

RICHARD. (*Whispering urgently.*) Ssh! In the bedroom.

JANE. What about my dress?

(*HE pushes her into bedroom.*)

MANAGER. (*Off.*) Mr. Willey!

RICHARD. (*Calls.*) Coming! (*RICHARD realises he's wearing his dressing gown. HE opens bedroom door. Calls into bedroom.*) Throw me my jacket!

(*JANE enters hands him his jacket and exits into the bedroom, closing the door. RICHARD, not realising, puts the jacket on over his dressing gown.*)

MANAGER. (*Off.*) Mr. Willey!

RICHARD. (*Calls.*) Coming!

(*As RICHARD starts to move from the bedroom door, the cupboard door falls open and the BODY appears still hanging on the hook.*)

RICHARD. Oh, my God! (*RICHARD hurries to the cupboard and closes the door.*)

MANAGER. (*Off.*) Mr. Willey!

RICHARD. (*Calls, calmly.*) Coming!

(*RICHARD does up the button on his jacket and opens the door. The MANAGER storms in, slamming the door behind him.*)

RICHARD. Sorry about that.

MANAGER. This is a very serious—(*The MANAGER stops and reacts to Richard's attire.*)

RICHARD. Shall we go? I really must get back to the debate. (*Realising.*) Oh, silly me. (*RICHARD chuckles at the way HE is dressed.*)

MANAGER. This is a very serious business, Mr. Willey.

(*The MANAGER goes to the window, opens it and looks out. RICHARD gently moves the MANAGER down into the room. During the ensuing dialogue RICHARD removes his dressing gown and puts his jacket on properly.*)

RICHARD. Yes, I'm sorry I can't be of more assistance. It's been very quiet here actually.

MANAGER. A guest nearby said she'd seen a man kneeling on this balcony looking through the window.

RICHARD. Must be mistaken.

MANAGER. No, this is the balcony all right. Suite 648. She said she'd watched this man for a good ten minutes. He didn't move a muscle. He just knelt outside—staring in.

RICHARD. Good Lord! Well, as you can see, there's nobody there now. Let's forget all about it.

MANAGER. Sounds like a Peeping Tom to me or, even worse, a burglar. I'll just go into your bedroom.

RICHARD. Bedroom?

MANAGER. The balcony goes past there too. Can't do any harm to check.

(*Suddenly the window falls with a loud bang. RICHARD jumps and clutches the MANAGER.*)

MANAGER. I must tell maintenance about that. Excuse me.

(As the MANAGER starts to move to the bedroom door RICHARD quickly opens it.)

RICHARD. Allow me.

MANAGER. I'll do it, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. All right. Yes. (Loudly for JANE's benefit.) It's a good idea for the Manager to check the bedroom window! (HE smiles at the MANAGER.)

MANAGER. (Surprised by the shouting.) Thank you.

(The MANAGER moves to go past RICHARD but RICHARD stops him.)

RICHARD. And for the Manager to check the bedroom balcony!

MANAGER. (Surprised.) Thank you.

(The MANAGER moves to go past RICHARD. RICHARD stops him.)

RICHARD. After the Manager! (Handing the bewildered MANAGER his dressing gown.) Thank you.

(RICHARD allows the bemused MANAGER to walk past him into the bedroom. There is a KNOCK at the corridor door.)

RICHARD. (Loudly, into the bedroom.) I'll just see who's at the door! (Calls.) Who is it?

GEORGE. (Off.) It's me, Mr. Willey. George.

(RICHARD opens the corridor door. GEORGE steps in, holding his briefcase.)

GEORGE. I got here as fast as I—

RICHARD. Shut up!

(RICHARD pulls the surprised GEORGE into the room and shuts the door.)

RICHARD. Now, listen, Pigden. I'm going to say this once and very, very quickly. I discovered something extremely unpleasant in my suite tonight.

GEORGE. When you say "sweet" do you mean pudding or—?

RICHARD. (Interrupting.) Shut up! This body now resides in the coat cupboard.

GEORGE. When you say body do you mean—?

RICHARD. (Interrupting.) Shut up! We will arrange for this body to be discovered at some other place later tonight by your good self.

GEORGE. I don't quite understand.

RICHARD. (Pressing on.) By which time I will be in the House of Commons lending my support to the Transport Minister and—

(There is a pause as GEORGE attempts to take it all in.)

GEORGE. Do you think I could go out and come in again?

(RICHARD sits GEORGE in the chair R.)

RICHARD. George! When the Hotel Manager comes out of that bedroom, remember—everything I've just told you never happened.

(GEORGE goes to speak but then looks at RICHARD dumbly.)

RICHARD. There's been no intruder on the balcony. I've had a very quiet evening. There's no dead body in the coat cupboard.

GEORGE. Well, thank goodness for small mer—

RICHARD. Shut up! *(Continues.) Nothing's happened. Have you got that?*

*(There is a moment's pause and then GEORGE shakes his head.)*

RICHARD. For God's sake just agree with everything I say. Don't try to be helpful. Just look intelligent and nod your head.

*(GEORGE blankly nods his head. The MANAGER comes in from the bedroom.)*

MANAGER. Nothing unusual on that balcony either.

*(GEORGE rises but RICHARD sits him immediately.)*

RICHARD. I thought not. Oh, this is my Parliamentary Private Secretary, Mr. Pigden.

*(GEORGE gives a wan smile and nods intelligently.)*

RICHARD. Yes. I'm afraid I've lumbered George with rather a lot of detailed work so I've asked him to stay in London overnight, haven't I, George?

*(GEORGE hesitates and then nods intelligently.)*

RICHARD. Yes. So I was wondering if you could accommodate him.

MANAGER. I'll see what I can do, Mr. Willey.

RICHARD. Actually—what would be perfect would be the suite next to this. Either side will do. Adjoining balconies. We need to be close, don't we, George?

*(GEORGE hesitates a little longer than usual but then nods intelligently.)*

MANAGER. I'll see if we have anything nearby, Mr. Pigden.

RICHARD. *(Lightly.)* Don't bother to get up, George. MANAGER. And I'll put our Security on to that intruder, Mr. Willey.

*(The MANAGER moves to go. RICHARD leans nonchalantly against the cupboard door.)*

RICHARD. Oh, I wouldn't bother. There's been no damage. *(Inimacely.)* And not good publicity for the hotel, that kind of thing.

MANAGER. Nevertheless, I have my—you're right, it's not good publicity, is it?

RICHARD. Definitely not.

MANAGER. Maybe it's a case of "least said soonest mended."

RICHARD. I'd like to borrow that phrase if I may.

MANAGER. Thank you. *(The MANAGER looks pleased and exits.)*

GEORGE. Mr. Willey—?

RICHARD. Well done, George. Every nod was a gem.

GEORGE. What on earth's going on?!

RICHARD. You're going to have a free overnight stay at a four-star hotel.

*(RICHARD moves to bedroom but GEORGE stops him.)*