS /
(to **Monique**)

He knew how much I wanted this.

DORIS rips off the paper to reveals the painting. She positions it upright on the mantle.

MONIQUE
It is beautiful, Maurice.

MAURICE
Thank you, Monique.

DORIS
I'll treasure it forever.
Actually, I'll hang it on the
bedroom wall so Horace can look
at me before he goes to sleep
every night.

DORIS cackles.

MONIQUE
You are so amazing, Maurice.

Another peck on the cheek.

MONIQUE /
Oh, I just have to dance.

They continue to dance.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP.

BEDROOM

HORACE slowly removes his spectacles, then opens the wardrobe door and takes out a carved wooden box,

He opens the box to reveal an antique pistol. He loads a single bullet into the chamber then points the pistol at his reflection in the mirror.

HORACE -
He is the enemy of theatre.
Hostile to your world.
(*Dirty Harry*)
Uou talkin' to me?
(*points pistol*)
You talkin' to me, punk?

He grimaces and discards the pistol as he turns away in disgust.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP.

A party mood as they continue to dance to the music of Saint Germain.

MONIQUE

What are we waiting for? Let's go out.

DORIS

All right.

MAURICE

Hey, Doris, do you like my outrageous suit?

DORIS

Oh I love it, Maurice. But you do look like a pimp.

MONIQUE laughs and throws her arms around him. He responds and pulls her closer.

MONIQUE

(provocatively)

Tu aimes ma robe, Maurice?

MAURICE

Oui. Très sexy, tu es aussi belle.

She kisses him on the lips.

DORIS cackles.

DORIS

Wait here. I'll be back in a minute.

MAURICE

Super.

DORIS takes the stairs.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP.

BEDROOM

HORACE *sits despondently on the bed.*

DORIS *enters in high spirits. She ignores him completely and goes to the wardrobe and pulls out a black and gold slinky dress.*

DORIS
(*imploringly*)
We're having so much fun
downstairs. We're going out. D'
you want to come?

Silence.

She turns to face him.

DORIS /
Oh come on, Horace. It'll be a
laugh.

Silence.

DORIS /
Oh cheer up, for god sake!

She holds up the dress for him to see.

DORIS /
D' you remember this dress?
Vivian Westwood.

Silence.

DORIS /
I'll wear it for you if you come
with us?

Silence.

DORIS /
(*sighs deeply*)
Look, it's no good just sitting
here with your head stuck half
way up your flipping arse, is it?

She sits down next to him and puts a consoling arm around his shoulders.

DORIS /

Put on your nice green velvet
suit and come out with us?

Silence.

DORIS /

Oh come on, Horace.

HORACE

I can't. I'm finished, Doris.
It's over. I'm over.

DORIS

Oh don't be so silly, of course
you're not.

Silence.

DORIS /

You know, you've changed. You're
becoming a stranger to me these
days. I don't even know my own
flipping husband anymore.

HORACE

Blame that reptile down there. He
has destroyed my faith in
theatre.

DORIS

(furiously)

Rubbish! He has not! That's just
your paranoia at work!

HORACE

That toe rag has belittled me.

DORIS

Oh don't be so bloody ridiculous!

(reflective pause)

D' you remember what you used to
say to me?

(pauses)

Forgive your enemies... nothing
annoys them more.

HORACE

(intolerantly)

It wasn't one of mine. It was
Oscar Wilde's.

DORIS

Whatever! Who cares?

(pauses)

Maurice is such a nice guy... he really is. And it looks like he and Monique are going to start up their relationship again.

HORACE

I wouldn't mind putting a bullet through his skull.

She climbs off the bed and stares in the mirror at her reflection.

He watches her pitifully, before she flies into him.

DORIS

Listen to me, Horace Nugents. You said his play was one of the best you've read in a decade. Just because he wrote it you sit here like a flipping defeatist!.

(angry pause)

You're sitting here with egg all over your face all because you've been exposed as a pompous, self absorbed, miserable old fuck pig. And I have just about had enough of your selfish me, me, me attitude! All you do is go on about how flipping great you are. Character assassinating people who don't live up to your expectations. And d' you know something else?

HORACE

Go on.

DORIS

In all these years of our marriage, you've not once offered me a leg up. How could you be so flipping high and mighty about your own successes while at the same time not give a flying fuck about mine? My life! You're an egotistical fuck pig, Horace Nugents and right now I fucking loathe you!

HORACE

(grits teeth)

He's my Nemesis!

DORIS

And you are mine when you're like this!.

(pauses)

Why does everyone feel the flipping tension around you?

HORACE

Just leave me alone, then.

(pauses)

And you can have a divorce if it'll make you happy.

DORIS

Just stop this flipping bullshit!

She pins him down and slaps him, until she lies down beside him and sobs.

DORIS /

I should be the one sitting here with my head up my arse, not you. Your slut is down there with her ex and all you can do is hide up here. Go and face then like the man I thought I married.

HORACE

I will. The Horace Nugents way.

He climbs off the bed and straightens his clothes.

DORIS

Calmly, Horace.

HORACE

We'll see who's calm.

He stealthily grabs hold of the the pistol, then makes his way down the stairs.

DORIS gets up and undresses.

LIGHTS DOWN:

LIGHTS UP.

LOUNGE

MAURICE and MONIQUE canoodle on the sofa.

HORACE approaches with pistol in hand.

MAURICE

(to *Monique*)

So what happened to you afterwards?

MONIQUE

I went to stay with my aunt in Canada.

With a look of horror she spots Horace approaching.

MONIQUE /

Ohmondieu! Horace, what are you doing?!

MAURICE jumps off the sofa and retreats.

MAURICE

(*knowingly*)

Horace, what is going on?

HORACE

I aim to kill you, Maurice... that's what's going on.

He points the pistol at him.

MAURICE

(*afeard*)

Stop this nonsense, Horace. You are being ridiculous.

HORACE

Am I? You know this pistol once belonged to the Duke of Wellington. He gave it to my great uncle Charles. He was a decorated war hero at the battle of Waterloo.

MAURICE

That is good.

HORACE

He killed many of your lot with this mechanical device.

MAURICE

So are you going to shoot me with
it as well?

MONIQUE *steps between them.*

MONIQUE

Oh please, Horace. Please don't
shoot him. I beg you not to shoot
him. I love him.

HORACE

Well, he's turned my world upside
down, and he'll probably do the
same to yours at some stage.

His hand begins to shake violently and becomes unsteady.

MONIQUE *panics and quickly exits through door right.*

MAURICE

Oh c'mon, man. You cannot
frighten me with that toy gun. I
bet it does not even work.

HORACE

You know everything was fine
before you arrived. Why did you
have to come here? You really
should have heeded my advice and
stayed away, punk.

MAURICE

We will go, then. Monique!

HORACE

Who's laying eggs now, punk?

He squeezes the trigger.

*The bullet hits the painting in the centre and tears a huge
hole in the canvas.*

Off stage MONIQUE screams. MAURICE dives for cover.

MAURICE

OHMONDIEU! DORIS COME! PLEASE
HELP US! HORACE HAS LOST HIS
MIND!

HORACE

It's alright, darling. I'm just dealing with a reptile. I think he's cowering behind the sofa. But don't worry, I've got him covered.

MAURICE

HORACE PLEASE STOP THIS! DORIS HELP US!

HORACE

Did you enjoy my wife? Oh yes... and the dinner? That'll be five hundred pounds sterling. And I only accept cash.

MONIQUE *

HORACE PLEASE DON'T HURT HIM!

MAURICE

HORACE I BEG YOU TO STOP THIS NONSENSE RIGHT NOW!

HORACE

Give me one good reason why I should?

MONIQUE *

PLEASE HORACE STOP THIS!

DORIS quickly descends the stairs wearing her black and gold dress. She spots the ruined painting and gasps in horror.

DORIS

(lividly)

Oh, what have you done, you big twerp!

She whacks Horace across the head, then grabs the pistol from him.

HORACE

I was aiming at a reptile. I missed.

MAURICE pops his head up from behind the sofa.

MAURICE

We cannot stay here a moment longer. This man has gone loopies.

MONIQUE *reenters and stands agape at the destruction of the painting.*

MONIQUE

Oh mon Dieu! Crazy guy, Horace.

MAURICE

C'mon Monique. Let's get out of this hot house.

DORIS *stands deflatedly with her head inside the portrait.*

DORIS

(to **Horace**)

Look what you've done to my face. It's ruined.

HORACE

It was an accident, Doris. I missed.

She discards the painting.

DORIS

Right! I'm not staying here with him.

MAURICE

(to **Horace**)

You need help, man.

DORIS

(to **Horace**)

And get to bed!

MONIQUE

(*shakes head*)

So crazy...

They leave Horace and exit through door left.

He stares down at the pistol, then picks it up and slides the barrel into his mouth. He wraps his finger around the trigger and squeezes.

CLICK.

LIGHTS DOWN:

CURTAIN