

OUT OF ORDER

JANE. (*Referring to music.*) I think that might give us hiccups, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. (*Turns, then sexily.*) Oh, you look gorgeous.

JANE. Thank you, Minister.

RICHARD. (*Switches off the radio and moves to her.*) Absolutely gorgeous! (*HE goes to embrace her but she speaks.*)

JANE. You know—this feels really naughty, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. So it should, it is naughty. Do you mind if I slip into something more comfortable? (*RICHARD picks up his case and goes into bedroom.*)

JANE. (*Calls.*) I mean you're a Junior Minister and I'm one of the secretaries over there.

RICHARD. (*Appears taking off his jacket.*) Very democratic, though. Especially as Mrs. Thatcher's my boss and Neil Kinnock's your's. (*RICHARD exits into bedroom.*)

JANE. (*Chuckling. Calls out.*) Mr. Kinnock would hit the roof if he knew.

RICHARD. (*Enters putting on his dressing gown.*) Mrs. Thatcher would go through it. (*RICHARD goes to kiss her.*)

JANE. I don't make a practice of doing this, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. Quite right! Neither do I. (*HE goes to kiss her.*)

JANE. Come off it, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. (*Hurt.*) Jane!

JANE. You should hear the jokes about you that go round the typists' pool.

RICHARD. (*Surprised.*) About me?

JANE. About you, Mr. Willey. And with a name like that some of the jokes are pretty strong. I can tell you.

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RICHARD. Disgraceful.

JANE. (*Laughs and sits on settee.*) I'm only teasing you, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. Are you?

JANE. (*Teasing him.*) Don't you like to be teased, Mr. Willey?

RICHARD. Depends what you mean by—"teased." And I wish you'd stop calling me "Mr. Willey." (*RICHARD sits beside her.*)

JANE. I've never called you anything else.

RICHARD. Well, under the circumstances I think you can call me—Dickie.

JANE. (*Giggling.*) No, I couldn't.

RICHARD. All my friends call me Dickie.

JANE. No I couldn't. Not after all those jokes I've heard. I'll call you "Richard."

RICHARD. Coming from you, it sounds beautiful. Now, I've laid on some champagne—

JANE. Lovely!

RICHARD. Some caviare—

JANE. Lovely!

RICHARD. And three dozen oysters.

JANE. Oysters! Aren't they supposed to do something to a chap? (*JANE rises and moves to the radio.*)

RICHARD. God, I hope so, they're damned expensive. What time do you have to be home in—er—where is it? Lewisham?

JANE. I don't. I can stay all night.

RICHARD. (*Delighted.*) All night! What have you told your husband then?

JANE. I'm visiting Auntie Rosie in Felixstowe.

(*JANE presses a button on the radio, and the intro music of "Love And Marriage" is heard.*)

RICHARD. (*Delighted.*) Auntie Rosie in Felixstowe.
JANE. She's developed severe bronchitis.
RICHARD. Poor Auntie Rosie.

JANE. And Auntie Rosie's not on the phone so—
RICHARD. So your husband can't ring up to disturb
you. Lovely! (*HE goes to kiss her as Frank Sinatra starts
singing "Love and Marriage."*) There must be a more
suitable song than that. (*RICHARD starts to fiddle with
the radio.*)

JANE. It's a beautiful warm night. Shall I open the
curtains? (*JANE moves to the window.*)

RICHARD. Why not? If I remember correctly there's a
beautiful view. These balconies overlook the river.

(*JANE pulls the cord to open the curtains. The curtains
open to reveal the BODY of a man in a raincoat. The
window has come down on his neck. His head,
shoulders and dangling arms are protruding into the
room with the rest of his body in a prostrate position
outside the balcony. JANE steps back to look out of the
window and sees the BODY. SHE emits no sound but
her hands come up to her mouth and SHE staggers back
a pace. SHE then turns from the window.*)

JANE. Ohhh!

RICHARD. (*Is still concentrating on the radio.*)
Breath-taking view, isn't it? Nelson's column one way. Big
Ben the other.

JANE. (*Finally, trying to be calm.*) Mr. Willey—
RICHARD. I've told you, "Dickie."

JANE. I think I feel sick.

RICHARD. (*Going to her.*) Can't stand heights, eh?

JANE. (*SHE grabs him.*) Oh, my God!

RICHARD. Well, six floors is pretty high.

JANE. Mr. Willey—!

RICHARD. (*Holds up a remonstrative finger.*) Dickie!
JANE. Dickie! (*SHE moves past him.*)

RICHARD. (*Going to window.*) Well, don't look down,
just look up at (*Seeing the BODY.*) Good God! (*HE kneels
down to look at the man's face. Turning to JANE.*) I think
we can dispense with Rod Stewart.

(*JANE turns off the radio. SHE then moves to RICHARD
who is feeling the man's pulse.*)

RICHARD. The window must have come down on his
neck.

JANE. Oh, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. I can't feel any pulse.

JANE. He's dead, is he?

RICHARD. (*Terse.*) That's what "no pulse" usually
means.

JANE. (*Kneels beside RICHARD.*) How long's he been
there?

RICHARD. (*Tetchily.*) How do I know? The curtains
were already closed when I arrived. I've been here about ten
minutes.

JANE. Is he still warm, Mr. Willey?

RICHARD. (*Rises and back away a pace.*) Yes, he's
still warm, Miss Worthington!

JANE. (*SHE rises.*) He looks awful.

RICHARD. Course he does, he's dead!

JANE. Poor man.

RICHARD. Poor man? He's obviously a burglar.

JANE. Is he?

RICHARD. Well, he's not the waiter delivering oysters,
is he? Besides, we're six floors up. Of course he's a burglar.
JANE. He might be one of the guests.

RICHARD. Jane, it doesn't matter who he is, he was clearly breaking and entering. He must have somehow got onto our balcony—(HE looks out of window.)—it goes all round the hotel—forced the window open and (HE mimes the window coming down.) bang!

JANE. Must be a dodgy sash or something.

RICHARD. Well, he won't be suing the hotel, that's for sure. (RICHARD pulls the cord and closes curtains.)

JANE. (Has picked up the telephone.) We'd better ring the police.

RICHARD. Police?

JANE. About him.

RICHARD. We can't ring the police! (RICHARD replaces the receiver.)

JANE. We must, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. How do we explain what you and I are doing in a suite at the Westminster Hotel?! I'm supposed to be attending an all-night sitting in the House of Commons.

JANE. But he's dead, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. Well, the police won't be able to bring him round, will they? (Suddenly realising.) God! If Mrs. Thatcher finds out—! One more scandal for the Conservatives and we'll fall below the Liberal Democrats in the opinion polls.

JANE. You can't discover a dead body and just ignore it. If you're worried about the police, phone down for the Manager.

RICHARD. What's the difference? Look, Jane, I'm thinking about you.

JANE. You're thinking about your wife, Mrs. Thatcher and your career.

RICHARD. Well, those too. (Suddenly.) God, I can see the headlines in the Sun now—Junior Minister and Kinnock's secretary in sex-orgy with dead body.

JANE. You've got to inform somebody!

RICHARD. You're right. I'll inform George. (HE goes to phone.)

JANE. Mr. Pigden?

RICHARD. (Dialling.) Yes.

JANE. What will your PPS do?

RICHARD. Whatever I tell him. (On phone.) Richard Willey here. Put me through to my PPS ... George, get over here right away ... never mind the debate, just get over here ... no, not the British Museum, the Westminster Hotel ... never you mind. You can be here in two minutes. Suite 648 and don't tell anyone where you're going ... Bring anything with you? Yes, your brains, George, your brains.

(HE slams the phone down. There's a KNOCK at the door. THEY both hesitate.)

RICHARD. (Calls sweetly.) Who is it?

WAITER. (Off.) Room Service.

RICHARD. (Calls.) I'm busy.

JANE. You ordered champagne, caviare and oysters.

RICHARD. I know!

WAITER. Room Service 648!

RICHARD. Go away!

(The WAITER KNOCKS persistently.)

WAITER. (Off.) Room Service! 648.

RICHARD. God, he'll have the whole hotel in here. Wait in the bedroom.

(HE pushes JANE into the bedroom. There is more KNOCKING from outside. RICHARD sees Jane's