

GEORGE *(from off SL)* Fenella, please can you get the door? I'm just cooking your breakfast for you.

FENELLA *(off-SR upstairs)* I can't get it... I've just started vibrating!

GEORGE *(off SL)* Never mind, I'll go!

FENELLA *(comes to the top of the stairs in a dressing gown)* Oh the relief! I wish I'd bought the back massager years ago. *(goes off upstairs)*

GEORGE comes from the hall into the shop wearing outfit No.3 with a cooking apron on

SIDNEY comes in the entrance dressed in decorators' overalls, he is accident prone, cocky and not very bright, carrying a toolbox, ladder and some paint

SIDNEY Cor! It's waining cats and dogs out there!

GEORGE Good morning Mr Arber! You're a little later than I expected. I thought you were coming first thing this morning. It is now 10.30am!

SIDNEY Me mum cooked a full english bweakfast! I'm not allowed to leave the house until I finish it all! Gwab some of this paint, will you?

GEORGE Umm, yes of course! If you'd like to follow me please! *(picks up the paint and goes out the arch SR and into the back room)*

SIDNEY Yeah, alwight Mr Weeper! *(gets his ladder caught in the arch, he backs back, tries again and gets through)*

GEORGE *(puts the paint down)* I think Mrs Reeper wants you to start in here and... Blow me, where's he gone? This is going to be a disaster, I just know it!

SIDNEY appears and hits the ladder up George's behind; then catches the ladder against a picture on the wall, he then swings it again towards GEORGE who ducks just in time

SIDNEY You won't wecognise the woom by time I'm finished. *(sets up the ladder, he then opens the paint)*

GEORGE That's what concerns me! Please be careful!

SIDNEY goes up a couple steps of the ladder and freezes

Is there something wrong Mr Arber?

SIDNEY I suffer from vertigo!

GEORGE But it's only a few steps up! It's not like you're on top of a roof!

SIDNEY I can't help it if I've got a disability! *(comes back down)*

GEORGE Good grief! *(rolls neck, and climbs the steps)* You see! It's fine.

SIDNEY *(hands George the brush and paint)* Yeah, but you're just holding the ladder. Twy painting as well! *(picks up a newspaper and starts reading)*

GEORGE *(goes to start)* It's not that bad really, once you get going.

SIDNEY Make sure you do nice long stwokes.

GEORGE Like that? *(painting the R wall)*

SIDNEY That's it, you're getting the hang of it. You'll have it done in no time!

GEORGE Once you get into the swing of it, it's... What on earth am I doing? *(gets off the ladder)* If you get a spare minute, please can you get the remains of a wardrobe from the top of the stairs and dispose of them!

SIDNEY No pwoblem! *(looks out the 4th wall window)* Cor, look at that wainbow.

GEORGE Also, my wife wants you to wallpaper the wall that we've marked in the mortuary. Oh yes, and to arrange for an electrician to fit the new light. I'll leave you to it. *(goes out the back door and down the hall off SL)*

opens some paint and starts to move a couple things out of the way. Moves the ladder and puts his foot in an empty paint tin and gets his foot stuck; drops the ladder, pulls the empty paint tin off and starts painting at the bottom of the wall

FENELLA *(comes downstairs in outfit No.3)* Hello Mr Arber, how are you?

SIDNEY I'm alwight Mrs Weeper, can't complain.

FENELLA Thank you for coming, at such short notice! I'll just get you a steamy drink. How do you like it?

SIDNEY Half tea, half coffee with milk and seven sugars, cheers!

FENELLA Very well! I'll just pop to the kitchen and manipulate a concoction. *(goes out the back door through the hall off SL)*

SIDNEY *(he starts to climb the ladder, loses his footing and falls off again)* Maybe I'll paint aroud the light switches and sockets first. Where's my scwewdwiver to ease it off the wall.

hunts for a screwdriver in his toolbox and undoes a socket cover, whilst doing this, he starts singing "Radio Gaga by Queen"

"All we hear is wadio ga ga, wadio goo goo, wadio ga ga. All we hear is wadio ga ga, wadio blah blah, wadio what's new?"

phone goes in the shop

EDWINA *(from off SL)* I spose I'd better get the phone as no one else will!

EDWINA comes in the shop from the arch SL and picks up the phone, she is wearing outfit No.2. She occasionally starts coughing from now on

SIDNEY *(he drops a screw)* Oh, silly me, I've dwopped the scwew in behind the socket.

EDWINA You leave it to us Mr Golightly. We can 'appily pick up your dead wife and...
(pause) She's where? *(pause)* In your chest freezer! *(pause)*
FENELLA passes through the hall SR to the back room

SIDNEY *(prods behind the socket and gets an electric shock)* This electwic's well dodgy!

FENELLA *(comes in with a drink for him and she's got a glass of wine)* There you are!
How long do you think you will be going for?

SIDNEY Hard to say weally! It's quite technical. I have to wait for the wight mood and climb into the zone! I get kind of hypnotised like Vincent Van Pavawotti.

FENELLA Fabulous, well I'll leave you, to get into the... zone! *(goes back upstairs)*

SIDNEY I'll soon have this woom so clean... you could have a baby... cwawling aaround in here! *(he sits down and falls asleep)*

EDWINA *(still on the phone)* No, don't bring your dead wife here in a wheelbarrow.
(pause) Yes, we'll pick her up. See you tomorrow. *(puts phone down)*

CHARLIE *(comes through the arch from SL in outfit No.2)* Good morning! How are you?
(goes to touch her)

EDWINA *(shouts)* Poppycok! I'm fine!

CHARLIE Please tell me, you're not still sulking?

EDWINA Leave me alone to get on with me work. *(she groans holding her stomach)*

CHARLIE Are you alright? You don't look at all well!

EDWINA Don't pretend that you care 'cause I know you don't. Praps I should go to Mr Reeper and say you've indecently assaulte' me. It worked for that last woman! She ended up with £10,000!

CHARLIE *(shouts)* You need a wake-up call Edwina!

EDWINA Believe me Charlie, I've 'ad one and now it's your turn. I'm gonna stop the weekly payments for your mother in the nursing 'ome!

CHARLIE *(calmly)* Please, be, be reasonable.

NORMAN *(comes in the back room in outfit No. 2, from the mortuary and shakes Sidney)*
Hello! Can you help to get a coffin in here?

SIDNEY *(wakes up)* Yeah, I spose!

NORMAN It's hard to see in the mortuary because the main light has stopped working.
NORMAN goes into the mortuary, SIDNEY follows

EDWINA That's just the icing on the cake. You've got a big shock coming!

CHARLIE What do you mean by that?

EDWINA You'll find out!

CHARLIE *(grabs her wrists and shouts)* I said, what do you mean by that?

EDWINA I've sent a letter to Miss Keeper, explaining everything. I expect she's read it by now.

CHARLIE lets go of her shocked

You've got no choice! You'll have to be with me! It would've come out eventually. We can move away and start a new life together.

EDWINA tries to hug him; CHARLIE struggles free and pushes her onto the sofa

CHARLIE You've lived in this small-minded town all your life and worked here so long...

EDWINA starts violently coughing and he calms down

Look, I'm sorry. You just pushed me too far. I'll get you some water.

she becomes motionless; he goes out the arch SL

NORMAN and SIDNEY push the coffin on a trolley into the back room, NORMAN is wearing an apron and gloves, a backstage member can be the corpse

NORMAN Can you help to get the trousers off Mr Chard?

SIDNEY holds the top half, NORMAN pulls the trousers off

SIDNEY I'm gonna phone an electrician, I might be a while. *(SIDNEY goes into the mortuary with the ladder)*

EDWINA falls across the sofa

NORMAN *(pulls socks off)* Where do these socks go? They think Norman's a bit funny. But Norman's not a bit funny. And if Norman does feel a bit funny; he has a walk around and then doesn't feel a bit funny. *(walks out the back door)*

CHARLIE *(comes back in with water and a blanket)* Oh for crying out loud! *(pulls Edwina back up and makes her drink the water)*

NORMAN *(comes in the shop)* Mr Heath, where is the box for smelly clothes?

CHARLIE *(startled)* It's out by the back entrance next to the washing machine.

GEORGE walks along the hallway and upstairs with Fenella's breakfast.

NORMAN Is Edwina okay?

CHARLIE Yes, yes! She'll be right as rain in no time; just came over a bit funny.

GEORGE *(going upstairs)* Fenella, I've got your breakfast for you. *(goes off upstairs)*

NORMAN If Norman feels a bit funny, Norman has a walk around. *(he lifts Edwina)*

CHARLIE Really, there's no need.

CHARLIE gives in, silly business with them dragging her about a couple times and then CHARLIE sits Edwina down

I'm positive, she's feeling better now.

GEORGE comes downstairs and goes into the mortuary

NORMAN *(gets a tape measure and starts measuring her)* To find the right sized coffin; can you hold this tape by Edwina's foot to measure her and...

CHARLIE Please get back to work. Don't forget to write down every item belonging to Mr Chard. Then, categorise the new delivery of coffins.

NORMAN goes out the arch SR and into the back room

(to Edwina) What's wrong with you? If you're pretending to be unconscious to alarm me, then you've made your point.

NORMAN Do this, do that, do this, do that! *(goes to the desk to write)*

CHARLIE *(starts pacing)* I think she's fainted! What am I going to do with her! I can't let anyone see her in this state!

NORMAN *(making notes)* One pair of trousers, one pair of...

the chorus of "Staying Alive" by the "Bee Gees" starts playing, the sound comes from the coffin, NORMAN runs upstairs. EDWINA falls across the sofa, CHARLIE picks her up and puts the blanket over her and sits down; NORMAN comes back downstairs with FENELLA, the music has stopped

FENELLA *(holding a glass of wine)* For the love of dog, what is it? You've interrupted my breakfast!

NORMAN Dog!

FENELLA We can't have pooches in here! I'm the only one with animal instincts!

NORMAN There's a strange noise coming from Mr Chard!

FENELLA Well of course there is! Surely you've been told about the trapped wind.

NORMAN No, it was the Bee Gees. "Ah, ha, ha, ha, stayin' alive, stayin' alive".

FENELLA Are you intoxicated?

NORMAN No! Definitely not!

FENELLA Well you should be! I heartily recommend it. *(hiccup)* I see what's going on! You've got me here to seduce me! You savage beast! I'm going to have to keep my eye on you. *(she walks upstairs off)*

NORMAN Norman is well and truly boggled! Better go and sort out the new coffin delivery before anything else happens! *(goes into the mortuary)*

CHARLIE I've got to get her away from here. *(stands up)* I'll get my car and drive Edwina back to her house. *(goes out the entrance)*

SIDNEY *(comes back in with the ladder and sets it up by the wall SR)* At least I've saved some money on the electwician. The new light was easy to fit in there.

(gets some paint and climbs the ladder, he drips some paint on the corpse)
That's wuined his make-up, where's my sponge. *(gives the face a wash)*

His hair looks a wight mess. *(fiddles with the toupee and it comes off)* It's a dodgy wig! Damn thing won't stay on stwaight! Where's my staple gun?
(starts stapling the toupee back on the head)

His teeth don't look that clean. *(he takes a cloth and rubs the teeth)* Flipping heck! He's got false teeth, where's me glue? *(sticks the teeth back in)*

then scrambles up the ladder when he hears Vera coming down

VERA *(comes downstairs in outfit No.3)* How are you getting on Mr Arber?

SIDNEY Yeah okay! *(comes down the ladder)* I've fitted the new... I mean, I got an electwician to fit the new light in the mortuary.

he starts flicking the light switch by the mortuary doorway, the lights go on/off in the shop each time he fiddles

VERA *(peering into the mortuary)* I'm afraid nothing is happening!

SIDNEY I'd better check... I mean... I'll get the electwician to check the wiwing.

VERA Please be careful! May I suggest you move anything important into the mortuary before you carry on painting! I'll leave you to it. *(she goes through the back door and down the hall off SL)*

SIDNEY I'd better we-check the wiwing on that light! *(takes the ladder and goes into the mortuary)*

CHARLIE *(comes back in the shop)* Oh for crying out loud! I've just had a thought! What happens if that letter that Edwina wrote has already got to Vera?

doorbell goes

I must find Vera and make-up a story to cover myself. I'm in deep shi... shi... trouble! *(runs out the arch SR, through the back room and into the mortuary)*

MARGARET comes through the entrance into the shop wearing many layers of clothes; she's a sweet and kind lady, but talks incessantly and bumps into things as she's adjusting to wearing contact lenses. She's always squinting her eyes

MARGARET *(slightly trips)* Oh dear, oh dear! Pick your feet up Margaret! *(bangs into the wall and goes to Edwina)* Hello lovie, I need to see a Miss Vera Reeper, it's regarding my husband, Michael. You don't mind if I sit down, do you? *(she sits)* It's quite a drive from where I live in Farewell. I've got a bit of a headache, as I'm trying contact lenses for the first time and its taking me a while to adjust to them. I've worn glasses from an early age as I'm short-sighted. I'm not complaining mind you, there are a lot of people worse off than me.

adjusts how she sits and EDWINA'S head falls in a different direction; CHARLIE runs into the back room and upstairs

Take my neighbour Mary, for example. She had a hip replacement done. When she woke up, Mary felt quite uncomfortable so she asked the consultant about it and he said, "there should only be moderate soreness on the left side that was operated on". She asked him why the surgeon operated on the left side when it was her right hip that needed replacing! He confessed they'd put the artificial hip in the wrong side! Mary didn't trust the surgeon anyway... as he was foreign... He came from the Isle of Wight! *(looks at Edwina)* She's asleep!

CHARLIE *(comes downstairs with his phone)* I can't find Vera and why won't, why won't she answer her phone!

MARGARET shakes Edwina and her head falls a different way

MARGARET I'd better come back another time. I can't leave my husband just hanging around! If Michael stays in that position for too long, he'll start to have spasms and then he'll seize up! *(she gets up and bangs into a wall)*

CHARLIE goes through the back door

Pick your feet up Margaret! *(goes out the entrance)*

CHARLIE *(comes through the arch into the shop)* Look, I... *(shakes Edwina, checks her pulse and yelps)* She's dead! Good lord... Norman, saw me shouting and arguing with Edwina. Plus, she's sent that letter to Vera! They'll presume I killed her... I've... I've... I've got to think quickly. *(paces the shop)*

SIDNEY comes out with a sheet and starts to cover the coffin; "staying alive" by the "Bee Gees" starts

SIDNEY What was that? Where is evewybody? *(runs into the mortuary and shouts off SR)* Mr Weeper, the Bee Gees are in the coffin!

CHARLIE I've got it; that might work. Come on Edwina. *(drags her out the shop entrance)*

SIDNEY comes back in with GEORGE, the music has stopped

SIDNEY *(pointing to the coffin)* There; that's where it came from!

GEORGE Try to calm down Mr Arber. There's nothing here apart from Mr Chard! I appreciate it's not a particularly nice working environment, but you do get used to it eventually.

SIDNEY I don't think I could ever get used to it!

GEORGE Hopefully you won't be here too long and...

the "Bee Gees" start playing again, SIDNEY jumps onto George

Please let go of me! *(he drops Sidney)* There must be something in the coffin.

a figure starts to come from the mortuary through the curtain, SIDNEY jumps onto George again, NORMAN comes out and the music stops

(GEORGE drops Sidney, looks in the coffin and takes out a phone) It was just a mobile phone. While I think of it, my wife has bought a mirror for the shop. Could you take the old one down and put the new one up please?

SIDNEY My mum won't be happy if I do my back in!

GEORGE Your back will be fine; I'm sure!

SIDNEY The last time my back went, I was in bed for two weeks. Mum was calling me a lazy so and so. She was so angry, her face turned red! *(he goes out the back door and into the shop downstage C, he stares where the R wall would be)*

GEORGE Norman, please can you go and get some suitable bags for Mr Arber to put any rubbish in. Norman did you hear me?

NORMAN Sorry, it's hard to concentrate today, because last night Daphne was sick in bed. She hasn't been this poorly, since she was a duckling. It took ages to clean her bill! *(he goes into the mortuary)*

GEORGE goes upstairs in disbelief. CHARLIE runs into the shop half-dressed as Edwina. He sees Sidney and drops to his knees not to be seen and then crawls through to the back room

SIDNEY *(looking at the R wall mirror)* I'm not moving this! It's massive! *(contorts his face)* Flipping heck! I could stuff a cushion with all the hairs up my nose!

CHARLIE *(in the back room he carries on dressing)* Where's Norman when I need him? He's senseless enough, so I just hope he'll believe I'm Edwina for a couple minutes. I, I, I must be crazy but it's worth, worth a try. I'm sure Lady Agatha Guinness won't miss her wig and lipstick, it's not like she's going anywhere.

SIDNEY *(yanks a hair out and yelps)* Cor, that blinking hurts! *(holds his nose and stumbles backwards hitting a picture off the L wall)* That picture will never stay up! I'll get my cordless drill and a decent screw. *(goes out the arch SL)*

CHARLIE What am I going to say? (*imitates Edwina*) Umm, 'ello Norman, yes, 'ello Norman I've got a terrible 'eadache...

SIDNEY (*comes in the shop with a drill and screw*) This will do it!
he fixes a long screw into the L wall, the lights flicker on/off in the back room

CHARLIE What's wrong with the lights?

SIDNEY There, sorted! (*he hangs the picture and goes out the arch off SL*)
goes dark in the back room

NORMAN (*he comes in with bags, etc and yelps, seeing Charlie*) Who are you?
lights come back on

CHARLIE (*turns around in surprise*) For crying out loud, I mean (*in a higher voice as Edwina*) Poppycock! You made me jump Norman. It's me, Mrs Croak-Tit.

NORMAN Mrs Croak-Tit! You look different and what's wrong with your voice?

CHARLIE It's 'cause I'm so stressed from all the hours I've been doing! I can't carry on working for Mr Reeper. I think I'm 'aving a nervous breakdown and...

NORMAN Oh, poor you! You're feeling a bit funny! When Norm...

CHARLIE I've decided to give my resignation. Could you pass on my 'pologies?
SIDNEY walks along the hallway SR and into the back room

NORMAN Yes of course. Please take care of yourself! (*kisses Charlie on the cheek*)

SIDNEY (*peers closely at Charlie*) Flipping heck, you look well wough!

CHARLIE (*turns to Sidney*) Goodbye!
goes to shake Sidney's hand, SIDNEY leans in fast, kisses Charlie and pinches his behind, CHARLIE slaps Sidney's face and goes out the back door and down the hall off SL

SIDNEY I was only being sociable! (*to Norman*) Can you help me move this coffin in there before I dwip any more paint on it?
they push the coffin on the trolley into the mortuary
(SIDNEY shouts from off SR) Hang on; it's slipping, get out the way!
there's a crash

GEORGE (*comes downstairs*) Where have Norman and the decorator gone? They are both accident prone. I know I shouldn't think it, but I feel like calling them dumb and dumber!

SIDNEY *(they come back in)* I'm surprised how easily the coffin fell apart when we dropped it! We've put the corpse back on the trolley!

NORMAN *(he's limping)* The decorator pushed the trolley too quickly! The coffin and Mr Chard fell on Norman's foot.

GEORGE Please go and find Jim and Danny and move Mr Chard to another coffin.

NORMAN Okay. Norman feels a bit funny again! *(he goes into the mortuary)*
smoke starts drifting from SL into the hallway

GEORGE Mr Arber, please could you take a look at the ceiling in the hallway? I'd like you to run your roller over it?
GEORGE goes through the back door and looks at the hallway ceiling by the arch; SIDNEY follows him with the ladder
(startled seeing the smoke) Blow me! Something's on fire in the kitchen!

SIDNEY Yeah, I just set light to a load of wubbish that I tossed in the fire place.

GEORGE The chimney has been blocked off for years! I'll get some water! *(runs off SL down the hall)*

SIDNEY Yeah, alright! He doesn't half get his knickers in a twist! Blimey, it was only a little fire.
he sets the ladder up in the hallway so that the audience can see what's happening through the arch, he goes up the ladder to look at the ceiling, falls off and goes up again
I can't paint this! No chance! *(starts banging the ceiling and breaks into the song "Rebel Rebel" by "David Bowie")* Webel Webel, you've torn your dwee. Webel Webel, your face is a mess. Webel Webel, how could they know? Hot twamp, I love you so".
GEORGE comes back, the smoke dies down

GEORGE Can you check with me before you do anything like that again! Now where were we? Ah yes, looking at the ceiling.

SIDNEY It needs to be wiped down, it's all well dodgy!

GEORGE Surely we don't have to go to that extreme. A coat of paint will be fine.

SIDNEY Not a chance, it's in a shocking state. I'm telling you, it's beyond repair.
SIDNEY bangs his fist against the ceiling, dust and plaster fall over them and he comes down the ladder

GEORGE *(restrained temper)* Please can you clear this mess up and fill the hole that you've made in my ceiling! I am now going to have a shower! *(goes in the back room and shouts)* Norman, can you help Mr Arber for a minute. *(goes upstairs)*

VERA *(appears from SL)* I'm not going to ask what's happened here. Do you know where my dad is, or Mr Heath? I can't find either of them.

NORMAN walks through the back room and into the hallway with the bags

SIDNEY Haven't seen Mr Heath for a while, but Mr Weeper is having a shower.

VERA Having a shower! That's unusual, at this time of day!

SIDNEY That's what I thought!

VERA I don't suppose you've seen Edwina either?

NORMAN Mrs Croak-Tit said that she's resigned because she's having a nervous breakdown. And then she walked out! She didn't look well.

VERA Dear lord, that's the last thing we need! *(comes into the shop and looks at the appointment book on the desk)*

NORMAN and SIDNEY throw the mess in bags. Then they go through the back room into the mortuary

I'd better check if there's any appointments. Why on earth didn't she come and talk to me! I just don't understand! *(looks at the book)*

CHARLIE *(flustered, he comes into the shop back in his own clothes)* I've been looking for you everywhere! Why haven't you answered your phone?

VERA My phone! It's in my... Oh, I left it at home. You look white as a sheet, are you alright?

CHARLIE Well... I'm, I'm just feeling rather burnt-out at the moment.

VERA Have you got lipstick on?

CHARLIE Lipstick! *(rubs it off, laughs nervously)* No, no, don't be silly. I've just drank some... umm... you know... umm... cranberry juice.

VERA I'm not surprised you're frazzled. You've been working so many hours recently! *(distracted looking at the book)* It all makes sense now! Have you seen what Edwina has written in the appointments book?

CHARLIE No, I haven't! Look, I need to tell you...

VERA "The 19th January. Mrs Hunter phoned and wants to discuss what to put on her dead husband's headstone. She wittered on about the husband having it off with her at No.54".

CHARLIE Please Vera, I must...

