

# Jail Birds

A farcical comedy play

by Colin Barrow

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## CAST

7 female, 3 male, 1 either

The prisoners should all be portrayed as retired people, this may need some actors/actresses to age themselves up. The remaining cast can be of any suitable working age

Emma.....	Prisoner, an artist
Jane.....	Prisoner, money launderer and computer addict
Mary.....	Prisoner, crippled and never speaks
Lewis.....	Male prisoner, a burglar
Officer Parker.....	Prison Officer
Sandra.....	Prisoner, scientist and illegal distiller
Sonia.....	Prisoner, horticulturist
Jenny.....	Prisoner, ran an illegal brothel
Angela.....	Prisoner, wheel chair bound, seamstress
Governor.....	Prison Governor
Nurse Dawson.....	Prison Nurse

## SET PLAN AND DETAILS

A simple box set having two up stage exits, one left and one right. This should give the illusion that the prison communal area is set along a corridor. Where off-stage stage space is limited at smaller premises, a single exit could be used with some entry and exiting adjustments as written in the script.

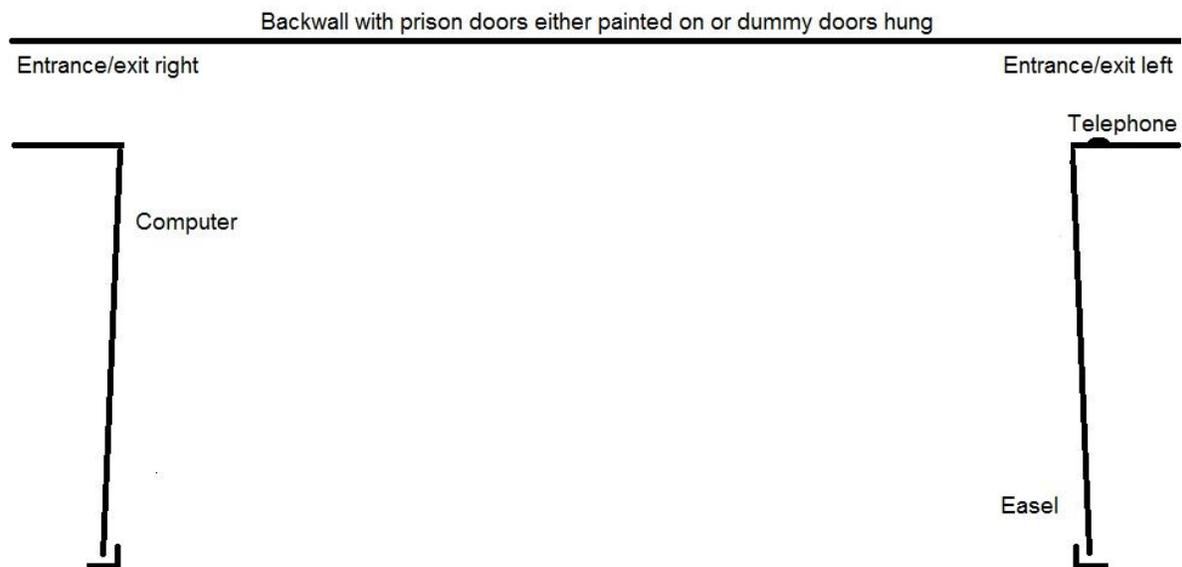
On the back wall, there should be dummy prison doors screwed onto the surface. It would also be possible to paint door images direct onto the wall, if this would be more preferable. The doors will strengthen the look of the setting, reminding the audience where the action is taking place. The stage size will dictate the number of doors displayed. With a centrally positioned door the others would lead off at equal distances left and right. Odd numbers looks more effective, three, five, seven, etc. The far left and right doors should be partially seen by the audience and leading off stage out of view to give the illusion of a continuing corridor.

The general décor should have some expected elements and characteristics of a prison. In addition to these, there should also be a homely and a luxury influence. The dressing of the stage must reflect good living and plushness, (*carpet or rugs,*

arm chairs and smaller occasional chairs, scatter cushions, pictures, furniture, ornaments displayed, etc) In fact, you can go over-the-top with set dressing as it will fit the essence of the story. The only elements required by the script are:- a minimum of three plush arm chairs, (do not need to match) and you can add more if the stage size allows. At stage front left, an artist easel and stool/chair for Emma,

and at mid to upper stage right, a computer and chair for Jane. A radio or CD player is placed on a shelf or piece of furniture at middle to upstage left or right. There is a wall mounted telephone just off stage left, only the handset will be seen by the audience when it is used.

## STAGE PLAN



The chairs, furniture, compact disc player and wall pictures are set according to the stage size

**A note for the director:-** Although the script includes entrance and exit direction, in the main there is no stipulation as to which ones. For the smaller groups using only one entrance/exit, this will not matter. For the rest using two entrances/exits, make sure the hospital, garden/outside and kitchen are allotted to one and the Governor's office, male wing and main entrance allotted to the other. These exits or entrances will only apply to particular cast in certain scenes. The remaining entrances and exits can be set to suit the general flow and tidiness of the performance.

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## **CHARACTER AND COSTUMING GUIDLINES**

Research done at the time of writing seems to be at odds with prisoner clothing and of course different between countries. It would appear the rules for women can be different to men and different prisons have their own rules regarding clothing. What does seem to be a pivotal point is that after three months of imprisonment you may be able to wear your own clothing (*prison approved*) of a limited amount, on account of good behaviour. The women prisoners can wear their own clothing on account of that good behaviour clause. The one male prisoner in the cast wears a track/jogging suit which seems to be normal issue, as he frequently breaks out of his own wing into the women's wing. At the time of production, I would advise a few minutes of internet research on what the clothing rules are at that time as they can alter. If you do use the prison standard issue type of clothing, I suggest the women's are a different colour to the one male prisoner in the cast.

If you are using their own clothing option:- In general, the prisoners need whole or partial costume changes during the course of the play to indicate a different day or week. The staff can remain in the same costume as it will be a uniform or suit.

**EMMA:-** Can have a slightly abrupt attitude where needed. A local or other accent could also work well. Her costume should reflect an artist with some paint marks upon it. Trousers or leggings would work well with a smock or loose top.

**JANE:-** Works well being a soft mellow type of person, but at times more authoritative in a soft way. Her costuming should be quite feminine and pretty.

**MARY:-** She never speaks. She walks painfully and slowly with a walking frame. Costuming is flexible and include skirts or dresses to fit with the dialogue and actions. (*If you use the prison issue clothing and she wears trousers, where the script instructs the character to flap her skirt, she can pinch and pull at her trousers instead to give the effect required.*)

**LEWIS:-** Quite jovial and light hearted. Could have a local accent. He comes across as quite active and not laboured in his gait. He wears a jogging/tracksuit as issued by the prison.

**PARKER:-** Quite authoritative, but mellows when required in the script. His walk and stature should be quite regimented but relaxes this when he is hoodwinked into the web of the prisoners schemes. His costume should be typical of a prison officer of the day.

**SANDRA:-** Bossy, authoritative and can be quite stern. Quite quick in her walk. Costuming should suit her character and not be soft or flowery. Possibly never without an large handbag, which she could use to her advantage by allowing it to swing about and be used as a prop to strengthen her actions.

**SONIA:-** Quite harsh, forthright and butch. Her costume should reflect a horticulturist with a masculine influence.

**JENNY:-** Has elegance with a business like attitude. Speaks well and sexily when required in the script. Where possible she ought to be costumed in fashionable attire to suit a woman at least thirty years younger. Depending on the actress and her comfort zone, the costuming could have suggestion of a dominatrix.

**ANGELA:-** Wheeled chair bound. Should be quite well dressed in designer type clothing to suit her dialogue.

**GOV:-** Well spoken, but not over authoritative. Walks with a reasonable relaxed manner. Smartly dressed, business like.

**NURSE:-** Best played by a female, but a male can also do the part justice. Speech can be very a local/broad accent or foreign. A scatterbrain and quite inefficient at the job. Always has a tendency to be in a rush. Costumed suitable for a nurse and could show a little untidiness to suit the character. Will require disposable aprons and gloves for some scenes.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

### ACT I

Scene one..... Morning  
Scene two.....Late morning  
Scene three..... A week later

### ACT II

Scene one.....Later that day  
Scene two..... The following morning  
Scene three..... The next day  
Scene four... Four weeks later, the day of the outing

## JAIL BIRDS

### ACT I

#### Scene one

#### **Morning**

A prison communal area which has a homely look and feel to reflect good living. **This includes:-** A minimum of three arm chairs and/or smaller occasional chairs none of which need to match. Various scatter cushions on the chairs. Wall pictures. Objects d'art displayed where possible on furniture or shelving. At stage front left, an artists easel, stool/chair, paint brushes in a jar and paints. On the easel is an unfinished messy painting of a lady in a red dress. Mid to upper stage right, a computer and chair. A radio or CD player is placed on a shelf or piece of furniture at middle to up stage left or right. And any additional furniture and dressing to fit the stage space available. There is a telephone wall mounted just off stage left, only the handset will be seen by the audience when it is used.

*The curtain rises on a well lit prison communal area. Jane is sitting at the computer, stage right. Emma is sitting at her easel painting, stage left*

**Emma** *(looking across to Jane)* Why do you spend so much time on that thing?

**Jane** It's marvellous and so informative. You name it and it's here, Emma.

**Emma** At your time of life you shouldn't need to fill your head with more useless rubbish.

**Jane** Not all of it's rubbish.

**Emma** *(turning back to the painting)* Everything is rubbish if you don't use it.

**Jane** *(looks at Emma)* Who says I won't use it?

**Emma** *(glances back at Jane)* You do realize, Jane, dear, that you're locked up in this prison for the rest of your life?

**Jane** *(turning back to the computer)* That's no reason for not keeping my brain agile and alert.

*Emma looks toward off stage left corridor and sees Mary about to enter the stage*

**Emma** Look out, here she comes again. The tortoise that's lost the hare!  
*(Turns back to the painting)*

*Mary enters stage left very slowly with her walking frame. During the following dialogue, she crosses to move painfully and slowly down stage right, passing behind Emma. She then slowly crosses stage front before moving up stage left passing Jane and crossing to exit off stage right just after Lewis enters*

**Jane** At least Mary keeps moving. The only time you detach yourself from that easel is for meals or at bedtime.

**Emma** *(swivels around to face Emma)* That's the pot calling the kettle black. It's a wonder you don't get square eyes looking at that thing all day.

**Jane** *(looks at Emma)* I'd much sooner have square eyes than be crippled like Mary.

**Emma** *(glancing at Mary)* You wouldn't think she held up a bank with a shotgun two years ago would you? Such a pity she got caught before getting her hands on the cash.

**Jane** It was her own fault for fastening the shotgun onto her mobility scooter. She should have realized the recoil from the gun would tip her scooter onto its back. *(Turns back to the computer; with sympathy)* Poor soul, having to wait with her legs waving in the air until the police arrived.

**Emma** *(swivels back to the painting)* Did the trick though didn't it? Saved her from going into a residential care home dwindling her life's savings. Now with life imprisonment, she can live out her days in luxury without paying a penny.

**Jane** Good old government making life plush and comfortable for the prisoners. The thought of living out our days roughing it in an old folks home doesn't bear thinking about.

**Emma** I haven't seen Sandra for some time now. Where is she?

**Jane** She has a meeting with the Governor.

**Emma** *(with a slight glance to Jane)* What about?

**Jane** Persuading him on giving us a better Television package. It will give a much better choice of programmes.

**Emma** *(turns back to the painting)* I'm all in favour of that. Do you think she will succeed?

**Jane** *(turning to Emma)* Have you ever known the Queen Bee losing a battle with the governor! *(Turns back to the computer)*

**Emma** That's true. *(Omit the remaining line if prison clothing is used)* I

mean look what she did so we could wear our own clothes and not

the prison standard issue. The men still have to wear those dreary jogging suit things!

*Enter Lewis stage left. He is carrying a newspaper. Mary continues to exit right after his entrance*

**Lewis** Morning girls.

**Emma** }  
} Morning Lewis.  
**Jane** }

**Lewis** Have you heard today's news headlines?

**Jane** *(glances at Lewis)* No.

**Lewis** A scam has rocketed the banking world. Millions has disappeared without trace.

**Emma** *(glances at Lewis)* These days of technology it can be traced, surely?

**Lewis** *(sitting)* Apparently not. The banks computers have been hacked into and large sums of money removed. The money has transferred so fast electronically between various accounts all over the world and leaving the trail stone cold.

**Jane** Except for the perpetrator.

**Lewis** *(to Jane)* You spend hours on that thing, Jane. It's not you is it?

**Jane** *(with vagueness)* I wouldn't know where to start.

**Lewis** But you're in here for money laundering.

**Jane** Only to be caught, sentenced and cared for in comfort so that I want for nothing till I snuff it.

*Enter Nurse stage left hurriedly wearing a clean disposable apron, with a medicine bottle and a dessert spoon. Comes down to near stage front*

**Nurse** Anyone seen Mary? *(Pausing waiving the bottle)* Doctor Jones wants her take take this three times a day to try and cure her bilious attacks. *(Pulls a slight face of forgetfulness)* I've forgotten to give this morning's dose to her.

**Lewis** *(pointing off, stage right)* Just missed her, she went that way.

**Nurse** *(begin to rush off then stops, sniffing)* Can't smell anything.  
*(Quickly looking around at each person)* I don't think she's dropped one!

**Jane** One what?

**Nurse** A back door cough. *(Glancing quickly to everyone)* She's worse than a horse that's been eating radishes! *(Rushing to exit and stops)* Must try and catch up with her before her bum starts grumbling again. *(Exits)*

**Emma** I'd sooner die and have done with it than be nursed by that imbecile!

*Enter prison Officer Parker*

**Parker** *(firmly)* Lewis Weston! What are you doing here in the women's wing again? This is not a hotel with the right to wander where the mood takes you.

*Emma and Jane return to their activities*

**Lewis** *(smugly)* I prefer the ladies company to those boring old farts in my wing. And I can't see the problem, as I'm still under lock and key.

*Enter Sandra*

**Sandra** Morning, Nosy.

**Parker** *(abrupt)* Sandra Hopkirk! Just because my surname is Parker, it doesn't give you or anyone the right to call me nosy!

**Sandra** Keep your hair on, Nosy. *(Sits)* At least we say it to your face and not when your back is turned.

**Parker** Where have you just come from by the way?

**Sandra** *(confidently)* Been to see the Governor about a better television package.

**Lewis** Any luck?

**Sandra** *(smugly)* Putty in my hands and our request will be met. *(Firmly)* Well, Nosy, haven't you got work to do? This place will soon go downhill if the staff don't pull their weight.

**Parker** *(stern)* You people seem to think we're here to wait on you hand, foot and finger. We - are - not! I work damn hard and pay my taxes to keep you lot in here.

**Sandra** And we've worked damn hard and paid our taxes all our lives too.  
*(Firmly)* And it's about time we benefited from some of it.

**Parker** You all treat this prison like a first class retirement home!

**Emma** *(turns to face Parker)* Exactly. If it was dreadful and dire it would mean all our criminal efforts had been wasted.

**Parker** *(looking at them in awe)* Am I to take it you all planned your imprisonment?

**Sandra** *(firmly)* To damned right we have. *(Instructing)* Now, if you don't mind, I fancy a cup of coffee!

**Jane** *(turns to face Parker)* We could all do with a cup.

**Sandra** *(telling)* And a nice quality biscuit selection today please. Not those dog biscuits we had yesterday.

**Parker** *(abrupt)* Just who the hell do you think I am?

**Sandra** A member of staff which caters for our needs, so get cracking.

**Parker** *(exiting toward stage right)* One of these days you'll get your comeuppance, *(on exiting)* you mark my words.

*All blow a raspberry towards Parker*

**Lewis** Today's headline news makes good reading.

*Emma attends to her painting*

**Sandra** I had a quick glance through the paper in the Governor's office. And if banks can afford to pay huge sums of money to those fat cats at the top, they can afford to lose a few million.

**Jane** *(turns back to the computer)* My feelings entirely.

*Enter Sonia*

**Sonia** I'm so glad we pushed the Governor to have the commercial greenhouse for the garden. The larger crops will certainly keep the prison kitchen and a little local trade well supplied.

**Lewis** I must congratulate you, Sonia, on making the gardening club a great success.

**Sonia** *(peering over Emma's shoulder at the painting)* Everyone has been so enthusiastic and we've also been able to pick and sell our surplus crop to the outside world.

- Lewis** I'm surprised the Governor allows that!
- Sonia** *(moves across to Jane and glances over her shoulder)* That was down to Sandra's persuasion, and the Governor signed a contract allowing us to send the surplus produce to Cathy's country store.  
*(Looking toward Sandra)*
- Sandra** *(smugly)* He soon realised a little profit from our produce would look well on the prison accounts books.
- Lewis** *(with concern)* Can Cathy be trusted?
- Sonia** *(quickly haughtily)* Of course she can be trusted, she's bent as a cork screw! Cathy has a successful business with her accounts showing her on the brink of bankruptcy.
- Emma** *(swivels to look at Sonia)* Is Cathy destined to become one of us?
- Sonia** *(sits in a chair or on the arm of one)* When life becomes too difficult living on her own, she will sell her home and stow the funds away -along with the rest of her wealth - with her nearest and dearest. After which, she will commit a brilliant crime, and hey presto, *(indicating the surrounds)* luxury living.
- Lewis** *(agreeable)* A very wise woman with her head screwed on.
- Enter Jenny on her mobile phone*
- Jenny** That's enough for today. I'll give you more next time you bad boy!
- Jane** *(swivelling away from the computer)* Who's that, Jenny?
- Jenny** One of my clients.
- Emma** *(turning back to the painting)* One of these days you'll get caught. A little side-line business is one thing, running a chat line is another kettle of fish.
- Jenny** Talking with desperate sex driven men is the only action I get these days!
- Lewis** Beats me how they know your number in the first place.
- Jenny** I advertise my services in newspapers.
- Lewis** *(keenly)* Which ones?
- Jenny** *(pointing to the newspaper)* If you go to the classifieds pages in that one and look under the personal services column, you'll see it.

*Lewis turns the pages quickly until he finds the classifieds pages. Looks eagerly.*

**Lewis** Here it is. *(Reading to himself frowning)* Are you sure this is you?

**Jenny** Just read it out.

*All look and listen with interest*

**Lewis** *(reading aloud)* Dial a Dolly. A professional sex chat line for men giving complete satisfaction. All fantasies covered and exciting the imagination for hot blooded male. Call Madame Whiplash, day or night for the experience of a life time. Then it gives the contact details and automatically deducted costs.

**Emma** *(astounded)* How many men do you get phoning?

**Jenny** *(quite matter of fact)* Some days more than others. *(Brightly enthused)* But at times this phone's on permanent charge!

**Jane** How long has this been going on?

**Jenny** Eight months or so now. Got some good regulars too and with such filthy minds. *(Chuckles)*

**Lewis** *(at a loss)* Why do such a thing?

**Jenny** Stops me from me being bored and old habits die hard.

**Emma** *(alert)* What old habits?

**Jenny** Running an unlicensed brothel and pleasure house in a government property. That was my one way ticket into this place.

**Emma** Surely the closing down of your establishment and a hefty fine would be quite normal. At most, a prison sentence would only be for a few years.

**Jenny** *(happily)* Not when the arresting Officer and the County Judge were two of my best clients!

**Sandra** *(a little taken aback)* And you knew who these men were when running this whore house of yours?

**Jenny** *(proudly)* Naturally I knew their identities, I ran rather an elite establishment you know. *(More factual)* Which meant it was easy to have my premises raided, arrested, and then sentenced to life imprisonment.

**Lewis** And what if they didn't agree to your scheme?

**Jenny** *(laughingly)* Then they would be exposed with some of my interesting and carefully taken photographs.

- Sonia** You crafty old sod, Jenny. I bet they're much happier now the photographic evidence has been destroyed?
- Jenny** Destroyed! I'm not stupid. The said photo images are safely stowed away just in case I require the services of those two fine law abiding citizens again.
- Jane** (*searching*) How come you've got a mobile? We have to use the communal telephone.
- Jenny** (*sitting where possible*) On the day I was admitted into this prison the Governor recognised me. It's amazing what you can persuade people to do when they want to keep a secret.
- Emma** (*astounded*) He was a client of yours?
- Jenny** Oh yes and very popular with my girls. Anyway, he deals with the contract and payments. I chat with the men and have the premium rate earnings paid direct into a secret bank account of mine.
- Sandra** (*happily*) How do you all fancy going on a day's outing?
- Lewis** Do you think you can swing it?
- Sandra** Jenny has just made it a dead cert.
- Lewis** (*at reasonable volume*) We shall need some bottles of your special brew, Sandra?
- Sandra** (*quickly quelling*) Sssh not so loud! You know they don't allow that sort of thing in here. It was the devils own job to get the Governor to allow me to practise my little experiments in the first place.
- Jane** Surely he knows you were locked up here for operating a unlicensed distillery?
- Sandra** That was the sticking point in getting him to agree to my laboratory. I had to make a solemn promise not to start any such activities within these walls.
- Jane** (*forthright*) But you are distilling within these walls!
- Sandra** Not technically. You see, I made that promise in his office. My laboratory is a different building entirely and not within these walls.
- Jenny** Thank goodness for that because I look forward to my little tipple every day.
- Jane** (*Turns her attention back to the computer*) We all do, Jenny! And it's damn good stuff too!

**Sandra** Only because I don't water it down, it's high alcohol content!

**Lewis** *(getting up and going to Emma)* What are you painting? *(Looking at the painting)*

**Emma** An undiscovered piece of work by Picasso. My nephew has a client looking for one.

**Lewis** How will you get it to him? *(Returns to his seat)*

*Mary enters in her slow laboured speed from stage right. During the following dialogue she comes down to stage front and crosses towards stage left*

**Emma** The Governor is very keen on art and quite happy for my paintings to be rolled up in his presence then placed into a cardboard roll, sealed, and ready for dispatch. As long as I keep my thumb over the forged signature, he's none the wiser.

**Jane** Poor old Governor. His signature is on all our little adventures.

*Jenny's mobile phone rings. She answers it*

**Jenny** *(seductively and sexy)* Madame Whiplash at your service. How can I whet your appetite and fill your desires today?

**Jane** There's the voice of experience.

**Jenny** *(gets up and exits whilst talking)*. I accommodate for every demand, but refunds are null and void.

**Emma** *(with distaste)* How that woman sleeps at night with a clear conscience is beyond me.

**Sandra** *(looks toward Mary)* Morning, Mary. Are you well?

*The sound of Mary loudly breaking wind is heard*

**Sonia** *(with humour)* She's all right.

*Mary pauses and flaps the back of her skirt with her hand*

**Jane** *(detecting an aroma)* I wish you'd stop eating eggs and beans together, Mary? A healthy gut is one thing; a stink of that magnitude is quite asphyxiating.

*Those near Mary can use body language to back up Jane's line. Meanwhile, Mary slowly moves on during the following dialogue and exits eventually stage left*

**Lewis** *(standing)* Suppose I had better wander back to my area.

**Sandra** You can come on our outing, Lewis, as you're almost one of us. But the others in your wing are exempt.

**Lewis** *(begin to exit)* You need permission first?

**Emma** *(indicating Sandra)* If she's arranging it, you can take it as read that the residents of this wing are going on a day out.

*Lewis exits. Enter Parker pushing Angela in a wheelchair. Angela is holding a garment that she is sewing and has a sewing kit on her lap. Once placed in position she begins to sew*

**Parker** Here we are Angela, back with your inmates.

**Angela** *(sternly correcting)* Residents if you don't mind.

**Parker** You're in prison, you are all inmates.

**Sandra** And we inmates are still awaiting our coffee.

**Parker** It will be brought to you when there's a moment to do so.

**Sandra** *(impatiently)* Come on, Nosy, get your finger out. My stomach thinks my throats cut.

**Parker** *(turning to exit; abruptly)* For your information I have all my fingers out. *(Exiting)* You'll get your coffee when I'm good and ready.

**Jane** *(swivels and looks at Angela)* What are you sewing, Angela?

**Angela** Just a little something for my niece. Poor thing, loves designer clothes but can't afford any. Still with my skills no one can tell the difference.

*Lewis returns*

**Lewis** *(slightly annoyed)* Comes to something when a locksmith can't break back into his own wing again.

**Jane** *(swivels back to the computer)* Park your bum down, Lewis. Parker is bringing us coffee and biscuits.

*Nurse enters hurriedly stage right and comes down near stage front. Still holding the bottle with the cap removed and spoon*

**Nurse** *(looking around quickly)* Mary not here?

**All** *(pointing stage left)* She's gone that way.

**Nurse** *(waiving the bottle)* I've been all that time trying to get the flipping

childproof cap off! (*Glancing around quickly*) And it's ruddy adult

proof too! Eventually I got the cap off and when I looked up Mary had gone! (*With a hand movement to indicate speed*) Phut!  
(*Begins to hurriedly exit*) Have to get this down her gullet before she contaminates the air again! (*Exits hurriedly left*)

*Jenny enters stage right*

**Jenny** Another satisfied customer.

**Sonia** That was quick, he couldn't have wanted much?

**Jenny** It was just an enquiry of my services. Now I've wetted his appetite he will be a regular for certain. (*With slight seduction*) He had rather interesting fantasies of a spine quivering nature.

**Emma** (*abrupt*) Do - you - mind! Your lurid activities are interfering with my concentration. If I'm not careful I shall be painting an appendage that has no place in this masterpiece!

**Sonia** (*quite flatly*) It would certainly make that dreary painting look more interesting. As it is, it leaves me quite stone cold!

**Angela** (*remembering*) Oh, I've been visiting Anita at the prison hospital. That's where I've just come from actually, time's running out for the old girl.

**Emma** She won't be back here again then?

**Angela** Too ill for that, she'll remain in the hospital till the end. And that means a new resident will soon be with us.

**Sandra** (*stern*) We don't want just anybody taking her cell. Does anyone know of a lady who's about to go into an old folks home? Someone happy to fit in with us here and not rock any boats?

**Sonia** The last I heard, my neighbour could be.

**Sandra** What's she like?

**Sonia** Salt of the earth, do anything for anybody.

**Sandra** (*glances around*) Anyone else?

*Everyone shakes their head as negative*

**Sandra** (*instructive*) You had better get on the phone and offer her first class accommodation here. She had better get weaving though before some other undesirable bugger slips in instead.

**Lewis** (*inquisitively*) This neighbour of yours, Sonia. Is she attractive?

- Sonia** Very tall, immensely thin with a well lived in face.
- Lewis** (*dreamily*) Mmmm, sounds nice and I just adore scrawny women. My late wife was that thin she had bones poking out all over the place!
- Sonia** You won't get far with Trudi I'm afraid, Lewis. Men do nothing for her, if you get my drift.
- Lewis** Pity. (*Sexily suggesting*) Any of you girls fancy a turn somewhere quiet?
- All** (*except Jenny*) No!
- Jenny** (*with interest*) Seeing as the phone is quiet on the theory side of things, suppose a bit of practical wouldn't go amiss.
- Emma** Disgusting!
- Lewis** Enjoy what you can and when you can, Emma. You're a long time dead you know?
- Angela** (*remembering*) That reminds me, when I was with Anita just now, keeping her company and talking about nothing of interest, there was a gathering of prison board members and a representative from the home office.
- Jane** (*swivelling giving her attention to those gathered*) I wonder why?
- Angela** Cost cutting. There was little they could do in the hospital, but in the kitchens they could cut costs considerably with ease.
- Sandra** In what way?
- Angela** Have ready prepared meals brought in rather than cook fresh here.
- Sandra** (*abrupt*) If that's what they think, they can damn well think again. I'm residing here to get the best of things, not to be fed rubbish.
- Enter Parker with the coffee on a wheeled trolley. It has a cafetiere, jug of milk, sugar and bone china cups and saucers and serviettes. Also a tiered cake stand with a selection of biscuits*
- Parker** Here's your coffee.
- Sandra** (*forcefully enquiring*) Hey, Nosy. What's this gathering of money cutting sharks doing here?
- Parker** (*happily*) To restrict you lot of luxuries with any luck.

- Angela** (with reservation) I don't agree with that! We wouldn't have committed our crimes if prison standard of care was poor and unpleasant.
- Parker** (firmly) If it was down to me you'd have bread and water and rough it!
- Sandra** Well it ain't down to you, is it? (Getting up) It looks as if I need to have an authoritative word with this lot and put them straight on a few things.
- Sandra moves to exit*
- Parker** (amused) I don't know what power you think you have?
- Sandra** (smugly) I have the right to give my point of view and if that don't work, I'm sure there's at least one of them who will remember Jenny!
- Parker** (puzzled) Meaning?
- Sandra** It would appear that many so called respected citizens have a skeleton in the cupboard that they wish to remain there! (Exits)
- Parker** Now what's all that supposed to mean?
- Jane** (amused) If you don't know, Nosy, then you've led a sinless life with no photographs to prove otherwise.
- Parker** Photographs? What Photographs?
- Angela** None for you to worry about so it seems. Now start pouring the coffee?
- Parker** I'm not your ruddy servant. (Begins to exit) And prison is not intended to be luxury living. (Exits)
- Lewis** (happily) Now then ladies, shall I be mother?
- All** Yes please, Lewis.

*Lewis begins to pour out the coffee. Nurse rushes on stage with a spoon containing medicine in one hand and the bottle and cap in the other. On the apron are good splashes and dribbles of spat out medicine. Use a coloured substance which is sticky and very slow running*

- Nurse** Mary spat the first spoon-full out all over me and won't open her mouth for this one. (Quickly looking around, offering) Anyone in need of some jollop for wind?