

Just Another Friday!

A Farce in Two Acts

By

David Barrett

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Just Another Friday! Dramatis Personae

Claire	A bored housewife in her forties
Mike	Her husband
Sandra	A girl from the tennis club
Geoff	A man from the judo club
Cindy	Claire and Mike's student daughter
Steve	Cindy's boyfriend
Constable	
Granny	Claire's mother
Medic 1	Answers the first emergency call
Medic 2	The ambulance driver

1. none - ACT 1, EARLY ONE FRIDAY EVENING, APRIL 1985

The action is set entirely in the living room of a first floor flat. There are five exits from this room - a door UR leads into the bedroom, a door UL leads into the kitchen, a door UCL leads to the hall. A second bedroom and the bathroom are off this hall, which leads to the front door. A window R overlooks the garden and an entrance DL opens onto a small balcony containing a garden chair and small table. There are two cupboards US just to R of C. There are five pieces of furniture in this room - two armchairs CL and CR, a sofa just L of C, a coffee table in front of the sofa (with magazines on it and two bottles of sherry underneath) and a small table against the US wall with a table-cloth, vase of flowers, an answer-machine and a telephone. There is a door-chime on the US wall with cables leading into the wall towards the front door. The coffee table is strewn with gardening and ladies' magazines as well as two sets of car-keys. Mike and Claire are in their forties and are finding life rather humdrum now that the children have all left home. They have both joined different evening classes in an endeavour to spice up their lives. Mike has joined a tennis group and Claire has started Judo, both on the same night - tonight. The spice takes the form of Sandra, a fit and attractive blonde, whom Mike has met at tennis and Geoff, a rather ordinary guy who, like Claire, has taken up judo. Claire sits reading a magazine. Enter Mike, in his tennis gear.

CLAIRE Are you still here, darling? I thought you'd already gone to tennis.

MIKE As you can see, I haven't. I'm not even sure I've got the energy tonight.

CLAIRE Oh, come on honey, isn't it mixed doubles today?

MIKE Yes, but what difference does that make?

CLAIRE Well, doesn't the thought of those fit young girls in short white skirts make you raring to go?

MIKE I beg your pardon?

CLAIRE Well, you know.....

MIKE (Acting decorously) No, I do not know! Anyway, I can't say I've noticed any fit girls at tennis.

CLAIRE (Sniggering violently) My goodness, then you must be getting short-sighted in middle age.

MIKE I certainly am not! I can read newspaper print at a hundred yards.

CLAIRE Can you indeed! Then read this paragraph to me. (Holding up the magazine and indicating the paragraph.)

MIKE (Seriously flustered) I...I...well...um...ah...

CLAIRE There you are, you see. You can't read it, can you?

MIKE It's the italic font and and the green background. You know I'm colour blind to red and green.

CLAIRE Oh, the crosses men have to bear!

MIKE Now that's unfair! You know that I'm suffering from arthritis and lumbago and a trapped...

CLAIRE I know I have to listen to the same excuses every Saturday night. (Pause) That doesn't mean it's true.

MIKE Now just look here... (ponders) Anyway, what about the men at your Judo club? They can't be wimps can they? I mean, it's not a tiddlywinks club.

CLAIRE My mind is totally focused on the judo moves, as it happens. I have no time to notice the men.

MIKE What, even when they grab you around the waist, throw you to the floor and pin you down? (He gestures and she notices his hand.)

CLAIRE Mike, you're not wearing your wedding ring. Why have you taken it off?

MIKE I... I... well, you know, it rubs against the racquet when I play.

CLAIRE But you're right handed and you wear your wedding ring on the left.
MIKE What is this, the Spanish Inquisition?
CLAIRE (Looks at her watch) Goodness, is that the time? I must get changed - and you must go, or you'll be late.
MIKE Goodbye dear - back about eleven. (blows her a kiss and exits.)
CLAIRE (Giving a hefty sigh as the front door slams) Goodbye, darling. Don't have a fatal accident on the way. Now, where was I? Oh, yes, about to get changed.

She hums to herself as she exits R to the bedroom. The telephone rings but we hear Claire singing. Clearly she has not heard the phone. The answer-machine cuts in.

ANSWER We are sorry we are unable to take your call at the
MACHINE moment. Please leave a message after the tone and we will call you as soon as possible. (tone)
SANDRA'S (In a sexy voice) Hello, Mike, Sandra here. I hope you
VOICE haven't left yet. I've just arrived at the club and it's flooded - so tennis is off. Please come down to the club and pick me up anyway. I would like to suggest some alternative ... extra-curricular activity, as we have a free evening. Perhaps we could go to your place? Bye for now.

There is a kissing sound then a click as she rings off. Noises off - Mike driving away.

Enter Claire, still singing, and now dressed in judo gear.

CLAIRE (Goes to exit then stops.) Silly me, I won't get far without the car keys, will I!

Crosses to the coffee table and picks up her keys. As she nears the door she looks at the answer-machine and goes as if to press the button.

CLAIRE Oh, I'd better leave it switched on - Cindy might phone from college.

She exits, jingling her keys and still singing. The front door slams and the phone rings immediately. The answer-machine cuts in.

ANSWER We are sorry we are unable to take your call at the
MACHINE moment. Please leave a message after the tone and we will call you as soon as possible. (tone)

GEOFF'S (Sounding rather nervous.) Hello, darling!
VOICE It's...it's...it's me, Geoff. If you haven't left yet, please p...p...pick up the phone. (silence) Oh hell, I suppose you've already left. Well, in case you're in the bathroom or something, I was just phoning to say that J....J....Judo has been cancelled - damned power cut. There goes our evening together. Unless - I say, I could come round to your place for a... a... coffee. That is..... if you would like me to. Anyhow, I'll see you outside the judo hall. Bye for now.

Click as he hangs up. Noises off - Claire's car driving off. Phone rings and answer-machine cuts in.

ANSWER We are sorry we are unable to take your call at the
MACHINE moment. Please leave a message after the tone and we will call you as soon as possible. (tone)

CINDY'S VOICE Mum, Dad are you there? Just to let you know I'm coming home from college for the weekend - tonight, in fact. Please will you come and give me a lift from the station? Dad? I know you're in 'cos you never go out any more! I'll be on the 7.30 from Waterloo. Please pick me up. Thanks, Dad. I love you. (Hangs up).

The front door slams and we hear a girl giggle. Enter Mike pulling Sandra in by the hand.

SANDRA Oh, Mike, nice pad you have here. (They embrace and kiss.) Just right for a love-nest. What a shame you live alone.
MIKE Well, this is our living room and over here is the kitchen.
SANDRA You said 'our'!
MIKE Slip of the tongue - I meant 'my'. The spare bedroom and the bathroom are back along the hall.
SANDRA And where's your bedroom, Mike? (cuddling up to him.)
MIKE Oh, that's just over here, but would you not like a coffee or something.
SANDRA Just the 'or something' will do. I'll have a coffee later. Come on Romeo - show me the way. (She pushes him towards the bedroom.)

They exit into the bedroom, the door slams and we immediately hear giggling sounds from within. Noises off of front door closing quietly. Enter Claire, followed by a nervous Geoff.

GEOFF This is very cosy - I like it very much. (Looks out of window.) And what a lovely garden you have. I do like gardening.
CLAIRE Oh, so do I. Hence, the gardening magazines. I'll just make some coffee.

She exits to kitchen.

GEOFF (Picking up a magazine and reading silently for a few moments as he settles into a chair.) Are you any good with plant diseases? I have a real problem with my Nelly Moser wilting.
CLAIRE (Appearing at the door.) No, but I do suffer from fungus on my hypericum.
GEOFF (Chuckling) I suppose we should go to see a plant doctor together, eh?
CLAIRE Black or white?
GEOFF I don't care where he's from a long as he can speak English.
CLAIRE Would you like milk - in your coffee?
GEOFF Oh yes, very pale and sweet, if I may. Just like me. (Sniggers)
GEOFF (Quoting from the magazine) Hey listen to this: there's an African plant that can cure cramps. It's called *cryptocarya latifolia*, commonly known as umkhondweni. I would have thought that just saying the name could cause you cramps in your mouth. (Chuckles)

Enter Claire

CLAIRE Your coffee, sir. Just as you like it.

Puts the two coffees on the coffee table.

GEOFF Oh that's handy. But what about the wine I brought?
CLAIRE Well, perhaps we could have that later. We have the whole evening to kill.

GEOFF I expect we'll find something to do, dear. (Sniggers again.) Well, why don't you dig out some wine glasses while I go out to my car and fetch the wine?
CLAIRE O.k., but I must go to the loo first. Don't be long.
GEOFF (In an intrepid tone) I am just going outside and may be some time....

He exits with a chuckle. The front door closes quietly. Exit Claire to bathroom. Enter Mike and exit to the kitchen to make coffee. He sings 'tea for two' and does a little dance as he exits. Immediately, enter Sandra. She sits at the sofa and picks up a copy of Woman's Own magazine.

SANDRA (Frowning and taking a sip from one of the coffee cups) My, that was quick. Must have had coffee in the percolator. I thought you lived alone, Mike.
MIKE (Off) So I do.
SANDRA And do you read Woman's Own?
MIKE (Entering) Woman's Own?
SANDRA Yes, look (pointing to the front page) Woman's Own.
MIKE Oh, that Woman's Own.
SANDRA I've never met a man who reads that before.
MIKE Ah, and... well... this one doesn't either.
SANDRA Then... this isn't your magazine?
MIKE (Snatching the magazine) Quite right. It's not.
SANDRA Then whose is it?
MIKE That's my... my... sister's.
SANDRA You live with your sister?
MIKE Not exactly - but she often stays over.
SANDRA Well, you should tidy up after her more often. Here, let's put these underneath.

She takes it from him and tidies it away with the others.

SANDRA (Picking up the remote control) Just in time for Taggart. My favourite programme.
MIKE (Snatching the remote. In a French accent.) Not tonight, Josephine. We have other matters to attend to - in the bedroom.
SANDRA (Copying accent) But Napoleon, surely it can wait?
MIKE Non, ma Cherie. Allez! I will join you shortly in my chambre.
SANDRA As you wish, monsieur.

She takes the two coffee cups from the table and exits to bedroom. Exit Mike to kitchen. We hear him briefly, clinking cups and spoons.

Faint noises off of toilet flushing. Enter Claire. She sits at the table and looks for her magazine. She is surprised to see it tidied away. Turns a few pages and looks for her coffee.

CLAIRE That's odd! I'm sure I put the coffees on the table.

She gets up, looks around and crosses to the kitchen just as Mike enters with two coffee cups. They both start and Mike spills the coffee.

MIKE I thought you were going to wait in the..... in the..... What the devil are you doing here?
CLAIRE I.... I..... I live here, remember. And you didn't tell me to wait anywhere. What are you doing home?
MIKE Tennis was cancelled - there's been a flood.

He glances anxiously towards the bedroom

CLAIRE And so has judo. What a co-incidence! Look, I'll help you clear this up. But why the two cups?

MIKE Oh, it must just be habit. I thought I was making one for you too.
Look, you hold the cups and I'll get a cloth.

She takes the cups just as the door-bell rings. She starts, spills more coffee and hands the cups to Mike.

MIKE Now, who on earth could that be? Are you expecting somebody?

CLAIRE No... no... no-one.

She grabs the bell-wires and pulls them out of the wall.

MIKE Claire, what on earth are you doing?

CLAIRE Those wretched children again - ringing the door-bell and running away. 'Knock Down Ginger' they call it.

MIKE How do you know that's who it is? I'll go and see.

CLAIRE NO! No, Mike, I know it's them - been doing it all day, all night, doing it earlier, in fact.

MIKE Look, darling, you seem a bit anxious. Come and sit down and drink this coffee.

He looks at the two half-empty cups then pours the rest of one into the other and gives it to Claire. She takes some sips.

CLAIRE Oh, that's better. Now I think I'll go and lie down for a while. Those children - it's upset me.

She rises and starts to cross to the bedroom.

MIKE No! No, dear, I think you will be more comfortable here. I'll put the telly on. It's Taggart tonight - your favourite programme.

CLAIRE I hate police dramas - you know I do.

MIKE Of course, dear. I'm just trying to cheer you up. Actually, I think I'll have an early night tonight. (Looking towards the bedroom.)

CLAIRE (Rising) Just let me get changed first. I need to get out of this ridiculous outfit.

MIKE I'll get your clothes dear. Why don't you make another cup of coffee?

CLAIRE Another cup? Good idea. (Aside) I think I'm going to need it.

Claire exits to kitchen just as Sandra enters. Mike quickly clasps his hand over her mouth and pushes her back into the bedroom.

CLAIRE (Re-entering) Would you like one, dear?

MIKE (Putting his head around the bedroom door, wearing a false grin) Yes, please dear, and I suppose I'll have to fix the wretched door-bell in a minute.

Exits to bedroom and shuts door.

CLAIRE Oh, that can wait until the morning. (Exits to kitchen.)

There is a knock on the window. Geoff has found a ladder and he opens the window from the outside and puts his head in. Claire hears the window rattle and enters. Geoff waves the wine bottle at her.

CLAIRE Geoff, what on earth are you doing?

GEOFF (Climbing in.) Dashed door-bell isn't working. Couldn't get back in, you know.

CLAIRE But the neighbours might see.

GEOFF Let them see! I shall be your Romeo and you shall be my Juliet.

CLAIRE Don't be daft, Geoffrey, and keep your voice down.
GEOFF Why? Is the baby asleep? (He chuckles)
CLAIRE No, but my... my... my uncle is in the bedroom.
GEOFF Your... uncle?
CLAIRE That's right. Come to visit - from America. Wasn't expecting him.
GEOFF But I didn't see anyone...
CLAIRE Must have been when you were at your car. Look, he's very straight-laced, my uncle. I wouldn't want him to find you here. And he is a little - well, confused.
GEOFF Why's he in your bedroom? What's wrong with the spare room?
CLAIRE Bed's too small. He's a big man. Just have to sleep in the spare room myself tonight.

The door handle turns on the bedroom door.

CLAIRE Quick, hide. Uncle mustn't find you.

She pushes Geoff towards a chair and he hides behind it.

Mike enters very quickly from the bedroom carrying Claire's clothes. He shuts the door and leans his back against it.

CLAIRE What on earth is the matter? You look very pale.

She takes her clothes from Mike and takes off her judo top and trousers.

MIKE Nothing! Nothing at all. I think I need a drink before I go to bed.

MIKE Sit down and I'll get you a nice hot cup of coffee.

MIKE That's not what I mean by a drink.

CLAIRE Whisky and soda?

MIKE That would be more helpful, yes, please.

Exit Claire to kitchen in her underwear and Mike sinks into the chair Geoff is hiding behind. Enter Sandra from bedroom.

SANDRA There you are, Michael, you naughty boy. You mustn't go creeping off like that.

Mike jumps up as if stung by a bee and quickly hides Claire's clothes behind a cushion. He makes frantic signs and whispers.

MIKE Sister ... kitchen... home unexpectedly..... hide..... quickly!

Mike gestures to the other chair and Sandra quickly hides. Enter Claire with whisky. She knows her conversation is being overheard by Geoff. Her manner is extremely patronising.

CLAIRE There we are, you poor old thing.

Gives him the whisky, which he downs in one.

MIKE Thank you.

CLAIRE We need to get you to bed quickly. You need your eight hours.

CLAIRE What are you talking about?

CLAIRE Auntie Joan would not be very happy to see you get overtired now, would she?

MIKE Auntie who?

CLAIRE There you are you see! You always get absent-minded when you're tired.

MIKE I'm not absent-minded and I'm not tired - (forcefully) and I haven't got an Auntie Joan - have I?

CLAIRE My, you are getting forgetful. Do I have to explain the family tree to you again?
MIKE No, you certainly do not. That's guaranteed to send anyone to sleep.
CLAIRE I'll go and turn back the bed-clothes. Elderly folk like their bed to be prepared, don't they.
MIKE No, no, don't go in there. I can manage.
CLAIRE Don't be silly, Uncle Michael. Have you got a girlfriend hiding in there or something?
MIKE A gah, gah, gah...
CLAIRE Of course not. That sort of thing can give you a heart attack at your age.

Exit Claire to bedroom. Sandra stands behind her chair. Geoff stays where he is.

SANDRA What's all this 'uncle' business? You didn't tell me you had a niece. Who is she? If I find out you've been lying to me...
MIKE She's not my niece - she's my sister. She's not been very well - can't you tell? The lights are on but she's not quite at home, poor thing.
SANDRA And you give up your home to her and take care of her. You are such a darling!

Enter Claire from bedroom and Sandra ducks behind the chair again. Mike gives Claire a little wave and a sheepish grin. Claire hums to herself and exits to kitchen. Sandra comes out of hiding.

MIKE Has her own key. Let's herself in when she needs me.
SANDRA It must be ever such hard work, caring for a sick relative.
MIKE It sure is, especially on those days when she thinks she's Marilyn Monroe - or Queen Victoria.
SANDRA She doesn't!
MIKE I'm told it's a sort of defence mechanism.
SANDRA Well now, you heard your sister - it's time for bed. (Putting her arms round him.) And aren't you the lucky one - you have your own special nurse to look after you tonight.
MIKE Oh no, do we have to do that role-play stuff. It's so tiresome.
SANDRA Now, now, you must not be a difficult patient. Come along now - to bed.

They exit to bedroom, Sandra giggling as she goes. Enter Claire, who quickly puts her clothes on.

CLAIRE It's alright, Geoff, you can come out now.

Geoff comes out of hiding, looking rather confused and scratching his head.

GEOFF Well?
CLAIRE Well what?
GEOFF What is he, uncle, brother, aunt, or does it change from moment to moment?
CLAIRE Uncle of course. He's much older than me. Not all there up top, can't you tell?
GEOFF Well, he thinks you're his sister.
CLAIRE The poor dear. His own sister died very young and he never quite got over it. He is obviously mixing her up with me - as I'm quite young! (adopting a quick 'model' pose.)
GEOFF Do you know, I'm beginning to get confused myself.

CLAIRE It's not important, just as long as he doesn't find you here. He would not approve.
GEOFF It's good that he has a nurse to look after him. Takes the pressure off you a bit, I should guess.
CLAIRE He does?
GEOFF But enough about your family. What about us? Let's break open the wine.

He begins to exit towards kitchen and Claire follows.

CLAIRE Good idea, I think I need a glass of wine. Better still, make that a bottle.

They both exit to kitchen. Enter Mike with a pair of pliers, a torch and a screwdriver in his hand. Sandra is talking to him from the bedroom.

SANDRA Not now! Why do you have to do it now?
MIKE We must have a working door-bell. You never know who might call.
SANDRA Can't you do it in the morning when it's light?
MIKE I don't need light - I have a torch.
SANDRA Oh, Mike! Must you?
MIKE (Feeding the bell wires back through the hole in the wall.) Won't be long, love. Just make sure you're all ready for me - and keep out of the way of my sister. She can be violent, you know.

Exit Mike down the hall.

SANDRA (Poking her head out of the bedroom.) Violent? Mike, come back! Mike!

Claire sings 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend' (off) and Sandra quickly retreats into the bedroom. She turns the key in the lock.

Enter Cindy up the ladder, followed closely by Steve.

CINDY Damn and blast! What a thing to have to do to get into your own house. The bell doesn't work - we're locked out - and there's no-one in to welcome us.
STEVE Well it's your own fault, Cindy! You shouldn't keep losing your key.
CINDY And I might have known we'd be walking from the station. Dad never gets anything right.
STEVE (Sitting down on the sofa.) I do think you're being a little harsh on your dad. He may not have got the message.
CINDY (Cindy crossing to the answer-machine and pressing the button.) I bet he did. Let's have a listen!
ANSWER MACHINE (Geoff's voice, sounding rather nervous.) Hello, darling! It's... it's ... it's me, Geoff. If you haven't left yet, please p...p...pick up the phone. (silence) Oh hell, I suppose you've already left. Well, In case you're in the bathroom or something, I was just phoning to say that J...J...Judo has been cancelled - damn power cut. There goes our evening together. Unless - I say, I could come round to your place for a... a....

Cindy pushes the off switch.

CINDY Goodness, must be a wrong number. Well, perhaps Dad didn't get the message after all. Well, what do we do now, Steve? I was hoping Mum would be in to cook us a lovely lasagne or something.
STEVE (Patting the sofa beside him.) Well, I can think of something we can do to pass the time - and then we could go out for a take-away later.

CINDY (Sitting beside him.) And just what might that be, Casanova?
STEVE Well, you know - what we've been practising but haven't perfected yet.

He embraces her violently, kisses her and puts his leg across her.

CINDY Hey, hey, HEY! Just a minute! I'm all hot and bothered from the journey. I think I shall just go and have a quick shower. My bedroom is just along the hall. (In an American accent.) Meet me there in fifteen minutes, Sam.

She exits down the hall.

CINDY Sam? Oh, I see!
STEVE Steve settles into the sofa and closes his eyes. Just then the lights go out.
MIKE (Off) Bugger!

The room is dimly lit by the moon.

STEVE Oh hell! Now what do I do? Just a minute! Cindy says she likes practising with the lights out. This'll be even better.

The key turns in the bedroom door and Sandra enters looking for Mike. Just then, Steve coughs.

SANDRA (In a whisper.) There you are, darling. (Crossing to the sofa.) Is this another of our little games - nursie looks after patient in a power-cut?
SANDRA (In a whisper) What do you mean and why are we whispering, Cindy?
SANDRA Cindy? Oh, I see - you want me to be Cindy - then I shall be Cindy. Let's do it here, shall we? While the lights are out.

She throws herself onto Steve with much smacking of lips.

STEVE Ababa etc....

He tries to speak but finds it impossible with Sandra's mouth clamped over his. After a few moments it goes quiet and they stay entwined. Enter Geoff pulling Claire along by the hand. They stumble a little, clearly tipsy, and exit into the bedroom, locking the door behind them. The two on the sofa are too busy to notice.

CLAIRE (As they exit) It's alright, uncle must be outside, fixing the bell - and the lights.
GEOFF Is it safe? I mean, for an elderly man?
CLAIRE I don't know, but at least we won't be disturbed. (They exit)

The sounds of kissing, breathing and cuddling on the sofa begin to crescendo. The lights come on briefly and then go off again. Sandra screams and slaps Steve very hard across the face so that he falls off the sofa, flat on his face.

SANDRA (In a hoarse whisper) Who the devil? You pig. I've never been so insulted.

She strops off into the kitchen.

STEVE Cindy, no wait!

He is still stunned by the blow and staggers across the room. Still

believing Sandra was Cindy and that she has gone to her room, he exits down the hall.

A police constable appears at the top of the ladder, shining a torch around.

CONSTABLE Hello! Is anyone at home? Hello!

(He climbs in through the window and shines his torch around the sitting room. He turns the light-switch on and off a few times and curses when it does not work. He crosses to the bedroom door and tries the handle. We hear the door unlock and Geoff appears, quickly closing the door behind him.)

CONSTABLE Good evening, sir.

GEOFF Who the devil are you?

CONSTABLE As you may surmise by my uniform, I am an officer of the law, sir. Are you the owner of this flat?

GEOFF A... a... a... well, not exactly - but I do know the owner.

CONSTABLE I see! In that case, you won't mind telling me the owner's name.

GEOFF It's Claire.

CONSTABLE And the surname, sir?

GEOFF Um, er, Claire um.

CONSTABLE Know the owner well, do we, sir?

GEOFF Well, as a matter of fact... I... I...

CONSTABLE It's just that we have had reports of a break-in in progress. A man was seen climbing up this very ladder and in through this very window.

GEOFF How very inconvenient!

CONSTABLE And it happens that he answers to your description. I am going to have to ask you to accompany me to the station.

GEOFF But I haven't done anything wrong. I... I... was locked out and the doorbell didn't work.

CONSTABLE We have to ring our own door-bell to get in do we, sir? Not old enough to have our own key yet?

GEOFF But, you don't understand.

CONSTABLE I do hope you'll come quietly, sir.

He takes out a pair of handcuffs and swiftly cuffs Geoff.

GEOFF Now you just look here - I shall complain to my M.P., you know.

CONSTABLE (Leading Geoffrey to the hall.) All in good time, sir. All in good time.

GEOFF (Off-stage) Hey, you haven't done that 'you are not obliged to say anything' bit...

CONSTABLE All in good time, sir. All in good time.

The front door closes. Enter Sandra from the kitchen, carrying a lighted candle and sobbing.

SANDRA Where is that Mike? I've been assaulted by a stranger. We must call the police.

SANDRA (Crossing to window and peering out.) Mike! Mike, are you there? I've been raped - almost. I would have been if the lights hadn't come on. (Impatiently now.) Mike! Mike, are you down there?

She leans further out and loses her balance, falling out head first. Screams diminuendoing and ending in a thump as she falls into a veronica bush. Enter Cindy and Steve from the hall, wearing only towels.

STEVE Let's try again shall we? I'm sorry if I was too rough earlier.

CINDY What on earth do you mean earlier. Oh, you mean before you had a shave. That's alright I like to kiss an unshaven man.

STEVE Why did you run off like that, Cindy?

CINDY I told you, I went to have a shower.

STEVE No, I mean after that. When we were ... Practising on the sofa.

CINDY I have no idea what you are talking about, honey.

STEVE Oh I see - you'd rather forget that whole episode and start afresh. Good idea! Come over to the sofa. There's plenty of room for two - even in a horizontal position!

CINDY I hope the springs are good.

They cuddle up on the sofa, still wrapped in their towels. Noises off, of an ambulance taking Sandra to hospital.

STEVE You're lovely and warm.

CINDY So are you. This is an unexpected pleasure having an evening to ourselves with no-one to disturb us.

Enter Granny up the ladder.

GRANNY Yoo hoo! Anyone at home?

STEVE Good lord, someone's coming up the ladder. Who on earth is it?

Steve jumps up from sofa, not realising that Cindy is treading on his towel. He tries to exit to the hall but does not make it and freezes in the middle of the room, just as Granny enters. He quickly snatches the table cloth from under the answer-machine but it is far too small to cover much.

GRANNY Why hello, young man. Have we met?

STEVE Who the devil are you?

GRANNY (Rising and crossing to Granny.) Steve, this is my Granny, Mrs Dobson - Granny, this is Steve, my boyfriend.

GRANNY Very pleased to meet you, Steve.

She shakes his hand and the table-cloth falls to the ground. Cindy screams and Granny faints and is caught by Steve, who gently puts her on the floor. Simultaneously, Mike enters from the hall and Claire enters from the bedroom. Both freeze as they take in the scene. Steve desperately tries to cover himself with the cloth again but Cindy snatches it to fan her Granny. Steve covers himself with his hands.

CLAIRE My God! Cindy?

CINDY Mother! Father!

MIKE What are you doing here, and who is this naked man?

CINDY This is my boyfriend, Steve. I brought him home for you to see.

CLAIRE We did not need to see quite so much of him. (Noticing Granny) Mother! What on earth? Cindy, what's happened?

CINDY I think she's fainted.

MIKE I'm not surprised, it's probably many years since she had so much excitement. What's she doing here, anyway?

CINDY I have no idea. She must have seen the ladder and climbed up it.

MIKE As for you, young man, I think you'd better get dressed and leave.

STEVE But I ... I ...

MIKE (Sternly) Immediately!

STEVE Yes, sir. (Exits down the hall.)

MIKE And you, young lady - you have some explaining to do.

CINDY Well, it wouldn't have happened if you'd been at the station to meet me.

MIKE Oh, I see - it's my fault, is it?

CLAIRE She's coming round.
 MIKE Who is? Not another visitor, surely.
 CLAIRE No, it's mother. She's rallying.
 GRANNY Where am I? What's happening?
 CLAIRE You're going to be alright, Mother. You've just had one
 of your dizzy spells.
 GRANNY What's that you say?
 MIKE DIZZY SPELLS!
 GRANNY (Disappointed) Oh! Then it was all a dream.
 CLAIRE What was?
 GRANNY I dreamed I was talking to a handsome young man and he
 was stark...
 CLAIRE Yes, well never mind that now. What are you doing here
 and why on earth did you climb up that ladder?
 GRANNY That what?
 MIKE THAT LADDER!
 GRANNY Why shouldn't I? Everyone else has.
 MIKE What do you mean everyone else?

They help her onto a chair.

GRANNY Well, I had a call from Mrs Thompson over the way.
 MIKE Oh, here we go - the old bat who thinks she works for
 MI6. She has a pair of binoculars grafted to her brow.
 It's about time she had them surgically removed.
 GRANNY Don't interrupt me, Michael! You know how invaluable the
 neighbourhood watch can be when it comes to fighting
 crime.
 MIKE Yes, but what about when it comes to gossip and innuendo?
 GRANNY She was only trying to be helpful. After all, it's dark
 and you don't expect to see a line of people climbing in
 a first floor window off a ladder.
 CLAIRE I do think Mrs Thompson may be exaggerating, mother.
 GRANNY It's all in her log - she showed me.
 MIKE She keeps a log?
 CINDY Smelling salts!
 CLAIRE I beg your pardon?
 CINDY That's what Granny needs to perk her up. Have you still
 got some in your bedroom drawer?
 CLAIRE Why yes, I no, no I don't think I have.
 CINDY Well, I'll have a look anyway.

Cindy begins to cross to bedroom but Claire blocks her way.

CLAIRE No! You can't go in there. I'll go and look!
 MIKE (Blocking Claire's exit.) That won't be necessary.
 CLAIRE Why not?
 CLAIRE I'm nearer - I'll go.

Mike and Claire jostle a little.

CLAIRE Let me go.
 GRANNY It's alright, I have some here. (She produces a bottle.)
 The doctor recommended I carry some with me after my last
 nasty turn.
 MIKE (Aside) She's not the only one having nasty turns tonight.
 CLAIRE You just have a nice sit down, Granny, and I'll get you a
 lovely cup of coffee.

Crosses towards the kitchen.

MIKE I'll do it.
 CLAIRE It's alright, Mike, I can manage.

She exits to kitchen. Mike watches with trepidation, fearing Sandra might
 be in there but realises he is safe, for the time being.

MIKE Now, you can explain yourself later. In the meantime, I suggest you get dressed.
GRANNY But I am dressed.
MIKE Not you, I mean Cindy.
CINDY Yes, father.
MIKE And right now, I'm going to fix the damned door-bell - and the lights. (Exits)
GRANNY It's very hot in here, dear. I need some fresh air.
CINDY I'll open the window for you - oh it is open! Why don't you sit on the balcony, Granny? There's a comfy chair out there already.
GRANNY Thank you lovie, I would like that.
CINDY Come on then, let's get you up.

Helps her to her feet and installs her on the balcony.

GRANNY Thank you, dear.
CINDY Mum'll bring you your coffee in a minute. I'll just go and dress.
GRANNY Alright ducks.

Exit Cindy

GRANNY What excitement. That Adonis seemed so real. I must have put too much sherry in the trifle. I think I'll get another couple of bottles tomorrow.

Enter Claire with Granny's coffee.

CLAIRE Here we are, Mother. This'll do you good. I put extra sugar in it for you. (Looks around for Granny but the room is empty.) Now where's she gone. I suppose she's in the loo - it's all the excitement. (She puts the coffee on the table and exits to the bedroom.) (In a whisper) Geoff? Geoff, where on earth are you?

The phone rings and the answer-machine cuts in.

ANSWER We are sorry we are unable to take your call at the moment. Please leave a message after the tone and we will call you as soon as possible. (tone)
MACHINE
CONSTABLE (Voice) Good evening, this is Wimbledon police station. We are ringing to advise that you lock all your doors and windows. There is a prisoner on the loose, dressed as Bruce Lee, who may be dangerous. He is suffering from delusions and seems determined to gain access to your property. This criminal has been arrested once this evening but has escaped from custody. He has given the name Geoffrey Farlington-Smith but we believe this to be false. Please contact the station on your return. (tone)
GRANNY (Entering from the balcony.) It seemed so real. Reminded me of my Herbert, but he was a much bigger man, of course! Ah, my coffee. (Picks up the cup and notices a bottle of sherry under the table.) Perhaps if I put some of this in my coffee I might have sweet dreams tonight!

She slurps some of the coffee and fills up the gap with sherry. She puts the bottle back and begins to exit. Having second thoughts she goes back for the bottle, picks it up and exits. The audience see her on the balcony, alternately sipping coffee and swigging sherry from the bottle.

Enter Claire from the bedroom, looks into the kitchen and mutters.

CLAIRE Where on earth is Geoffrey? How many places can there be
to hide in a flat this small? (Exits to the hall)

The phone rings and the answer machine cuts in.

ANSWER We are sorry we are unable to take your call at the
MACHINE moment. Please leave a message after the tone and we will
call you as soon as possible. (tone)
(A woman's voice:) Hello, this is the hospital with
a message for Mister Mike Thornton. We have a Miss Sandra
Bottomley ready for discharge and she has named you as
next of kin. As she has had a nasty bump on the head we
need someone to collect her. If there is no-one available
we will have to send her home in an ambulance. Please
call us urgently. Thank you.

GRANNY (Sings.) Roll out the barrel, we'll have a barrel of fun!
(etc... then snores...)

2. none - ACT 2, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

The power is still off. Granny is on the balcony. She hiccups loudly and giggles. Claire enters from the hall and exits into the bedroom, still looking for Geoff. Enter Steve, furtively, up the ladder and in through the window. He is sneaking across the room towards the hall door when the lights suddenly come on.

STEVE (Shocked. Putting his hands up.) Alright, don't shoot.
I'll come quietly.

Granny is woken by this and gets out of her chair.

GRANNY (Aside) What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Looking around and seeing no-one there, Steve breathes a sigh of relief. He crosses to the hall door and exits just as Granny enters, sherry bottle in hand.

GRANNY (Holding up the bottle.) Cor, this must be working, I saw
him again. I think it was the same boy. Who can be sure
when they have clothes on?

She exits and sits on balcony. Enter Claire, who looks behind the chairs for Geoff. She opens both cupboard doors to look inside in case he is hiding there. She exits into the kitchen, shaking her head.

CLAIRE (As she exits) He must have gone. He could at least have
said goodbye!

Enter Geoff, through the window, with some difficulty as he is still handcuffed. He is holding his judo trousers up as his belt has been confiscated by the police. The front door closes with a bang and Geoff is alarmed. Granny hears the bang and gets out of her chair. Geoff tries to open cupboard 1 but cannot do this and hold his trousers. He lets go of his trousers and they fall to his ankles. Granny enters again, wielding the sherry bottle.

GRANNY (Spotting Geoff with trousers around his ankles) My
goodness, it certainly does work - and it gets better the
more you take. Why have I not discovered this before?

GRANNY Exits onto balcony and sits.

Geoffrey conceals himself in cupboard 1 just as Mike enters from hall and crosses to the bedroom door and Claire enters from the kitchen. Mike gives a start when she speaks.

CLAIRE So, you've fixed the lights then!
MIKE Ah, ah, ah yes. I have.
CLAIRE What about the bell?
MIKE And the b..bell.
CLAIRE Good! Have you seen mother?
MIKE No, I haven't, thank goodness.
CLAIRE I can't find her anywhere - I'm worried that she's wandered off and got lost.
MIKE Perhaps she's just gone home.
CLAIRE But she's not well. Anything could happen.
MIKE Not well, or inebriated? Why don't you go and find her? I'm going to bed.
CLAIRE Yes, I think I will. I'll just get my coat from the bedroom.
MIKE (Panicking) No! (He blocks the door.)
CLAIRE I beg your pardon!
MIKE I...I'd rather you didn't.
CLAIRE Why not? It's chilly outside.
MIKE Not cold enough for a coat. Your mother hasn't got one.
CLAIRE Then all the more reason to take mine. Now, please get out of my way. Why do you not want me to go in the bedroom. Have you got something to hide?
MIKE Yes - I mean no!
CLAIRE Well, which is it - yes or no?

She brushes him aside and exits into the bedroom. Mike sinks into an armchair, puts his head in his hands and rocks back and forth, waiting for the explosion. Enter Claire.

CLAIRE Just as I thought.
MIKE (Standing) Look, I can explain everything.....
CLAIRE It was over the back of my chair. (Putting her coat on.) What do you mean 'you can explain everything'?
MIKE Oh, nothing darling.
CLAIRE Goodnight.
MIKE Goodnight, dear.

Exit Claire to hall and Mike to the bedroom. The front door slams and Granny gets out of chair.

MIKE (Off) Sandra! Sandra, where the devil are you hiding.

Granny staggers in and swigs from the bottle, only to find it empty.

GRANNY Dash it all, my medicine's dried up. (Peers around.) And it seems to have stopped working - the visions have gone. (She spots the second bottle.) Aha, I'm in luck. A repeat prescription.

She struggles to get the cork out, loses her balance and falls down behind a chair, in view of the audience. Enter Mike.

MIKE Where are you hiding, you naughty thing you. (He searches behind the other chair. Granny raises her hand.) Playing hard to get again are we? (Granny shakes her head.) Just wait till I find you, you wicked old girl, I'll just have to teach you not to be naughty. (Granny nods vigorously) And you know what that means, don't you? (Granny nods more vigorously and grins broadly.) That's just what you wanted tonight, wasn't it. (More nods. Granny coughs quietly) Ah, so there you are. Now, I'm going to close my eyes and count to three - and when I open them again I expect to see you standing here in front of me. (He closes his eyes and Granny crawls out and staggers to her feet.) One, two, three...

Mike hears heaving breathing in front of him and on the count of three he embraces Granny and kisses her. Enter Claire from hall door.

CLAIRE Mike, what the hell are you doing?

Mike opens his eyes and screams. He takes out a handkerchief and wipes his mouth vigorously. Granny passes out and falls behind the chair out of sight.

MIKE I...I...I...

CLAIRE I know menopausal men like to have a last fling - but with my mother?

MIKE I can explain everything.

CLAIRE Go on then.

MIKE No I can't.

Claire looks furious and Mike backs away from her as she approaches. He stumbles and puts his hand on the answer-machine button. Claire listens in horror to the recorded message. Now Mike's face screws up in a rage.

ANSWER (Geoff's voice, sounding rather nervous.) Hello, darling!

MACHINE It's... it's...it's me, Geoff. If you haven't left yet, please p...p...pick up the phone. (silence) Oh hell, I suppose you've already left. Well, In case you're in the bathroom or something, I was just phoning to say that J...J...Judo has been cancelled - damn power cut. There goes our evening together. Unless - I say, I could come round to your place for a... a...

Clair pulls the cable out of the machine.

MIKE So little Miss Perfect has a secret she's been keeping from me, does she?

CLAIRE No, it's not how it seems. It's all quite innocent.

MIKE Is it, DARLING? Could I come round to your place for a game of tiddlywinks?

CLAIRE No, of course not, I... I... Oh, you're impossible! (She struts off into the kitchen and Mike follows.)

(Off-stage) You're not so innocent yourself. Do you think I'm stupid?

MIKE Yes!

CLAIRE I can smell that scent on you every time you've been to tennis, you know.

Sounds of pots and pans flying around and lots of shouting. Enter Steve from the hall. He stops dead when he hears the row. A frying pan flies out of the kitchen and he ducks. Alarmed, Steve goes to hide in cupboard 1. The door sticks so he hides in cupboard 2 instead. As the door closes, it goes quiet in the kitchen.

CLAIRE (Off-stage) Mike! Mike, are you alright? Speak to me!

Enter Sandra through the window. Her head is bandaged and she is a little unsteady on her feet. She looks around the room and hears snoring sounds coming from Granny.

SANDRA (In a whisper.) Mike, is that you? (Searching for the source of the snoring sounds.) Mike, are you there?(Looking behind the chair and seeing Granny.) Oh my God! Who the hell are you?

Granny babbles some nonsense. There is a crash from the kitchen and Sandra quickly exits to the bedroom.

Enter Mike, staggering, with blood pouring from a head wound. Claire follows closely.

CLAIRE Mike, oh Mike, what have I done? Here, lie down on the sofa. Try not to get blood on it! I wasn't to know you wouldn't duck when I swung that saucepan. (She picks up the phone.)
Quick, nine, nine, nine. (She rattles the hook.) No dialing tone! (She looks down and picks up the loose ends of the wires she pulled out.) Oh hell, now what? A bandage. He needs a bandage. Bandages - kitchen.

Exit Claire to the kitchen.

Geoff comes out of the cupboard and looks for the source of all the noise. Enter Claire from the kitchen with a bandage and stops dead when she sees Geoff.

CLAIRE Geoff, where on earth have you been? I've looked everywhere for you.
GEOFF I can explain, but it's a long story.

He holds up his cuffed hands and his trousers fall down.

CLAIRE Geoffrey, this is not the time - and I told you I'm not into bondage. You've got to help me. Mike's hurt!
GEOFF (Pulling up his trousers.) Mike who?
CLAIRE My husb... Uncle. Look! (Pointing to where Mike is lying on the sofa.)
GEOFF Good lord, what happened to him?
CLAIRE Never mind that, I've got to get help. You stay with him.

She exits down the hall. The front door bangs. Granny moans and Geoff thinks it was Mike. He bandages Mike's head.

GEOFF It's alright old boy, your niece has gone for help. (Mike groggily sits up.)
MIKE Who the devil are you?
GEOFF You don't look old enough to be Claire's uncle.
MIKE Not the bloody family tree again. (He passes out.)
GEOFF I need some water to clean you up - the kitchen.

(Exit Geoff to kitchen.)

Steve comes out of the cupboard and looks down the hall. The door-bell rings and Steve quickly hides in cupboard 1. Geoff enters from kitchen.

CONSTABLE (Off-stage) Hello! Is anybody home. This is the police.
GEOFF The police! (He panics) They've come for me. Quick, Geoffrey, hide. There's no-one here to let them in. (He hides in cupboard 2.)

Granny staggers to her feet and goes to answer the door. Enter Sandra from the bedroom, looking unsteady on her feet. She hears voices in the hall and hides behind an arm-chair. Enter Granny with the policeman.

CONSTABLE Are you the owner, Madam?
GRANNY It's not working so well this time.
CONSTABLE What would that be, Madam?
GRANNY The medicine. I can't see through your uniform.
CONSTABLE I beg your pardon?
GRANNY It must be wearing off.

She staggers across to find another bottle but falls over behind the chair again. She snores.

CONSTABLE Certainly not! It's new issue - about six weeks old.

The front-door slams.

CONSTABLE Are you expecting someone, madam?

He turns around to find Granny has vanished. Enter Claire.

CLAIRE Goodness, how did you get in?

CONSTABLE I was let in, madam, by an elderly lady.

CLAIRE I've been looking everywhere for her. Where is she now?

CONSTABLE Vanished, madam.

CLAIRE Yes, she's quite good at that. Now, can I help you, constable?

CONSTABLE Au contraire, madam. I have come to warn you about a crazed idiot on the loose in these parts.

CLAIRE Really?

CONSTABLE He was arrested attempting to break into this very house by climbing in through an open window. You can't mistake him. He's dressed in judo gear and his hands are cuffed.

CLAIRE (Visibly startled.) Oh my!

CONSTABLE Unfortunately, he escaped from police custody. Do you have a torch? I would like to search outside for clues.

CLAIRE Certainly there should be one....

She opens cupboard 2 and closes it swiftly when she sees Geoffrey with his trousers around his ankles.

CLAIRE No, I'm sorry. We don't have a torch.

Mike groans.

CONSTABLE What was that?

CLAIRE I'm so sorry - it's my tummy. I've had no dinner tonight. If you don't mind I'll go and put the dinner in the oven.

CONSTABLE Certainly, madam. And if I might just take a quick look around, just in case?

CLAIRE If you must. (Exits to kitchen.)

The constable snoops around, unaware of the unconscious Mike, sleeping Granny and concealed Sandra.

CONSTABLE (Noticing the open window.) Aha, the ladder in question.

He crosses to the window.

Enter Cindy in her nightie. She is heading for the kitchen but stops when she sees the constable with his head out of the window.

CINDY Oh no you don't. Damned opportunist thief. I suppose he saw the ladder and thought he'd climb in.

Cindy grabs the constable's legs and tips him out of the window. Turning, she notices Mike laid out on the sofa.

CINDY (Admonishing) Dad, been on the sherry again?

She exits into the kitchen. Mike emits a loud moan.

SANDRA (Coming out from behind the chair) Mike, is that you?

MIKE (Barely conscious) Where is she?

SANDRA Who?

MIKE My wife.

SANDRA Poor Mike, you must be concussed. You're not married, remember?

MIKE Then, who are you?

SANDRA I'm Sandra.
MIKE Pleased to meet you, Sandra.

(He puts out his hand and tries to stand but wobbles.)

SANDRA Come on, let's get you into bed. You could do with some paracetamol.

She helps him hobble into the bedroom. Exit

GRANNY (On the floor) Roll out the barrel, we'll have a barrel of fun... (Trailing off...)

Geoffrey steps out of the cupboard and bends over to hitch up his trousers. At this moment, Steve opens his cupboard door a crack to peep out, then, seeing the coast is clear, he flings the door open. This hits Geoffrey on the head and he falls down unconscious. Steve hears voices in the kitchen and exits down the hall, unaware of the unconscious Geoffrey.

CLAIRE (Off-stage) I think you had better go straight to bed.
CINDY Good! I will.

Enter Cindy from the kitchen and exits to the hall, in a stop, not noticing the unconscious Geoff.
The door-bell rings. Enter Claire from the kitchen and exits down the hall. Enter Sandra on her way to the kitchen. However, she hears voices in the hall and quickly exits to the bedroom. Enter Claire with an ambulance-man.

MEDIC 1 And you say he tripped, madam, and fell?
CLAIRE That's right.
MEDIC 1 Where is the patient?
CLAIRE He's on the sofa. (Seeing Mike has gone) No he's not.
MEDIC 1 I presume this is he, madam, (pointing at Geoffrey) or do you have a collection of casualties.
CLAIRE No, I mean yes, I mean. What's going on?
MEDIC 1 (Kneeling over Geoff and feeling his pulse.) I presume he is your husband.
CLAIRE No he's not - I mean yes, he is.
MEDIC 1 It's alright, my dear, it often happens, you know. Close relatives often suffer shock and become confused when they see a loved one injured.
CLAIRE I'm not confused! Am I?
MEDIC 1 I'll tell you what - why don't you go and make us a nice cup of sweet tea. Raising the sugar levels often does the trick.
CLAIRE Alright. I'll just be in ... the kitchen. (She exits.)

The ambulance-man starts to bandage Geoffrey's head. Enter Cindy.

CINDY What's happening here? Who is this?
MEDIC 1 Who are you?
CINDY I live here, when I'm not at college.
MEDIC 1 Ah, then you must be the daughter.
CINDY Brilliant! But who's this?
MEDIC 1 I thought it was your father.
CINDY (Taking a good look) No, even after ten pints he doesn't look this bad.

Geoffrey comes round just as Claire enters.

CINDY Mummy, who is this man?
CLAIRE Just an ambulance-man, dear.
CINDY No, I mean this man!
GEOFF Did she say mummy?

MEDIC 1 Ah, good, he's coming round. This is her mother, sir, and you've had a nasty bang on the head.
GEOFF (To Claire) I thought you weren't married.
MEDIC 1 You've lost me now. Look, let's help him up and get him into bed. Where is the bedroom?
CLAIRE Just there.

They help Geoff to his feet. As they cross towards the bedroom, the door opens and Mike enters, supported by Sandra. Both couples freeze as they see one-another.

CLAIRE Michael, I think you have some explaining to do.
MIKE And so do you. (Enter Steve.) You again? I thought I'd sent you packing.
STEVE You did but I... I...
CINDY Daddy, what's happening? Who are all these people?
SANDRA What do you mean Daddy?

There is a loud hammering at the door.

MIKE I think I'll just get that - shall I? (He staggers off down the hall.)
CLAIRE (To Sandra) So what do you think you're doing with my husband?
SANDRA That's not your husband. It's your brother. He told me you were possessive - but you're plain deluded.
GEOFF You can talk! What a way to carry on with her uncle. What are you anyway, his nurse or his lover?
CLAIRE Whose uncle?

Enter Mike with another ambulance-man and the policeman, whose head is bandaged.

CONSTABLE (Pointing to Geoff) There he is - it's him. Arrest that man!
MEDIC 2 Steady now, constable, you've had a nasty bump on the head.
SANDRA Daddy, what are you doing here?
CONSTABLE Sandra, I thought you were at tennis. What happened to your head?
SANDRA What happened to yours? Mike, my father.
MIKE And who's the karate kid.
GEOFF Not karate - judo. And I'm a black belt, so you'd better watch out.
MIKE Where is your belt?
GEOFF He took it when he arrested me and put me in these.

He holds up the handcuffs and his trousers fall down. Granny, still hidden, starts to sing 'If you were the only boy in the world and I were the only girl'.

CINDY Come on Granny, time to go to bed.

She helps Granny off the floor, who spots Geoff with his trousers down.

GRANNY Hey, it does work after all. I say young man, are you busy tonight?
CINDY I think I'd better make everyone a nice cup of tea.

BLACKOUT