



INVISIBLE EDDIE

by Becky Kimsey

EXCERPT

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INVISIBLE EDDIE

A British Comedy
By
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Cast of Characters

<u>Eddie Bowers:</u>	A repressed introvert. (English) 20-40
<u>Mary Bowers:</u>	Eddie's anxious older sister. (English) 30-50
<u>George Carey:</u>	Mary's mischievous fiancée. (Irish) 30-50
<u>Ms. Dover:</u>	Saucy Landlady (Cockney) 50-60
<u>Bonny Carey:</u>	Kind, clever & blind (Irish or English) 20-40
<u>*Conrad:</u>	Unhandy handyman (Cockney) 50-60
<u>*Dr. Hans Zoff:</u>	Drunken Hypnotherapist (German) 50-60
<u>*Mr. Sexton:</u>	Eddie's hot-headed boss (English) 50-60
<u>Jerry:</u>	Naive barkeep (English) 30-60 (<i>Only in Act II</i>)

**The roles of Conrad, Zoff and Sexton could potentially be played by the same actor if that actor can do all three accents and characters.*

RUNNING TIME: Approximately 120 minutes

TIME: The Present.

SETTING: London, England.

ACT I

SETTING: An inexpensive flat in London. There is a door on the back wall slightly SL and a broom closet on the back wall slightly SR. Between them is a standing coat rack. There is an opening upper SL that leads to the kitchen and an opening upper SR that leads to the hallway. A sofa sits center facing the audience.

AT RISE: MARY enters the front door USL struggling with a very large paper bag of groceries, a handful of mail in her mouth and a shoulder bag. CONRAD follows closely behind.

MARY

Eddie? I'm home!

She crosses to the sofa, drops her shoulder bag onto it and attempts to take her coat off. During the following, she is about to set the bag on the sofa but realizes the bottom of the bag is wet so she struggles to take her coat off with one hand while taking the mail out of her mouth. CONRAD closes the door behind them and the doorknob to the broom closet falls off and lands on the floor behind the sofa.

Listen Conrad, I've been asking you for weeks now. If you cannot have that doorknob repaired, then I shall petition Mrs. Dover to advertise for a new superintendent.

CONRAD (Putting it back.)

Now, that's not quite fair miss! I've told you, I can't fix it right now. Mrs. Dover insists I get a doorknob that matches all the others. But they don't make this model anymore so I had to send away to three different places to get all the assembly pieces. I'm still waiting on parts from Australia.

MARY

Oh, for heaven's sake, I don't want to hear about pieces and parts I-would you at least pretend to be a gentleman and help me with this?

Indicating grocery bag. He helps her with her coat instead. Irritated.

Thank you. (Calling off.) Eddie? Are you home?

CONRAD

Eddie? Who's Eddie? I thought your man's name was George.

MARY

It is! George Carey is my fiancé, Eddie is my brother.

CONRAD

Ah. Visiting from out of town is he? What, is he on holiday?

MARY

He lives here, Conrad. He's been my flat mate for three years.

CONRAD

Really? Funny, I don't believe I've ever seen him.

MARY

Of course you've seen him. He gave you a Christmas card and a plate of macaroons last year.

CONRAD

Ah. I wondered where those came from.

MARY (Handing him the bag.)

Just put these in the kitchen for me, will you?

CONRAD

Right-o.

He exits. MARY puts her coat on the rack.
Doorknob falls off.

MARY (Calling off to kitchen.)

There! There! You see what I mean? Why can't you do something about that?

CONRAD (Off.)

I told you, I can't fix it yet!

MARY picks up doorknob and places it back in the hole.

MARY

Someone is going to have a very bad fall, you know! (Calling off.)
Eddie? Did you get the promotion, dear?

EDDIE (Off.)

What?

MARY (Looking through mail.)

Did you get the promotion?

We hear a door open and close in the hall.
EDDIE enters USR behind her wearing nothing but his pants. Not looking.

Well?

EDDIE

Well-

MARY (Turning.)

Yes? (Stares at EDDIE. Off his appearance.) No?

EDDIE

No.

MARY (Expletive.)

Balls!

EDDIE

No balls. That's right Mary. I've got no balls.

MARY

Eddie, please don't say that to me when I can see them quite clearly from here. (Holds mail up to obscure her view.)

EDDIE

No, I meant-

MARY

I know what you meant. (Gives him a sisterly hug.) I was only trying to lighten the mood. Do put your trousers on, though. Conrad is in the kitchen and George will be coming home soon. We can't have you standing there posing like an unfortunate art student.

CONRAD enters with bag. EDDIE yelps and hides behind MARY.

CONRAD

Sorry miss, I didn't hear what you were saying.

MARY (Shielding EDDIE behind her.)

Conrad, for heaven's sake. Just put the bag on the countertop and leave!

CONRAD

Alright, alright. (He exits again to kitchen.)

EDDIE

I'm sorry Mary. I'm sorry I didn't get the promotion.

MARY

What am I going to do with you? Everything was counting on that promotion! You were going to walk in there and tell that buffoon boss of yours that after sixteen years of being a glorified paperweight you deserve to be a manager!

CONRAD (Re-entering. EDDIE hides.)

You know, you really are confusing me Miss Mary, do you know that? First you threaten to have me replaced and then you tell me I should be the manager? I'm getting mixed signals here, love.

MARY

Conrad. Just get out of here and get those parts!

CONRAD

Hot and cold you are, miss. Hot and cold.

He exits. Doorknob falls off again.

MARY

Balls!! (Replaces doorknob.) Why didn't you get the promotion? You'd make a wonderful manager.

EDDIE

I just couldn't manage it, Mary.

MARY

Eddie, dearest. You are my brother and I love you.

EDDIE

I love you too.

MARY

But if I'm to be married soon, you're going to have to figure out how to get along in this world on your own!

EDDIE

I know.

MARY

Get a flat of your own.

EDDIE

I know.

MARY

Get a wife of your own.

EDDIE (Automatically)

I know- (Beat.) N-No.

MARY

That means going out on a date.

EDDIE

Mary-

MARY

And I know you're scared-

EDDIE

Scared? Who's scared? I'm not scared!

MARY

There are some very nice women out there, you know-

There is a knock on the door. EDDIE lets out a yelp and runs into the hall. MARY opens the door. MS. DOVER is standing there. She is an attractive woman in her mid-fifties. Her beauty however is overshadowed by the deliberately distracting neckline, flashy costume jewelry and an excessive application of glossy red lipstick.

MARY

Mrs. Dover! How are you?

DOVER (Entering.)

Mizz Dover if you please. He's been in Hawaii "On Holiday" for four years now.

MARY

Oh, has it been that long?

DOVER (Matter-of fact)

It has. I've decided to presume he's dead.

MARY

Oh dear!

DOVER (Anger rising.)

Or more likely, he's shackled up with some Hawaiian tart who feeds him sausages and potted meat from her coconuts all day long while he plucks away at her ukulele. (Beat. MARY has no words.) So! I reckon it's time to move on.

MARY

I see. Well...good for you! Ahem. What can I do for you?

DOVER (Looking around.)

Just thought you should know that you'll have a new neighbor soon. I've let the flat opposite. He should be arriving this evening to have a look at the place. (Primps her hair.) I hear he's a doctor. (Pushes up her bosom.) Single man. (Beat.) He's set to move in right away so there may be a lot of activity in the corridor tomorrow, what with the movers and all, so you may want to keep out the way.

MARY

I see. Well that's very good to know. I appreciate it.

DOVER (Snooping about the room.)

Yes well, I like to keep my tenants happy.

MARY

You do indeed.

DOVER (Looking around hopefully.)

Talking of, where's your Irishman? That George fellow?

MARY (Pointedly.)

Fiancé.

DOVER

Ohhh Fiancé now, is it? Ooh. Sounds serious.

MARY

We have been dating for four years now, so-

DOVER

I suppose that means he's off the market.

MARY

Well he- (Beat.) Yes.

DOVER

I have to admit, I'm a tiny bit jealous of you, miss. That tall glass of Irish crème of yours could be just what I need to set my hormones back to rights.

MARY

Perhaps a G & T would do the trick?

DOVER

A little S & M would be better.

MARY (Quickly.)

Yes! Well I'm a very lucky woman. In three months time, I shall no longer be Miss Bowers, you can call me Mrs. Mary Carey! (DOVER stares at her for a beat.) It looks better on paper.

DOVER

If you say so.

MARY (Ushering her out.)

Well! Thank you for the warning about the new tenant, Miz Dover. Perhaps we'll spend the day in the country tomorrow.

DOVER

There's a thought! It'll be fine weather for horseback riding. Nothing like a good bareback in the countryside eh?

MARY

Perhaps just a picnic.

DOVER (Elbowing her.)

Call it what you like.

MARY

Well thanks again for stopping by. (At door.) Goodbye Mizz Dover!

DOVER

Cheers!

She exits. Doorknob falls off. MARY puts it back as EDDIE re-enters carefully, looking around like a frightened squirrel.

MARY

That woman. (Turns to EDDIE.)

EDDIE

You were saying?

MARY

Ohhh Eddie. They're not all like that you know.

EDDIE

Like what?

MARY

All claws and teeth. Not all women are as savage as Mrs. Dover.

EDDIE

I know.

MARY

Eddie. Tell me once and for all. Are you a homosexual?

EDDIE

No!

MARY

Never mind about father, he would come to terms with you being a homosexual if given the proper allotment of time.

EDDIE

I'm not a-

MARY

Frankly, I'd be relieved if you were a homosexual.

EDDIE

What?

MARY

There are a lot more homosexuals in this city than there are single straight women, you know. Everywhere you go; there's a homosexual.

EDDIE

That's not-

MARY

I'm just saying it would be much easier for me to find you a sexual partner if you-

EDDIE

Mary, will you please stop saying the word sexual? (Shudders.) I'm NOT GAY, alright? I'm just-

MARY

Hopeless. That's what you are, hopeless.

EDDIE

Well it's not my fault. You think I'm happy being this way? It's not easy being both timid AND introverted you know. Being around people I'm not familiar with is not only frightening, it's exhausting! I feel like a deflated balloon halfway through every social engagement and then I have to go sneak off to the toilet and blow myself back up again.

MARY

Oh-

EDDIE

I like women! I like women very much. It's just that I have difficulty being myself when I'm around them.

MARY

You have difficulty being yourself when you're around anyone.

EDDIE

I know.

MARY

Eddie...I'm sure there are lots of introverts out there. There might even be just as many of them as there are homosexuals.

EDDIE

Except we don't have parades.

MARY (Agreeing.)

That would make them easier to spot, to be sure. (Beat.) I'm sorry, Eddie. You're not hopeless. You've just got to find someone of your own kind to settle down with!

EDDIE

Well, it's not like we have organized clubs or online dating sites. There isn't even an Introvert App.

MARY

I know. I checked.

EDDIE

There aren't any established places for introverts to meet other introverts! There are gay bars, straight bars, lesbian bars, furry bars and drag queen social clubs but I haven't seen any clubs or pubs called "Shy-Town" or "Introverts Unite".

MARY

Oh, Eddie...

EDDIE

And even if there were, we'd never show up! Oh, we'd make plans alright. We'd agree to "Get together" and "Hang out". But when the moment of truth arrives, we panic and cancel at the last minute; pretend to be sick or claim we forgot all about it. And, if we did happen to buck up the courage and actually appear, we'd all be drinking by ourselves in the corner anyway so what would be the point? And there can only BE SO MANY corners in a pub, so once all the corners are occupied everyone else quickly and discreetly pays their own tab and returns home to the company of their cat or parrot or novel of the month.

MARY

Eddie, I'm not suggesting that you-

EDDIE

And! And, I need hardly mention that after having a few pints, I would hardly be in a position to approach a woman.

MARY

Oh, I know...

EDDIE

It wouldn't even occur to me! I'd be too busy entertaining the salt and pepper shaker with a boisterous rendition of John Kanaka. Then the salt shaker would applaud, the pepper shaker would cheer and I'd stand up and take a dramatic bow. Then suddenly everyone in the place would be looking at me with squinched expressions on their faces, I'd go home mortified and lock myself up for a fortnight. Getting pissed at home in front of the telly with a large bowl of crisps watching Downton Abbey reruns is a far more appealing prospect than drinking in public.

MARY

Alright, alright.

EDDIE

You should never have taken me there Mary.

MARY

It was George's birthday!

EDDIE

I'll never recover.

MARY

Yes you will. You are a bright, funny, intelligent man! You just need to get over this ridiculous fear of being embarrassed!

EDDIE

It's called being English, Mary. Some of us have more English than others.

MARY

Eddie, everyone does stupid things when they're inebriated! That's why we do it! It's...supposed to be fun!

EDDIE

Well it's not. Not for me. I don't like being out of control. I don't like feeling fuzzy when people are around. It's alright when I'm by myself but I don't like people judging me.

MARY

You're afraid of people judging you.

EDDIE

I don't like them thinking poorly of me.

MARY

You're afraid of them thinking poorly of you.

EDDIE

I lost my job Mary.

MARY

You're afr- WHAT??

EDDIE

I got sacked.

MARY

How could you have been sacked? You've been there for sixteen years!!

EDDIE

Well-

MARY

What could you have possibly done to warrant being fired?

EDDIE

I went into his office this morning with that speech you prepared for me.

MARY

Yes?

EDDIE

And when I arrived he had just eaten a packet of Jaffa Cakes.

MARY

And?

EDDIE

He had an enormous chunk of Jaffa chocolate on his face. It was melting into a shiny wet glob on his chin and, rather than acknowledge the embarrassing smudge or pretend to ignore it, I stood there for a solid ten minutes and stared at it.

MARY

Stared at it?

EDDIE

Yes! I stared at my boss for ten minutes, Mary. And it wasn't a swift ten minutes. It was one of those time-stands-still ten minutes. He could have completed his quarterly taxes while I stood there. I didn't say a word. Not a single word. It was like my lips were stuck together by some invisible force.

MARY

Oh Eddie...

EDDIE

And then I ended up making this horrible guttural sound: "Mmmrrrrmmgggghr." It made him so uncomfortable that he fired me. Right then and there.

MARY

Why on earth did you freeze up like that? We'd been rehearsing that speech all week! I even held up that picture of Simon Cowell for you to practice on!

EDDIE

I know! I was too afraid to say what I was supposed to say and I was too afraid to acknowledge the Jaffa Cake Splotch and I was too afraid disappoint you so yes, Mary. I'm afraid, alright? You keep insisting that I'm afraid so yes, once again you are right and I am wrong. I'm afraid! (Beat.) I'm afraid I'm going to be staying in your flat for a very, very long time!

He runs down the hall to his room.

MARY

Eddie no! Now, wait-

We hear a door slam. George Carey enters the front door with a newspaper. He's Irish and affable.

GEORGE

Afternoon sweet Mary!

He closes the door. Doorknob falls off. He picks it up and places it gently in the hole. He moves to MARY and kisses her on the cheek.

MARY

Hello George.

GEORGE (Off her expression.)

Oh dear. Did he say no to the date, then?

MARY

What? (Remembers.) Oh no! Oh, I'm afraid I didn't get that far!

GEORGE

Shite! She'll be here in half an hour.

MARY

Well, you better ring her up and put her off.

GEORGE

I can't do that. She doesn't carry a mobile.

MARY

Why doesn't she carry a mobile?

GEORGE

She's...afraid she'll get brain cancer or something. Anyhow, you better tell him now, so he can prepare himself.

MARY

Nothing can prepare him for that! It's bad enough that we set him up on a blind date; much less not tell him about it.

GEORGE

Well it was your job to tell him!

MARY

I know, but things are swiftly circling the drain, George. He's just lost his job.

GEORGE

Blimey! How'd he do that?

MARY

He was too afraid to ask for the promotion and got sacked instead. He's a complete puddle now. I don't know what to do next!

GEORGE

Hey, you know what? I was reading the paper when I was waiting for my next fare and I saw an advert. (Opens paper and shows it to MARY.) It's a bit about some head doctor who just moved into town. He's a certified hypnotherapist.

MARY (Irritated.)

George, this isn't the time for one of your barmy ideas...

GEORGE

No! No, read it. Read it!

MARY (Takes paper.)

Oh for heaven sake. (Reading.) "Doctor Hans Zoff the world-renowned German hypnotherapist lately arriving in London is accepting new patients seeking immediate and lasting relief from bad habits, addictions, anxiety, eating disorders, depression, irritable bowel syndrome and phobias." (Beat.) Phobias?

GEORGE

There. Do you see?

MARY (After a beat.)

No. No, that's too ridiculous George; we're not so very desperate that we require the help of a pretentious witch doctor.

GEORGE

He's not a witch doctor! Look at his credentials, Mary. He's world-renowned. Maybe he can help Eddie get over his fear of being around other people.

MARY

This is ludicrous, George. We are not going to hypnotize my brother and that's the end of it. Now, when your cousin Bonny arrives, we'll just have to tell her that Eddie has taken ill and she'll have to meet him another time-(There is a knock. They freeze.) I thought you told her six thirty!

GEORGE

I did! Definitely! Six thirty!

MARY

Is she always this early?

GEORGE

Mmm, sometimes...

MARY

Well, that's just brilliant. We'll have to come up with an excuse. I doubt Eddie will come out of his room until Boxing Day.

Gives him a look and goes to the door. She opens it and we see BONNY standing there nervously. She is holding a tin of biscuits in one hand and a long stick in the other. is wearing sunglasses.

MARY

Bonny?

GEORGE

I'll put the kettle on too, shall I? (He exits swiftly.)

MARY

George wait!-

Pause. Awkwardly she turns and smiles BONNY, then realizes BONNY can't see the smile so she laughs loudly instead.

Haha! Haha! Ohhhh dear. Ahem. Would you like to sit down?

BONNY

Thank you.

She moves towards sofa guided by her stick.

MARY (Following.)

I'm so glad to finally meet you! George has told me...so much about you.

BONNY (Sitting.)

He's told me a lot about you too. You're prettier than I thought you'd be.

MARY

Oh! Um. (?) Thank you. (She sits beside her.) And you are just as lovely as he described.

BONNY

Thank you. I'm so looking forward to meeting your brother. Is he here?

MARY

Well, I'm afraid there's been a bit of a mix-up.

BONNY

A mix up?

MARY

Yes, well...you see-(oops!) Oh! I'm sorry.

BONNY

It's alright. I'm used to it.

MARY (Embarrassed.)

Of course. (Beat.) Well, we ran into an obstacle.

BONNY

Happens to me all the time.

MARY

We- (Stops.) We've hit a snag.

That too.

BONNY

You can't see him.

MARY

I know.

BONNY

I don't mean to keep you in the dark-

MARY

Too late.

BONNY

Shit!

MARY

Where?!

BONNY (Alarmed.)

Kettle's on!

GEORGE (Entering.)

MARY

George! There you are! I was just trying to explain to your cousin that we-

BONNY (Rising.)

May I use your washroom? I'd like to freshen up a bit if I may.

MARY

Oh. Yes of course! It's right through there. (!!) I mean, it's to your right. Your back-right. Um. Five paces to your-no three paces to your right-

GEORGE (Mercifully interrupts.)

Down the hall to your right, Bonnie. First door on the left.

MARY (Quickly.)

Right!

GEORGE

RIGHT! First door on the right!

BONNY nods and exits with the aid of her stick, bumping into the wall only once. Doorknob falls off. We hear a door open, close and MARY turns slowly to GEORGE.

GEORGE

Now let me explain-

MARY

What in God's name were you thinking trying to set my brother up with a blind woman?

GEORGE

Shhh! She can hear, you know!

During the following, we hear a door down the hall, EDDIE enters unseen by MARY and GEORGE. He crosses to the kitchen.

MARY

How could you possibly think it could work?

GEORGE

I have a perfectly good explanation if you would just listen-

MARY

Oh, I am listening. I am dying to know what made you think this arrangement was even remotely feasible, because for the life of me I cannot.

GEORGE

What? They have similar quirks!

MARY

Quirks?

GEORGE

Yes!

MARY

Eddie is shy and she can't see! How could that possibly be considered a similarity?

GEORGE

It's a very sensible arrangement!

MARY

Sensible!

GEORGE

Yes. Sensible! He's afraid of doing something embarrassing around other people, right? So, if he's to do something awkward in front of Bonny she'd never even notice! It's brilliant! Don't you see!

MARY

Oh, I can see alright. I can see that I may have seriously overestimated my fiancée's level of intelligence. I can see that I am engaged to an irksome Irishman who finds it amusing to set my brother up on a double-blind date!

GEORGE (Pause.)
Triple blind, actually. (Beat.) If you think about it.

MARY (Gritted teeth.)
George.

GEORGE
Mary.

MARY
Get rid of her.

GEORGE
Give her a chance, love. She's a nice girl! And she's lonely too in case you didn't notice. (EDDIE re-enters behind them.)

MARY
No, no George. This won't work. You have to come up with some excuse; as soon as she comes out, you'll have to-

EDDIE
Who brought the biscuits?

MARY/GEORGE (Startled)
AHHHH!!!

EDDIE
They've got nuts in them though. You know I don't like nuts.

MARY
Eddie! Will you please go back to your room and put on some clothes! For heaven's sake!

EDDIE
What's going on? Why are you two whispering?

MARY (Urgently.)
Quickly now!

GEORGE (Whispering.)
What difference does it make? She can't see him.

MARY (Loudly.)
I can see him!

EDDIE
Oh, I see. I'm in the way now aren't I? Now that I've lost my job and have no prospects you're both ready to chuck me out, eh? I'm like a ferret with no future. You two deciding whether to drop me off at the homeless shelter or donate me to the local humane society?

MARY

Eddie, go put your trousers on.

EDDIE

Fine. Fine. They have dog biscuits at the Humane Society; at least they don't have any nuts.

GEORGE

Not yet.

MARY

George!

EDDIE

I'll leave you to it then.

He exits. There is the sound of a door opening down the hall, followed by a yelp from BONNY and a scream from EDDIE who dashes back in screaming.

Ahhhhhhhhhhhh! There's a lady!! A lady in the loo!

He trips on the doorknob and falls to the floor behind the sofa.

GEORGE

You see? Quirks.

(Blackout)

(End Scene 1)