

SALMON CHANTED EVENING

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

(The scene opens to an empty stage. Enter ALAN carrying a newspaper parcel, cautiously looks around to make sure nobody is about and then makes his way over to the kitchen door)

ALAN John! *(Pokes his head round the kitchen door)* John? Are you there. *(No answer. Looks over shoulder and exits into the kitchen)*

(Enter BRIAN goes over to bar and sits down on bar stool)

(Enter Lynne in disguise, maybe long coat, dark glasses and hat. She pauses in door way)

LYNNE Pssst! Are you alone?

BRIAN *(Looking round)* Yes but make it quick somebody might come in.

LYNNE What's the deal?

BRIAN Have you got it?

LYNNE No, not yet.

BRIAN What! Why not?

LYNNE There's been a slight hitch.

BRIAN *(Agitated)* What do you mean a hitch? We can't afford any problems now.

LYNNE Don't worry. Just leave it to me. It's nothing, I can sort it out.

BRIAN You'd better.

LYNNE Don't panic. It'll be okay, I'll have it by tonight.

BRIAN I hope you're right. For both our sakes. We're too far down the line to go back now. We can't.....

LYNNE I know, I know.

(Voices are heard approaching off stage)

BRIAN Bloody hell! There's someone coming. *(Looking round frantically)* Quick, behind here *(They both hide behind the bar)*

(Enter BILL and NIGEL dressed as fishermen)

NIGEL Don't worry old chap, I'm sure it won't come to anything.

BILL Huh! *(Sits down at Table)*

NIGEL I know an excellent solicitor. I'm sure that chap didn't mean what he said.

BILL Huh!

NIGEL It's not your fault, how were you to know that we were supposed to have a licence. Anyway, I'm sure we could sue the obnoxious little oik for slander.

BILL Huh!

NIGEL Besides, I think you were well within your rights. The chap deserved to be pushed into the river. *(sitting at table)* Blooming marvellous isn't it, you've pushed an eighty year old pensioner in the drink and all we've got out is an old boot, a Sainsburys carrier bag and a copy of "Fly Fishing by J R Hartley"

BILL Nil desperandum dear boy. I have just the thing here. *(Rummages in his pocket and pulls out a small black box)*

NIGEL I say Uncle Bill, what's that?

BILL This is a salmon detector.

(Brian stands up from behind the bar pointing his gun at Bill and Nigel. Lynne quickly grabs his arm and pulls him back down before anyone sees)

BILL Wherever the salmon is hiding this will seek it out and stop calling me Uncle.

NIGEL But, Unc's surely it's cheating?

BILL It's not cheating dear boy. Think of it as a tactical manoeuvre.

NIGEL If you say so Unc's

BILL It can't fail and stop calling me Unc's, now come on, lets go and get changed for dinner.

(Bill & Nigel exit upstairs. Brian and Lynne appear from behind the bar)

BRIAN *(Grabbing Lynne quite violently and forcing her backwards across the stage and shouting at her)* How the hell do they know about it?

LYNNE I don't know.

BRIAN Who have you been talking to?

LYNNE Nobody. Get off me.

BRIAN I certainly hope so for your sake.

LYNNE I haven't said anything to anybody. Let go.

BRIAN Are you sure?

LYNNE Of course I am. I'm not stupid.

BRIAN *(Light dawns)* Shit! *(Lets go of Lynne)*

LYNNE What? What's the matter?

BRIAN They must have been sent.

LYNNE Who?

BRIAN Those two.

LYNNE What? The man from Uncle and his sidekick. Don't be daft

BRIAN They're on to us.

LYNNE On to you don't you mean.

BRIAN No I mean us. If I go down I'm taking you with me.

LYNNE You bastard.

BRIAN *(Smiling)* Absolutely. Just think of it as a little incentive for you to keep your mouth shut.

LYNNE I don't know how you have got the nerve to talk to me like that. After all it's you they're on to not me. It's you that's obviously cocked up. So what are you going to do about it, eh!

BRIAN Don't you worry your pretty little head about those two morons. I've waited too long for this opportunity, so I'm certainly not going to let them get in the way. Now - get out of here quick before anybody else comes. Meet me back here tonight, with the device.

(Lynne exits to the outside and Brian goes upstairs. Enter Alan from kitchen. Enter John from outside. They meet halfway)

ALAN Ah! John there you are, I've put that salmon in the fridge for you.

JOHN Thanks Alan. You're a life saver. How's the extension going?

ALAN Just got to finish the brick work on the inner wall and then we can start plastering.

JOHN That's quick.

ALAN Ah, well we don't muck about when we get going you know. Got to dash see you later. *(Exits)*

JOHN Cheers. *(John goes behind bar)*

(Enter the Girls. PAT and SUE, they are both dressed in riding gear jodhpurs etc. Sue has an ordinary riding whip whilst Pat is carrying a large bull whip)

PAT *(Going over to the bar)* What do you want to drink?

SUE I'll have half of lager and make it a pint, I've got a lot of parts that need refreshing.

PAT Did you get that, John?

JOHN Sure did.

PAT And I'll have just a half of lager please.

JOHN Coming right up. I'll bring them over to you.

(The Ladies go and sit down on the settee)

SUE What are you like?

PAT Sore, that's what *(Rubbing her bottom)*

SUE No I mean that *(Pointing to the Bull whip)*

PAT Well I've never been on one of these, activity holidays before. You said we were going away to do some riding and don't forget your whip.

SUE I meant a proper riding whip like this.

PAT I didn't know. Besides this is the only whip I could lay my hands on.

SUE Look, don't worry we'll buy you one tomorrow. Anyway, come here, let me tell you about last week.

(Enter Tommy, Alan and Pete They wander over to their table and sit down during)

PETE Do you know, I'm hampered with you two.

TOMMY What do you mean?

PETE I'll tell you what I mean? I've got a labourer, (*Looking at Alan*) who disappears for the afternoon on some harebrained scheme so I end up having to mixing gobo and I've a bricklayer, (*looking at Tommy*) who has managed to wall up our snap tin.

TOMMY That wasn't my fault.

PETE How do you work that one out? He wasn't even here.

TOMMY He moved it.

ALAN You should have looked before you started swating bricks down.

TOMMY Swating bricks down, swating bricks down. I'll have you know I'm a tradesman. My dad taught me all he knew.

ALAN Yeah, exactly, he used to drive a bus.

TOMMY At least I've not spent all my working life as a SLAVE

ALAN Rubble stacker!

TOMMY SLAVE!

ALAN RUBBLE STACKER!

PETE Don't start all that again. The simple fact is, that you two between you have managed to brick our sandwiches behind a nine inch wall and I'm starving. So, if you think the firm's paying for dinner you've got another think coming. One of you two can pay.

ALAN I can't, I'm skint.

TOMMY I've got about enough for a packet of fags and that's it. (*Pulls change out of pocket and looks at it*).

PETE I can't win. (*Shaking head in despair*). What about beer tonight?

TOMMY Actually, I was going to ask you about that.

ALAN Me too.

PETE Here we go, what now?

TOMMY Well, I could do with a sub, we both could.

PETE How much?

TOMMY Twenty quid?

ALAN That'll do me.

PETE *(Taking money out of wallet/pocket)* Here!

ALAN *(Alan snatches money from Pete's hand)* Ta! *(Exits upstairs)*

TOMMY *(Jumps up and chases after Alan)* Oi, come here.....

(Pete goes and stands at the bar. John serves him with a pint. During-)

SUE So, I said to him "If you want to do that you buy your own mango chutney and it'll cost you an extra fifteen quid."

PAT What did he say to that?

SUE Well after some haggling, we settled on a tenner and Branston Pickle.

PAT Branston?

SUE Well it was the nearest thing I had in the cupboard. He wasn't keen at first because he said it would ruin his little fantasy. But I said, "Richard, its the Branston or you can pack that balloon away and go home".

PAT Was that last Friday?

SUE Yeah why?

PAT I remember it blocking my passage.

SUE *(Sniggers)*

PAT Ha, ha, I mean it was stuck out side my flat door. I had to keep climbing over it. I'd got a really busy day Friday. Do you know I'd been up and down and up and down them stairs it must have been fifty times.

SUE Oooh! Your poor feet.

(Interrupted by John delivering the drinks).

SUE Thanks John.

PAT Thanks.

JOHN Have you had good day Ladies?

PAT Not bad, at least I now know why John Wayne used to walk bow legged.

JOHN Can I get you anything else?

PAT No thanks, we're ok for the time being.

JOHN If there's anything I can do for you?

SUE You could do a lot for me, darling.

JOHN No, I didn't mean it like that I meant -

SUE I know what you meant, (*Touches his arm gently*) I know what I meant.

JOHN (*Tries to pull away gently*) Err, well, if there's nothing more I can get I have to err (*Sue rubs her hand on his arm*) Err, go and err, wash the pots (*Moves to behind the Bar*)

PAT (*Nudging Sue*). Sue, stop it. We're here for a rest from men and look at you, you're still at it. This is supposed to be a holiday. I'd have thought you would have had enough of it. I know I'm glad to get away from the daily grind if you'll pardon the expression.

SUE Yeah, but that's work. This is pleasure. I think he's cute.

PAT Yes, well, I suppose he has got a certain charm about him.

SUE A certain charm. You fancy him as well!

PAT No I don't!

SUE Yes you do. I can see that look in your eye.

PAT What look?

SUE The same look you were giving him when you were sat at the bar last night. All gooey eyed.

PAT Well, you're only jealous because he was taking more notice of me than you.

SUE Don't be silly. Why should I be jealous. I'm not that bothered.

PAT Ok, you'll not be bothered if I chat him up then.

SUE Yeah go ahead you'll not get anywhere.

PAT You think that you could do any better ?

SUE Of course I could.

(Both continue to argue as, Bill an Nigel enter. They pause by the door)

BILL Two Gin and Tonics please John.

JOHN Certainly gentlemen.

NIGEL I say Unc, I mean Bill, have you see those two beauties, what?

BILL *(Looking over in the ladies direction at Sue's cleavage)* Yes, her friend's not bad either.

NIGEL Yes

BILL Chatted to them at the bar last night after you had hit the hay.

NIGEL You rotter. You never told me.

BILL Breaking the old ice for us. Asked them to join us for dinner tomorrow night.

NIGEL What a capital idea, just spiffing *(rubbing hands together gleefully)*. What did they say?

BILL Used all my persuasive charm.

NIGEL Yes, yes.

BILL Gained over years of experience with the fairer sex.

NIGEL Yes, well, well.

BILL Applied subtle pressure to get them to capitulate to my advances.

NIGEL And, and.

BILL Like putty in my hands.

NIGEL Oh, I say.

BILL Their defences crumbled. Had them just where I wanted them.

NIGEL And then?

BILL I pounced! Popped the question right at them.

NIGEL Absolutely top hole, old chap. What was the answer?

BILL Said they would think about it.

NIGEL Bugger.

BILL Chin up dear boy.

JOHN Here we go Gentlemen (*As he puts drink in front of Bill. Bill grabs his arm*)

BILL Has somebody looked at that for you?

JOHN It's just a small burn Sir, from the toaster.

BILL Are you sure? Can't be too careful. Once had a man in my surgery in Harley Street - did I tell you I was in Harley Street?

JOHN I think you mentioned it before, Sir (*trying unsuccessfully to tug hand away*).

BILL Came into the surgery - small burn he says, but I knew better, seen it before you see, up the Orinoco - spread from this chap's hand all over his body. Only thing we had was goats milk. Soaked him in that for a whole week, day and night.

JOHN But he's OK now though?

BILL No, dead. Eaten by a crocodile, poor fellow.

JOHN No, I mean the gentleman who came into your surgery.

BILL So do I.

JOHN What? (*Pulls hand away sharply*).

BILL Slipped on a banana skin at London Zoo. Fell into crocodile pit. Tragic accident. Never did get paid. All he left me was his card (*Takes card from pocket and looks at it. John walks away and goes behind bar*) Bond is best

NIGEL I say Bill, never mind that, do you think the ladies might have decided.

BILL Let's see shall we. Come on. (*Finishes his drink. Gets up and moves over to the Ladies*) Mind if we join you?

PAT Not at all. Pull up a pew.

BILL (*Takes a stool from the table over to the side of the settee and sits down*) Nigel. (*Nigel is stood up staring at Sue's cleavage*) Nigel

NIGEL What? Oh! Right. (*Tries to sit between Sue and Pat but Sue moves close to Pat so that Nigel has to sit at the end next to Bill*)

(*Enter Tommy, wanders over to join Pete at the bar*)

TOMMY How's the fishing going Gents, have you caught anything?

(*Bill & Nigel answer together*)

BILL Yes.

NIGEL No.

(Both realising they have said different things - both change to the other).

BILL No.

NIGEL Yes.

BILL Yes

NIGEL No.

BILL *(Stamps on Nigel's foot)*

NIGEL Ouch.

BILL Caught quite a few, actually. Why do you ask?

TOMMY Oh, no reason in particular, it's just that I hadn't seen you bring any back so

BILL True sportsmen, dear boy. Put them back of course.

TOMMY Right, I see. Sportsmen eh!

BILL Just catch a couple of nice ones this afternoon to take home with us.

NIGEL How do you know that old chap, we haven't had a nibble all week, and we've had no luck with the fish either - *(laughs loudly in posh laugh).*

(Enter Alan)

ALAN *(Mocks Nigel's laugh)* Fwah, fwah, Oh I say not had a nibble all week.

NIGEL *(Talking to BILL)* Was that common plebeian referring to me ?

BILL Take no notice dear boy. Just working class humour.

ALAN Working class and proud of it, pal! At least it's better than being a great ponce.

NIGEL *(Getting angry. Stands up)* Look here you, you, you, person. You're going the right way to receive a damn good thrashing.

ALAN Yeah, you and what regiment?

PETE Alan, pack it in

BILL Nigel sit down dear boy. Got more important things to think about.

NIGEL Like what ? *(Realising they are with the Ladies)* Sorry. *(Sits down)*

BILL How about dinner tomorrow night ?

NIGEL That's very kind of you Bill but I thought that we were going to ask the ladies.

BILL Nigel, I was talking to the ladies.

NIGEL Sorry

PAT Well, I don't know what do you think Sue ?

(Tommy takes his drink, sits at table and starts to read his paper)

SUE It sounds very nice

ALAN *(Chipping in)* Sounds boring to me.

PAT What's it to do with you ?

ALAN Well I thought you might like something a bit more exciting to do.

PAT Like what ?

NIGEL I say why don't you keep your nose out of it.

PAT It's all right Nigel I'd like to hear what he's got to say. Go on

ALAN There's a night club in town, admittedly it's not brilliant but, at least it's more entertaining than staying here.

SUE I don't know if I could cope with all that, what do they call it, rave music. It's just like dancing around a car alarm. I mean what ever happen to Garry Glitter ?

PAT Oh yeah and the Bay city Rollers

NIGEL The Who ?

PAT/SUE Yeah.

ALAN The Sweet, Slade.

SUE Roy Wood and Wizard.

BILL Who the deuce are you talking about.

TOMMY *(Looking up from his paper)* You can't beat Val Doonican, what ever happened to him ?

PAT/SUE/ALAN/PETE *(All look at Tommy)*

ALAN Well funny you should say that but, It just so happens that tomorrow night is a seventies night. Should be a good laugh.

PETE Yeah, come on. We can go down there have a few drinks a bit of a boogie and then go for a curry after.

SUE I don't know. Dinner sound nice but, then again I haven't been to a disco for ages. What do you think Pat ?