



GRAMATICALLY SPEAKING

by Marc Harris

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Cast

CLIVE PALMER: A well spoken, slow speaking, retired secondary school English teacher, aged mid-seventies.

SIMON HOPKINS: A former pupil of Clive's, aged late twenties.

(Both characters could be played by either sex if required.)

Synopsis

Simon decides to carry out his first burglary, unknowingly breaking into his former school teacher's cottage. Clive tries to convince Simon that everyone deserves a second chance but is everything as it seems?

Setting

The lounge in Clive's home, at midnight. The room is almost completely dark, apart from a small amount of streetlight shining through the window. There is an armchair/chair facing the audience, placed at a slight angle (which Clive is sitting in from the start).

There is another chair, a few pieces of furniture, with some small ornaments placed on them, and an old style telephone placed on a small table.

Please note that suggested sound effects are included to enhance the production but it can still be successfully performed without them. Ideally the stage/performance area should be dimly lit for added atmosphere (and for a more effective 'disappearance' at the end) but it can easily be performed in lighter conditions if necessary.

Lights. **SFX – Tawny owl hooting 2/3 times from outside. Ticking grandfather clock throughout.**

SIMON *(Slowly and quietly walking onstage, with a small bag hanging over his shoulder, shining a torch around the room. The light eventually lands on an armchair, before revealing Clive's body, then face. Clive is asleep. Startled, stepping back, and loudly)* What the hell?

CLIVE *(Awakening – opening his eyes suddenly, calm, and reacting as if nothing has happened)* Hello there. I was asleep.

SIMON *(Shaken, still shining the torch onto Clive's face)* You frightened me, stupid old man.

CLIVE Uh, manners. Would you mind not shining that torch into my face? It is very off putting.

SIMON *(Moving the torch away from Clive's face, and placing it down on a table, still facing the light in Clive's direction)* Is that all you've got to say? You're not even frightened.

CLIVE Not much frightens me these days.

SIMON Well just stay where you are, and everythin' will be fine.

CLIVE You found me then?

SIMON You carelessly left the front door open slightly, and the porch light was on

too.

CLIVE *(Said to himself)* Like a moth to a flame. *(Said to Simon)* I left it ajar, to allow a gentle breeze through.

SIMON You must be jokin', it's freezin' in 'ere.

CLIVE I had not noticed.

SIMON Anyone could have come in.

CLIVE Yes but you are not anyone.

SIMON Are you alone?

CLIVE You have my assurance that you are completely alone.

SIMON You weren't meant to be here.

CLIVE Wasn't I?

SIMON I'm gonna have to re-think how I'm gonna do this.

CLIVE *(Sincerely)* I'm sorry if I scuppered your plans.

SIMON *(Not believing Clive's politeness, and matter of fact remark)* Are you for real?

I didn't see you sittin' in the dark. What were you doin' 'ere, all on your own?

CLIVE Resting. Dreaming. But mostly waiting. *(Simon picks up the torch.)*

SIMON Waitin'? Where do you keep your money? *(Moving, and looking around.)*

CLIVE I do not have any.

SIMON You must 'ave some stashed away somewhere.