



VARSIITY BLUES
BY
BOB CHARTERIS

Extract

A SMITH SCRIPT

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Varsity Blues



A one-act comedy by Bob Charteris

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Enquiries to:
Bob Charteris
66 Fallbrook Avenue
WOODVALE
Western Australia. 6026
Telephone +61 8 9409 1997 or 0450 036 582
or email bob@ascriptintime.com.au

Varsity Blues

Characters

*Frank, a Cambridge university professor,
mid 60s*

Vera, mid 60s

Walter, a vicar, 60s

(Note: The characters could be any age from 50 up.)

Varsity Blues

A one-act comedy

Scene 1

A lounge room. Vera enters with some shopping.

FRANK (*off*): Vera! Is that you?

VERA: Yes, of course it is.

FRANK (*off*): Vera, can you help me? I've got my balls stuck in the washing machine!

VERA: What!

FRANK (*off*): I put them in a pair of your knickers. They must have snagged.

VERA: Oh my goodness!

Frank emerges with a pair of knickers, now rather torn, with something inside.

FRANK: It's all right, worked their way loose.

VERA: What did?

FRANK: My golf balls.

VERA: What were your golf balls doing in my knickers?

FRANK: I was washing them. Couldn't have them flying all around the washing machine, could I?

Vera grabs hold of her knickers and half a dozen golf balls drop out.

VERA: They're ruined!

FRANK: No they should be fine. Cleanest they've been for years.

VERA: My knickers! Not your bloody golf balls. I'll have to throw them out.

Vera grabs her knickers and goes into the kitchen to throw them in the garbage can. She re-enters, slightly more composed.

VERA: How did the interview go?

FRANK: Why do you think I'm cleaning my golf balls?

VERA: That bad.

FRANK: There isn't a comparative low enough to even begin to describe it.

VERA: So you won't be the next head of the school of English Language Studies, then?

FRANK: Not on this morning's performance.

VERA: At least you made the second round.

FRANK: I rather suspect that was only because I am a current staff member. Have to have one token internal candidate.

VERA: Perhaps they're trying to ease you out.

FRANK: Ease me out? They were bloody well trying to execute me!

VERA: No friends at court then?

FRANK: Friends! It was worse than the Spanish Inquisition. At one point, the Dean said something like "Do you think others would regard you as a pedant?" "Of course", I said. "How else do you defend the English language?" I could see by the look on her face that I'd said the wrong thing.

VERA: Frank, you've got to learn to be more ... flexible.

FRANK: That's what the Dean said. "Remember language evolves. We need sometime who can evolve with it."

So I told her this for me was a paraprodsokian moment.

VERA: A what?

FRANK: That's just what the Dean said. Shows that she has no understanding of the English language. They'll probably appoint someone with a degree in social media. You know. someone who can communicate with their thumb permanently stuck to a device.

VERA: Maybe they want fresh ideas.

FRANK: They want money! Get money in. It used to be all about getting your research published and lauded ... now 90 per cent of my time is trying to get funding. I'm supposed to be a salesman for the University .. and you know what I think about salesmen.

VERA: What about that text book you were writing?

FRANK: You mean *Grammatical Imperatives for the 21st century: Wrong Turnings on the Road to Literacy?*

VERA: Yes.

FRANK: It's run into a dead end.

VERA: You could revisit it.

FRANK: Revisit it? A book is not something you go to so you can have a cup of tea and a chat about Auntie Mildred.

VERA: You don't have an Auntie Mildred.

FRANK: You're missing the point.

VERA: Perhaps the dean was right. You're too much of a pedant.

FRANK: You can't be too forget it. I am going to the college to sort out a few things.

VERA: You'd better be back by three o'clock.

FRANK: Why?

VERA: I told you at breakfast. We are looking after the grandchildren.

FRANK: Which ones?

VERA: All of them. Joan and Jean are going shopping together so we've got the four boys.

FRANK: The four horsemen of the apocalypse!

VERA: Don't be so critical.

FRANK: Well every time they come here it's conquest, war, famine and death.

VERA: Death?

FRANK: The goldfish.

VERA: We don't know they're dead.

FRANK: Yes, of course. They're just enjoying their holiday in the sewers. Of course they're dead.

VERA: They're just boys. Don't you remember when you were their age?

FRANK: I shall go back to my writing.

VERA: More research?

FRANK: No another novel.

VERA: I thought you'd given that away.

FRANK: Now is just the time to get back into it. Another Professor Strong story. This time he's trying to find out who's murdered all the people on a selection panel!

VERA: And who'd want to publish that? No-one's wanted to publish any of the other six novels you've written.

FRANK: More fool them! I'll be back in a couple of hours.

VERA: You'll miss Walter.

FRANK: That's a blessed relief. How he ever became a cleric beats me. All he does is tell jokes, and very bad ones at that.

VERA: They're not that bad!

FRANK: There worse than bad!

WALTER (*off*): Hello.

VERA: In the lounge room.

Walter enters in his clerical outfit.

WALTER: Frank.

FRANK: Walter.

VERA: I've just put the kettle on.

(Vera exits to kitchen and Walter)

WALTER: Aren't you at the college today?

FRANK: I've been, come back and am about to go down again..

WALTER: Ah!

WALTER: Well, before you go, here's a good one. What did Scandinavians use to deliver secret messages in World War Two?

FRANK: Pardon?

WALTER: What did Scandinavians use to deliver secret messages in World War Two.

FRANK: I have no idea.

WALTER: Norse Code!

(Frank rolls his eyes as the WALTER laughs)

WALTER: I knew you'd like it! Now, what sort of bandage do you put on an injured tomato?

FRANK: I really don't -

WALTER: A vegetable patch!

(He slaps his knee as he laughs)

FRANK: Yes, very good. Now I must be going. Goodbye.

WALTER: Yes, God speed.

(Frank picks up a briefcase makes to leave, as Vera returns from the kitchen and shouts after him.)

VERA: Don't forget to be back by three.

FRANK: All right! All right!

(Frank leaves.)

VERA: I'm sorry, Walter. Frank's had a bad day.

WALTER: Again?

VERA: Things aren't going well for him at the University.

WALTER: Ah.

VERA: It was the interview this morning.

WALTER: Didn't go well?

VERA: Apparently not. Mind you, he is very fixed in his ways. I told him she should be more flexible. He came home in a very bad mood.

WALTER: What's happening at three o'clock?

VERA: The grandchildren. All four of them. All boys and all quite a handful.

WALTER: Yes, so you've told me. Now, Vera, this situation we find ourselves in.

VERA: Yes.

WALTER: It's not very good, is it?

VERA: No, but ...

WALTER: I mean Frank is very understanding, isn't he?

VERA: Yes.

WALTER: Has he said anything about it? You know, recently.

VERA: No, he just accepts it. That's the way his is. He accepts things - except changes to the English language!

They both laugh.

WALTER: Vera?

VERA: Yes, Walter?

The embrace and kiss.

WALTER: Have we time?

VERA: You mean now?

WALTER: Yes.

VERA: Oh yes, yes. Come on! Come on!

Vera and Walter embrace and the dash for the bedroom, starting to shed their clothes.

