

GEORGE. I never stay out without telling mother.
 RICHARD (*Grimaces.*) Well give your mother a ring. She'll be thrilled for you.

GEORGE. She's already in bed. Besides there's Nurse Foster.

RICHARD. Nurse Foster?

GEORGE. She looks after mother while I'm at work. She goes off at 9:30.

RICHARD. You can phone Nurse Foster and tell her she'll be doing some overtime.

GEORGE. I never take advantage of her like that, Mr. Willey. Anyway, mother worries herself to death if I change my plans at the last minute.

RICHARD. Your mother has been worrying herself to death for the last eighty years. The future of the Government is at stake here.

GEORGE. But why?

(By way of an explanation RICHARD quickly opens the bedroom door.)

RICHARD. Quickly! Out you come, Miss Worthington.

GEORGE. *(Surprised and concerned.)* Miss Worthington?

JANE. *(Appears still carrying her bag and still dressed in bra and pants.)* Have you got my dress—*(Sees GEORGE.)* Oh, Mr. Pigden. *(JANE moves to GEORGE.)*

GEORGE. *(Mortified.)* Miss Worthington!

RICHARD. Now can you see the problem?

(GEORGE goes to speak but decides to simply nod.)

JANE. Good evening, Mr. Pigden.

GEORGE. *(Eying her "bra.")* Good evening, Miss Worthingtons—Worthington. *(To RICHARD.)* Mr. Willey, how could you?!

RICHARD. I haven't yet, George, but that's the least of my problems. First of all we've got to get Miss Worthington's dress back.

GEORGE. Where is it for heaven's sake?

RICHARD. I gave it to the waiter.

GEORGE. Ask a silly question.

JANE. *(To RICHARD.)* What did you tell the Manager just now?

RICHARD. Never mind. George is stepping into the breach.

GEORGE. Not until he knows all the facts.

JANE. *(To RICHARD.)* Have you told Mr. Pigden about the dead body?

RICHARD. Yes, yes, yes.

GEORGE. *(Aghast.)* You mean there is a dead body?! You said there wasn't.

RICHARD. No, I didn't. I said to tell the Manager there wasn't.

GEORGE. I can't follow this.

RICHARD. All the Manager knows is that there's an intruder.

GEORGE. Intruder?

RICHARD. What the Manager doesn't know is that the intruder was a dead body.

GEORGE. *(Perplexed.)* The intruder was a dead body?

JANE. He was stuck in our window.

GEORGE. The Manager or the intruder?

RICHARD. The intruder!

JANE. With his neck broken.

GEORGE. Oh, I see. *(Realising.)* Neck broken?!

OUT OF ORDER

RICHARD. (*Opens bedroom door.*) Thank you, Miss Worthington! Will you kindly wait in the bedroom while I retrieve your dress.

JANE. How will I know when it is safe to come out?

RICHARD. I'll shout!

JANE. I'm sorry you've got involved in this, Mr. Pigden.

GEORGE. That's all right.

(*JANE exits.*)

GEORGE. (*Rising.*) I'm not involved in it!

RICHARD. (*Sits him and hurries to the phone.*) I need your help like I've never needed it before, George. (*RICHARD is dialling Room Service.*)

GEORGE. (*Rising. Concerned.*) Wait a minute. When I arrived you told me the body was in that cupboard.

RICHARD. It is. (*On phone.*) Hello! Are you the gentleman who's been providing 648 with Room Service...? Good. You went off with a dress just now ... I gave you a dress! (*To GEORGE.*) Stupid man. (*On phone.*) I want it back ... I want my dress back! 648 and hurry, you silly old bat! (*HE slams the phone down.*) (*To GEORGE.*) Next time there's a debate on euthanasia I'm voting in favour.

GEORGE. (*Fearing the worst.*) Mr. Willey, could I return to the body in the cupboard?

RICHARD. I knew you'd come to my aid, George.

GEORGE. Oh no! First of all I just want to know how it got from outside the window *there* to inside the cupboard *there*.

RICHARD. I think you'd better sit down, George.

GEORGE. (*Understanding the situation.*) Oh, no. Mr. Willey! You didn't!

OUT OF ORDER

(*RICHARD sits GEORGE.*)

RICHARD. (*Pleading.*) George! I had no alternative.

GEORGE. (*Mortified.*) You didn't move a dead body?

RICHARD. I had to think quickly. He's only a burglar for God's sake.

GEORGE. (*In disbelief.*) You haven't informed the police or anybody?

RICHARD. No, that's why I need your help, George.

GEORGE. (*Determinedly.*) I'm sorry, Mr. Willey. (*GEORGE rises and moves away.*)

RICHARD. George! My wife thinks I'm in the House of Commons! It would all come out. Miss Worthington! The lot!

GEORGE. Mr. Willey—you have tampered with material evidence.

RICHARD. My wife will tamper with something else if she finds out about Miss Worthington. George, you're not married. You don't know how terrifying an angry wife can be.

GEORGE. If I was married, Mr. Willey, I would be faithful to my wife!

(*RICHARD takes his briefcase and sits him in the chair R.*)

RICHARD. That's because you're a far better person than I am, George. Now, all we have to do—

GEORGE. (*Rising.*) There's no "we" about it.

RICHARD. O.K. all "you" have to do—

GEORGE. I don't have to do anything!

RICHARD. As soon as the Manager finds you a room we transfer the body—

GEORGE. We do what?!

RICHARD. Transfer the body. To your suite. We'll arrange him on your window ledge and then—when I'm safely back in the House of Commons and Miss Worthington is in Lewisham—you will open your curtains, discover the poor unfortunate chap and report it immediately to the Manager.

GEORGE. Just like that! Move the body to my suite. Lay him out on my window ledge. You and Miss Worthington—(HE mimes "leaving.") Poor George Pigden—(HE mimes cutting his throat.)

RICHARD. George, if you won't do it for me think of Miss Worthington! The poor girl's career will be ruined. She's Neil Kinnock's secretary for God's sake.

GEORGE. I've told you a hundred times where your libido would lead you.

RICHARD. (Suddenly very moved.) You'd also be doing it for our Prime Minister, Maggie. She'd be devastated. She'd have to ask me to resign. That'll be three in the last twelve months. George, the Government would never win the next election.

GEORGE. (Hesitates.) It's in the cupboard, is it?

RICHARD. Hanging on a hook.

(GEORGE grimaces. HE hesitates a moment and then moves to the cupboard door. HE stops and looks at RICHARD.)

RICHARD. You'll get a shock, George!

(GEORGE, averting his eyes, opens the cupboard door. The BODY is still hanging on the inside of the door. Slowly GEORGE turns to look inside the cupboard. The cupboard is empty. GEORGE starts to chuckle, believing that RICHARD has been playing a joke on him. Still laughing, GEORGE sees the dead body

hanging on the inside of the door. For a moment GEORGE continues laughing but then suddenly stops and screams. The MANAGER enters from hall [Without seeing GEORGE]. The MANAGER is removing his pass key from the lock.)

MANAGER. (As HE enters.) Good news, Mr. Willey! GEORGE. Ahhh!

(At the sound of the MANAGER's voice GEORGE steps into the cupboard and closes the door in one deft movement. RICHARD drops to his knees. The MANAGER surveys RICHARD on the floor.)

RICHARD. (As HE rises.) That's a very good quality carpet you have there.

MANAGER. (Decides to ignore this.) I've found Mr. Pigden a suite which is—oh, where's Mr. Pigden?

RICHARD. He's in the loo. (RICHARD leads the MANAGER away from the cupboard. Shouts across to bedroom, for JANE's benefit.) I've told the Manager you're in the "loo"! (RICHARD smiles at the surprised MANAGER.)

MANAGER. I've managed to get him suite 650.

RICHARD. (Shouting.) The Manager says it's suite 650.

MANAGER. (Getting perplexed.) Right opposite.

RICHARD. (Shouting.) The Manager says it's right opposite!

JANE. (Comes out of the bedroom still in her bra and pants.) O.K., you don't have to shout as loud—oh!

(SHE stops on seeing the MANAGER. The MANAGER steps back a pace. There is a pause as RICHARD and the surprised MANAGER take in the situation.)