

ACT 1

SCENE 1

Mrs Delaney: Oh for goodness sakes, does no one answer the phone in this place only me!

George: Hmm.

(She lifts the phone)

Mrs Deleany: Hello. (she listens for a few seconds and then puts her hand over the mouthpiece) George, Its for you.

George: Tell them i'm asleep.

Mrs Delaney: He says he's asleep. (beat) hello, hello (the other person has hung up so she hangs up too) What do you want for your lunch. Do you want soup or do you want sandwiches?

George: Yes.

(Mrs Delaney shakes her head and walks back into the kitchen and Edna enters stage left with a fly swatter)

George: Edna, what are you going to do with that?

Edna: Clean my teeth. What does it look like?

George: Well it would certainly fit into your mouth.

Edna: George I'm going to make it fit somewhere else in a minute. (she brandishes the fly swatter at him)

George: You will have to find them first.

Edna: Find what?

George: Your teeth, I think I saw them in the bathroom.

Edna: I have my teeth in. This is for swatting flies, I hate flies.

(Edna shuffles around the room smacking flies)

George: You missed one.

(He points at a fly on the other table. Edna creeps up on the fly and smacks it hard)

Edna: I got him!

George: How do you know its a him?

Edna: With these new glasses, I can tell the difference.

(Miss Fitch enters the room stage left. Edna does not see her as she is just about to swipe a fly on George's table. As she brings her fly swatter back she accidentally hits Miss Fitch with it)

Miss Fitch: EDNA! what on earth are you doing? I hope your not causing anymore harm, that incident where you mixed up the false teeth caused a lot of sore gums. When Benedict had George's teeth in he looked like Red Rum.

Edna: But Miss Fitch, I wouldn't hurt a fly.

(They both look at the fly swatter and Edna quickly puts it behind her back)

Miss Fitch: I had something to ask you, and now I have forgotten. I am losing my memory and its getting worse.

(The phone rings and George answers it. After listening for a few seconds he speaks into the phone.)

George: I don't want to know that!

Miss Fitch: What did they say?

George: A man just told me he wanted to go to the toilet.

Miss Fitch: I don't believe you. (she takes the phone and listens. After a few seconds she hangs up the phone.)

Miss Fitch: George, change the batteries in your hearing aid. No one said they wanted to go to the toilet, it was a recorded message for PPI. (She walks away, then turns and says) Are you still working on that jigsaw?

George: Yes, but all the pieces look the same.

Miss Fitch: Turn them over.

George: I've done that, but they are still the same.

Miss Fitch: What's the picture on the box?

George: Its a farmyard scene with a big rooster.

(Miss Fitch walks over to where George is sitting and lifts the box of the floor)

Miss Fitch: Let me see? You silly old goat! It's a box of cornflakes!

(Edna looks at the table and nods. George grunts and lifts his newspaper. Edna looks into Miss Fitch's face and Miss Fitch jumps)

Miss Fitch: Don't do that Edna. Ah ! I remembered, HAIR. Tristan's coming to do hair, do you want yours done?

Edna: No, I do my own, but I'm letting it rest at the moment.

Miss Fitch: Edna dear, I think its rested enough.

Edna: I was thinking of taking up hairdressing.

Miss Fitch: What! When?

Edna: When i'm older.

Miss Fitch: Edna, your eighty nine. If you wait any longer you won't be able to see people's hair.

Edna: That dose'nt matter too much. As long as I can see the sissors.

(Marjorie enters the room stage left)

Miss Fitch: Marjorie, would you like Tristan to do your hair?

Marjorie: Oh yes, such a dear boy.

George: Im not sure what he is!

Miss Fitch: MMMMM, Ok just you then Marjorie.

(Noise from the kitchen)

Miss Fitch: I've just remembered something else, I need a word with cook.
(As she leaves the room) Has anyone seen Fred?

Edna: Yes, we have all been fed.

Miss Fitch: No you deaf old coot! I said has anyone seen FRED?

(Edna thinks for a moment)

Edna: I don't think so.

(Miss Fitch rolls her eyes and leaves the room through the kitchen door)

(Benedict Enters stage left)

George: Here's Red Rum.

Benedict: What?

Edna: Morning Benedict. (sweetly)

Benedict: Morning Edna.

Edna: Benedict, what colour are my eyes?

Benedict: I didn't know bloodshot was a colour.

Marjorie: Benedict, Don't say that to poor Edna.

Benedict: Marjorie, do you think Miss Fitch is losing her memory?

Marjorie: Yes, she got tablets to slow down memory loss, but they don't work.

Benedict: Why not?

Marjorie: She forgets to take them. (beat) And i'll tell you something else.

Benedict: What?

Marjorie: She is so tense.

Edna: What does she want a tent for?

Marjorie: No, not a tent. I said tense. You know jumpy.

Benedict: Thats because of the situation over this place.

Marjorie: What situation?

Benedict: You don't know. Well there is a chance that we

(This conversation is interrupted by a row coming from the kitchen between the cook and Miss Fitch who have appeared at the open serving hatch doors)

Mrs Delaney: What do you mean?

Miss Fitch: When I said it was ok to sample the food you cooked I meant one spoonful, not three platefuls!

Mrs Delaney: But cooking makes me hungry.

Miss Fitch: Oh I think you could afford to miss a few meals without fading away.

Mrs Delaney: Are you saying I'm fat?

Miss Fitch: Well, you know the old saying, If the cap fits. I doubt if much else does. Your going to have to cut back, we spend too much money on food.

Mrs Delaney: But they can't live on fresh air.

Miss Fitch: By the smell of this kitchen it's not so fresh, It's a death trap.

Mrs Delaney: I will quit!

Miss Fitch: I'll save you the bother, your fired!

(Miss Fitch then closes the serving hatch doors)

George: I liked cook.

Marjorie: Yes and we know why, she used to give you big samples of everything she made. You used to come out of that kitchen with your cheeks stuffed like a squirrel hoarding nuts for the winter.

(Miss Fitch comes out of the kitchen but Edna does not see her as she has her back to the kitchen door)

Edna: Miss Fitch is an old witch. (she says angrily)

(George laughs but Benedict and Marjorie look alarmed. Edna guesses what has happened and turns to Miss Fitch)

Edna: I was just telling Marjorie and Benedict about you going to dress up as a witch for halloween.

Miss Fitch: Tactfully done Edna. Cook is leaving, go and say good-bye.

Edna: I remembered! I saw Fred.

Miss Fitch: When, Where?

Edna: Yesterday, he's dead.

Miss Fitch: What!

Edna: He got run over by a lorry.

Miss Fitch: Oh no! Are you sure it was him? What did he look like?

(Edna plays dead with her tongue out)

Miss Fitch: No no, What did he look like before he was dead?

(Edna lifts her head opens her mouth, raises her hands and looks horrified. Miss Fitch stares at Edna. Marjorie pushes Edna into the kitchen in front of her and Benedict and George follow.

Marjorie: You have a wicked sense of humor Edna.

(Miss Fitch shakes her head, takes out her mobile and dials a number)

Miss Fitch: (In a posh voice) Hello, Could I speak to a Mr M Burger please? Its a Miss Fitch calling.

(Pause) (She has her back to the serving hatch doors and George has opened them to listen when he hears her on the phone.

Miss Fitch: Hello, Is that Mr M Burger?

(Pause for other voice.)

Miss Fitch: (very sweetly) Well ok Melvin, You can call me Mildred.

(George sticks his fingers down his throat and pretends to be sick)

(Pause)

Miss Fitch: It's going great, I have sacked the cook and the health inspector is coming tomorrow. I never even bothered to pay the electric bill because we won't be here. This place is as good as yours and you will be able to expand from your building site next door.

(Pause)

Miss Fitch: Oh old George, he keeps an eye on the others and will let me know if they find out what's going on. He was a traffic warden and you know how nosey they are.

(Pause)

Miss Fitch: He just thinks that I am giving him 20%. By the time it's all over I will be gone with 100%, and it will be too late for him to do anything about it. Silly old Goat.

(George closes the doors scowling)

Miss Fitch: Don't worry, I have it all sorted.

(Edna, Benedict, George & Marjorie come back into the room and Miss Fitch ends the call)

Miss Fitch: Got to go, bye.

Marjorie: She was a really good cook.

Miss Fitch: Right, enough about cook. She wasn't that good, don't exaggerate. I have told you a million times to turn off the lights when your not in the room, the electricity bills are too high.

(She storms out stage left turning off the light)

Edna: But we're still here.

(Benedict switches the light back on)

Benedict: She has lost the plot and now we have lost our cook.

George: What about going out to get Hamburgers?

Edna: Not for me, I lived in America for forty years and I never had one of those macwhopper things.

Benedict: I think we can manage without a macwhopper.

Marjorie: Well don't look at me, I was a Postmistress. I wouldn't know where to start. What about you Benedict?

Benedict: I was a Major in the army, I can't cook.

Marjorie: You told me you could do eggs Benedict.

Benedict: Yes, but that's all.

(Edna looks into Benedict's face and he jumps)

Benedict: Edna, you remind me of someone but I can't think who.

Edna: I worked in a kitchen, I can cook.

Benedict: Great, how about some lunch?

Edna: I think I saw some Ox tongue in the fridge.

Marjorie: Oh no, I couldn't eat anything out of the mouth of an animal, but I like eggs.

George: What part of an animal do they come out of ?

Marjorie: Ok, skip the eggs.

(At this point George sneaks back into the kitchen)

Edna: Well what would you like? I can cook anything.

Marjorie: How about some Bagels for your Colleagues.

Edna: Ok, But I will need my Korean cookbook.

Benedict: Why do you need a Korean cookbook?

Edna: Because Koreans eat dogs.

Marjorie: I said Bagels for your colleagues, not Beagles or Collies.

Edna: Oh!

Benedict: I have to ask. What's this Korean cookbook called?

Edna: "How to Wok your dog."

Marjorie: I think we will just have the bagels this time Edna. Thanks.

(Edna goes into the kitchen and is hit by the door because George is coming the other way. She staggers into the kitchen stunned and he staggers round the room drunk and falls into his chair. Edna's voice comes from the kitchen)

Edna: Who drank all this bottle of whiskey?

(Marjorie and Benedict look over at George who has fallen asleep)

Marjorie: Benedict, finish what you were telling me earlier?

Benedict: What about?

Marjorie: About what's happening here!

Benedict: What, oh right. Well there is a chance we might have to move out. Before you came here this place was owned by a man called William Fitzpatrick, who left this place in his will to.....

(George leans over sideways in his chair and Benedict goes over and straightens him up.)

Marjorie: WHO ! Who did he leave it to?

Benedict: Miss Fitch!

Marjorie: I don't believe you!

Benedict: It's true.

Marjorie: But why?

Benedict: Because she was always really nice to him, it was all an act, he was her boss, but there were certain conditions. She must run it as normal, but if it fails it's health & safety inspection it will be closed down.

(George leans the other way and Marjorie goes over to straighten him up)

Marjorie: Then what?

Benedict: Then it becomes hers to do whatever she likes with. He probably thought it would be ok, he never knew what she was really like. The kitchen is in a bad state of repair, she just sacked cook and the inspection is due soon. Things can't get much worse.

(George has leaned right over and no one has noticed. Then he breaks wind loudly and wakens himself up. Benedict & Marjorie move quickly to the other side of the room holding their noses)

Goerge: I've been trying to do that for ages, but you two kept straightening me up.

Marjorie: Oh George, Put a cork in it.

Benedict: Not a good idea. We tried that once but when he bent over he shot the cat!

(Edna puts her head through the serving hatch)

Edna: I just came in to tell you that PHHWEW !

(Edna puts her head back into the kitchen and returns wearing a gas mask and mumbles something)

Benedict: Edna, take that thing off, it's not that bad now.

(Edna takes off the mask)

Edna: I just came in to tell you that I am heating up some sausage rolls first.

Marjorie: Thats great , bring them out.

(Edna returns to the kitchen)

George: Here's something you don't know. The health inspector is coming tomorrow and Fitch has made a deal to sell this place to SOME GUY CALLED HAMBURGER who plans to flatten it and build a moll or something on the site.

Benedict: A moll.

Marjorie: He probably means a shopping Mall, right.

George: Thats what it was.

Benedict: Thats it then. The kitchen won't pass the inspection and we are homeless.

George: I'll flatten Fitch.

(George shakes his fists and lifts a pot plant to throw but Benedict stops him.

Benedict: No George, I like that plant.

Marjorie: It's only an old plant.

(George sets the plant down and Benedict takes Marjorie away from George, who has dozed off again and tells her about the plant.)

Benedict: It's not just a plant. Remember Mr Fitzpatrick, well thats where his ashes are, In the plant. It was in his will, he liked flowers.

Marjorie: Who knows about the Ashes?

Benedict: Just me and Miss Fitch. George and Edna don't know because they were watching TV one night and someone said everyone who died should be cremated. They are both getting on a bit, and I think it scared them, so we didn't tell them about Mr Fitzpatrick.

(George wakens with a start and knocks over the cornflake box spilling it's contents. As Benedict & Marjorie start picking them up Edna arrives with the sausage rolls.)

Edna: Sausage rolls are ready.

(The kitchen door swings back into the room hitting Edna causing her to spill the contents of her tray on the floor. No one has noticed so she sets the tray on top of George's Zimmer frame and starts picking them up and cleaning the dirt of them. The last sausage roll is below the zimmer and as she picks it up she hits her head on the tray spilling the sausage rolls again. She rubs her head, looks at the floor and starts to picks them up again. She backs back and stands on a sausage roll, looks at it then kicks it with her foot. Edna now moves towards the others who now look up from their task)

Edna: Hear we are.

Marjorie: They look good Edna.

(At which point Edna sneezes on the tray, looks at it sadly and heads back towards the kitchen with her head down)

Edna: The bagels should be ready by now.

(Everyone else looks worried)

Benedict: George, how do you know all this?

George: I overheard Fitch on the phone with SOME GUY CALLED HAMBURGER.

(Edna returns with black, hard bagels. George laughs but Benedict & Marjorie sigh)

Benedict: Edna. What on earth are they?

Edna: They are Bagels.

Marjorie: They are black.

Edna: They are cajun.

George: They are burnt.

(Benedict takes a bagel and taps the plate with it, breaking the plate)

Benedict: Edna if that just broke the plate, What would it have done to my teeth?

Edna: Why should you worry, they are false.

(Edna returns to the kitchen again)

Edna: It's hard work this cooking business. Does anyone like Tuna?

Marjorie: Yes, I would love a Tuna steak.(she says hopefully)

Edna: I think there are a few tins in the cupboard.

(Marjorie sighs. Miss Fitch enters the room stage left)

Miss Fitch: Whats going on? What on earth are they?

Marjorie: Edna has been cooking for us. She says they are cajun bagels.

Miss Fitch: Edna can't cook.

Benedict: Can't cook!

Marjorie: She said she worked in a kitchen.

Miss Fitch: She was a school dinner lady.

Benedict: A school dinner lady!

(Miss Fitch looks at Benedict)

Miss Fitch: She only cleared the tables.

Benedict: Cleared tables!

(Miss Fitch glares at Benedict)

Miss Fitch: There's an echo in here. Yes cleared tables in a school canteen in America.

Benedict: In America!

Miss Fitch: There's that echo again.

(Benedict thinks for a moment then walks toward the kitchen)

Benedict: Edna.

Edna: Yes.

(As he opens the door it hits Edna coming the other way and knocks her back into the kitchen)

Benedict: I've hit something.

Miss Fitch: Probably Edna.

(There is a loud crashing sound coming from the kitchen)

Edna: Benedict help!

(Benedict opens the kitchen door and is hit in the face by a jet of water)

George: Looks like we have a burst pipe.

Benedict: Not much gets past you, does it? That's easy fixed. No problem.

(A loud explosion is heard in the kitchen and some smoke drifts through the door followed by a blackened staggering Edna holding the door of a kitchen cupboard.)

George: Oh look, Edna is doing cajun again. Why have you got that door in your hand?

Edna: That's all's left of the kitchen.

(Benedict looks at George)

George: How do we fix that one Benedict?

End of scene 1