

FRANCIS. I have to EAT EVERY DAY!

STANLEY. I shall pay you five pounds per day.

FRANCIS. (To Stanley.) Alright, guv, you're on.

STANLEY. Do you know where the main post office is in Brighton?

FRANCIS. (Aside.) I have absolutely no idea. (To Stanley.) Oh yeah, it's next door to my gran's.

STANLEY. There should be some post for me. You'll need this letter of authorisation. (Stanley gives Francis a letter.)

FRANCIS. (Reading.) To whom it may concern, the bearer is an authorised agent of Stanley Stubbers.

STANLEY. Shhh!

FRANCIS. Who's Stanley Stubbers?

STANLEY. (Whisper.) Me! But don't call me Stanley Stubbers. I'm going to have to make up a new name for the pub.

FRANCIS. (Whisper.) What's wrong with "The Cricketers' Arms"?

STANLEY. (Whisper.) You're not exactly a Swiss watch, are you? A false name for me, because I'm lying low. What do I call you? I don't do first names. First names are for girls and Norwegians.

FRANCIS. (Whisper.) Henshall.

STANLEY. Like it! (Whisper.) Get my trunk indoors, Henshall, collect my letters Henshall. I'll be in my room. (Exit Stanley into the pub. Francis attempts to move the trunk, it is too heavy. He requests help from the audience. Two male volunteers are brought up onto the stage and are taught correct trunk lifting technique. Under instruction from Francis they carry the trunk off into the pub, and remain backstage until next required. Opportunity for improv comedy around hometown, occupation, dress sense, etc., always respecting the audience members. Francis remains in character.)

FRANCIS. Post office. (Enter Rachel and Lloyd.)

RACHEL. Oil! Francis! Where are you going mate?

FRANCIS. I'm walking round and round in circles to ward off the hunger pangs.

LLOYD. I will cook you the lunch of a lifetime.

FRANCIS. Lunch?! I haven't had breakfast yet.

RACHEL. Have you got my trunk out of the motor yet?

FRANCIS. I've just done the trunk. (Aside.) Ah! — Concentrate, Francis! (To Rachel.) Don't worry, Roscoe, I'll get your trunk from the motor, now.

LLOYD. I'll get one of the bar staff to give you a hand. (Exit Lloyd into the pub. He sees the two volunteers standing offstage.) What! You two

again! I've told you before, it's not that kind of pub! (The volunteers return to the audience with applause.)

RACHEL. I need you to go to the post office, and —

FRANCIS. — Alright guv, stop going on about it. You only have to tell me once.

RACHEL. I haven't asked you to go to the post office at all, yet.

FRANCIS. (Aside.) Oh shit!

RACHEL. Lloyd tells me it is just around the corner.

FRANCIS. (Aside.) That's handy.

RACHEL. Collect any letters for me or my sister, Rachel Crabbe. This is a letter of authorisation.

FRANCIS. I've got one of those already. I don't need two do I?

RACHEL. How come you already have a letter of authorisation?

FRANCIS. (Aside.) This is trickier than I thought. (Francis takes the letter.) You're right. I'm gonna need that.

RACHEL. And any letters you collect are private. Is that clear?

FRANCIS. Don't worry, guv'nor, I won't even read them myself.

RACHEL. I'm gonna sink a couple of beers, and a lie down in my room. (Rachel goes in.)

FRANCIS. (Aside.) You got to concentrate, ain't ya, with two jobs. Kaw! I can do it, long as I don't get confused. But I get confused easily. I don't get confused that easily. Yes I do. I'm my own worst enemy. Stop being negative. I'm not being negative. I'm being realistic. I'll screw it up. I always do. Who screws it up? You, you're the role model for village idiots everywhere. Me?! You're nothing without me. You're the cock up! Don't call me a cock-up, you cock-up! (He slaps himself.) You slapped me?! Yeah, I did. And I'm glad I did. (He punches himself back.) That hurt. Good. You started in. (A fight breaks out, finally he attacks himself with the dustbin lid and returns himself unconscious. Enter Alan.)

ALAN. (Aside.) What is my life? Am I to eat, drink, sleep, get a good job, marry, honeymoon, have kids, watch them grow up and have kids of their own, divorce, meet someone else, get old, and die happy in my sleep like every other inhabitant of Brighton and Hove? What kind of a life is that? No. I am an artist. Character is action. I cannot allow this dilute suitor to come along and end my beautiful dream, like a dead, discarded Russian astronaut dog landing on my head. (He notices Francis.) My rival's lackey. This will be the beginning of the end. (To Francis.) Where is the dog, your guv'nor? He will die today. (Alan takes his jacket off, rolls his sleeves up, takes his watch off as if preparing for a fist fight.)

STAFF

FRANCIS. Do yourself a favour, mate, walk away.

ALAN. You have obviously never been in love.

FRANCIS. *(Counting on his fingers.)* Janice Carter, one; Pamela Costello, two; her gran, three —

ALAN. — Bring the cur out here, now!

FRANCIS. You want to talk to my guvnor?

ALAN. Talk a little, yes, and then slaughter a lot.

FRANCIS. Alright, stay there, I'll go and get him. *(Francis heads for the pub door. Just as he gets there Stanley opens it.)*

STANLEY. Have you been to the post office yet?

FRANCIS. I was —

STANLEY. — Who's he?

FRANCIS. He wants a word with my guvnor.

STANLEY. I'm your guvnor.

FRANCIS. Yes. You are, aren't you.

STANLEY. He wants a word with me, does he?

FRANCIS. *(Introducing Stanley to Alan.)* This gentleman is called Alan.

STANLEY. Oh bad luck.

FRANCIS. I'll be at the post office. *(Francis tiptoes backwards out of the way, unseen.)*

STANLEY. Are you an actor?

ALAN. Does it show?

STANLEY. The way you stand, at an angle. As if there's an audience, over there.

ALAN. My rival in love, Roscoe Crabbe, arrived from London today and is staying here.

STANLEY. *(Aside.)* Bizarre! Roscoe Crabbe is the name of the chap I killed accidentally last Saturday evening, stabbing him three times in the chest with a knife I'd bought earlier.

ALAN. He has today claimed my bride, my love, my life.

STANLEY. No! Roscoe Crabbe is dead. I know he's dead because a friend of mine knows someone whose dad works with a chap who says he murdered him.

ALAN. I met him not an hour ago. He lives, his every breath tortures me.

STANLEY. *(Aside.)* I suppose when I fled the club he wasn't actually yet dead. Oh jeez! If Roscoe did survive and is in Brighton, he's here for one reason only, to kill me. Oh my God. *(To Alan.)* He's not staying here. I know him. I would have seen him.

ALAN. Oh. I was led to believe. No matter. My card. If you see

him tell him that his life will only be spared if he gives up his wedding plans. *(Alan gives him a card.)*

STANLEY. You said your name was Alan? This card says Orlando Dangle.

ALAN. Actors' Equity already had an Orlando Dangle.

STANLEY. You chose "Alan"?

ALAN. It's 1963, there's a bloody revolution in the theatre and angry young men are writing plays about Alans. What's your name, sir?

STANLEY. My name? *(Aside.)* Buggerello! Gonna have to be creative now. Not my best game! *(Stanley looks at the trash can.)* Dust bin, Dustbin, Dustin! *(He looks around again for inspiration, taking in the pub sign.)* Dustin Pubsign.

ALAN. Pubsign?

STANLEY. Pubsign. It's an old Anglo-Saxon guild name. The bakers baked bread, the Smiths were the blacksmiths, the Pubsigns. Yup! We made the pub signs.

ALAN. It has been a pleasure meeting you, Mister Pubsign. *(Alan exits.)*

STANLEY. Roscoe is in Brighton! I'd be better off lying low in London than lying low in Brighton. Poor dear Rachel must be terrified. My God! Can this be happening? What to do?! I must go to London, find Rachel. Damn it! I can't! I have to wait here for Rachel's letter. *(Enter a policeman.)* Urgh! The fuzz! *(To the policeman.)* Lovely day for it!

POLICEMAN. Lovely day for what, sir?

STANLEY. Fighting crime. *(Stanley backs into the pub. The policeman walks off, though he is suspicious. Enter Francis. Francis starts going through the letters, of which there are four in all: two letters and two authorisations.)*

FRANCIS. Authorisation letter. Let's put that in this pocket. Rachel Crabbe. Let's put that in this pocket for now. I'm good at this. I could work for the post office. That'd be three jobs. Authorisation. That goes in the authorisations' pocket. Stanley Stubbers. *(Puts it in his mouth. Chews a little. Mumbling.)* Don't really need these authorisation letters anymore, do I? *(He puts the authorisations in the same pocket as the Rachel letter.)* So this pocket is now for Stanley Stubbers' letters. Good. What are these then? I'm getting confused now. Two authorisation letters. If there's two letters, they definitely need their own pocket. What's this? Stanley Stubbers. That's the one that tasted quite good. *(Aside.)* Is it? Is it?! *(Puts it in his mouth. Chews*

END