

BENNY

CAMILLA. No we don't. We can leave that to the drones and be divinely à deux in the locker room.

SUSAN. And risk getting another detention off Bleacher?

CAMILLA. My mother says if self-expression is now a sin, detentions are the new merits. The more I get the prouder she'll be.

SUSAN. You're lucky. All my parents want me to get is straight As and a scholarship to Oxford.

CAMILLA. Yawn.

SUSAN. No one else in my whole family's ever had the chance to go to university before.

CAMILLA. Sigh.

SUSAN. Couldn't we just wait until break?

CAMILLA. Wait?

*She recoils, clutching her heart.*

Oh, l'arnour, l'arnour! Je suis désolé!

CAMILLA flounces off. SUSAN flusters, torn – then scurries after her.

BRENDA SMEARS, the school sneak, pops up from her hiding place – squinting after them and jostling in her notebook.

BRENDA. 'Oh l'arnour – l'arnour – je suis désolé...'

*Then she's hailed by a whistle and BENNY enters – a cheeky young chaplie dressed as a workman with tool bag.*

BENNY. Watcher, darlin'! Awright? Betcha cluffed to clock me wiv me big wrench at the ready, aintcha!

BRENDA. Pardon me?

BENNY. Well jus' point us the way to yer showers, I'll have a butcher's and Bob's your uncle – (Clicks his tongue and winks.) know what I mean?

BRENDA. I don't have the faintest clue. Who are you?

BENNY. I'm Benny the Bag, ain't I?

BRENDA. I don't know. Are you?

BENNY. In the flesh. I'm from the Odd Job Agency. Got a list as long as me arm what needs seeing to 'ere... (Unfurls a roll of paper from his bag.) Number one being your hot water's gone on the blink, yeah?

BRENDA. No it hasn't, it's been turned off. And I'm very busy. Goodbye.

*She makes to leave. He pursues.*

BENNY. Eh, you what? Just a sec. You ain't telling me it's been turned off like deliberately on purpose?

BRENDA. By Miss Bleacher, our new headmistress. Because cold showers are character-building.

BENNY (Cockney accent slips). Crikey! (Corrects himself.) I mean, cor blimey stone the crows!

I don't Adam an' Eve it! Dame Doty Dossers? Sposed to be one o' them whacky, anyfink goes, ahead o' the times type o' schools, aintcha?

BRENDA. That's why Miss Bleacher's changed our school motto from 'Age quod agis' to 'Disce aut discede'.

BENNY. Eh?

BRENDA. Don't you speak Latin? It means instead of softy-watly 'Do what you do well', it's now strictly 'Learn or depart'. Because schools without rules breed savages and socialists.

*She dashes off. BENNY shakes his head after her.*

BENNY. Nuff said, yeah...

*Music 1a. Gay Arcadia*

*He removes a camera from his tool bag and takes snaps, then makes his own furtive way into the school.*

DORIAN

CAMILLA/DORIAN. Dorian - / Camilla -

*They laugh.*

DORIAN. Ladies first.

CAMILLA. No, I was just going to say something silly.

DORIAN. So was I, actually.

CAMILLA. Well, I can't explain why, but I keep feeling there's something strangely déjà vu about you.

DORIAN. But that's exactly what I was going to say about you!

CAMILLA. Really?

DORIAN. Something about your voice...

CAMILLA. Nothing about your voice, some sort of *anima*...

DORIAN. Or the champagne - ?

CAMILLA *likewise makes light.*

CAMILLA. Yes, it's ridiculous!

*They both turn away to look out of the window.*

Gosh! This really is the most marvellous view.

DORIAN. Battersea Power Station.

CAMILLA. It looks like a great dark cathedral.

DORIAN. Or an upside-down elephant?

CAMILLA. Yes!

*They catch each other's eyes again.*

Can I ask you a probing personal question? Dorian.

DORIAN. If I may ask you one in return. Camilla.

CAMILLA. Well, Dorian -

DORIAN. Yes, Camilla?

CAMILLA. Oh, stop it, you'll give me the giggles.

DORIAN. Then I trust you'll give me them back.

CAMILLA *giggles.*

No please, do ask.

CAMILLA. But I can't now.

DORIAN. But I beseech you.

CAMILLA. But I want to ask you lots of questions.

*Music 12. I Know It's Asking a Lot*

DORIAN. So do I.

CAMILLA. But hundreds.

DORIAN. Me too.

CAMILLA. Go on then.

DORIAN. After you.

CAMILLA. No, after you.

DORIAN. But I don't know what to ask you first...

I know it's asking a lot

To find out everything about you

Even so, now you're on the spot

I want to know what is your point of view

I want to delve into your psyche

I think I like imagining the way that we could be

I know it's asking a lot

But I have got to get to know you

CAMILLA.

I know it's asking a lot

To find out everything about you

But oh, I'm wondering what

Wondering, when, where, why, how and who?

I want to know all of your history

Don't be a mystery, satisfy my curiosity

I know it's asking a lot

But I have got to get to know you

CAMILLA/DORIAN.

Now is the moment I've waited for

How can I tell you that I adore you?

DAIMLER. I – I seem to have misplaced my towel...

MISS GIVINGS produces a handkerchief.

MISS GIVINGS. Here – use this.

DAIMLER takes it and blows her nose.

DAIMLER. Sorry. I'm just a bit down in the dumps.

MISS GIVINGS. So what's whacked you in the shins, then?

DAIMLER. Oh, nothing. Everything. Oh, it's just all completely hopeless.

MISS GIVINGS. Right... Well, I can't give you a plaster for internal injuries, kid. But I can give you my word the game's not over yet – and now is not the time to give up the fight, if you want to help Miss Austin save this school?

DAIMLER looks up.

So – better chin up and get back on the team, hey?

DAIMLER grits her teeth and rallies.

DAIMLER. Well, even if I can't win, Miss, I jolly well know what I'm fighting for.

MISS GIVINGS. That's the spirit!

*She heads DAIMLER off to the showers, then lights up a cigarette and breathes relief – as a wary BENNY creeps in behind her back, then turns to see her – and smirks.*

BENNY. Ooh, dodgy habit for a games mistress, Miss.

*She startles, then snaps back at him in her true persona.*

DIANA. Not as dodgy as your ridiculous accent.

BENNY. EH? Dontcha know yours truly was famed for me Eliza Doolittle in the Footlights?

DIANA. Oh, do grow up, Dorian. Your career at Cambridge was only famed for the glittering speed at which you got scull down.

DORIAN drops his BENNY act.

DORIAN

DORIAN. All right, bossy big sis, but I haven't been entirely useless gathering proof that Bleacher's got to go. Wait till you hear what I taped in assembly – her values are positively Victorian!

DIANA. Luckily the Dosserdalian spirit is still in formidable form on the hockey pitch. And I knew we'd have a trusty ally in dear Miss Austin. But she fears it's only a matter of days before Bleacher forces her into retirement.

DORIAN. Then all we need is for the tiresome lawyers to grant you sole Governorship pro tem in extremis, as per Sub-Clause Twenty-Three – *(Holds up his bag)* sufficient cause QED!

DIANA. So we need you to persuade them to pull their fingers out, Dorian.

DORIAN. Me? Um – how?

DIANA. You went to school with the senior partner's tiresome son, didn't you? So oil the wheels as old boys traditionally do.

DORIAN. You mean – you want me to wine and dine the deadly boring Percy Puttfoot?

DIANA. Drive up to town tomorrow, go to work in your darkroom, deliver all the evidence to his office. Then take him to The Ritz and twist his arm, so we can liberate these poor kids by Friday.

DORIAN *(sighs)*. Right. Fine. But, oh God, it's so tedious having to stand up and fight for things.

*School bell rings.*

DIANA. Get some snaps of the library and art room. Then meet me back at The Pig and Whistle.

*They exit separately.*

*Music 7a. Prepare to Pounce*