

225-008

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'amour, l'amour! Je suis désolée!

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 jotting in her notebook*.

BRENDA. 'Oh l'amour – l'amour – je suis désolée...'

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

BENNY. Watcher, darlin'! Awright? Betcha chuffed to clook 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 whisks*) 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*). Chtkey! (*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-wafy '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.

JUDITH (*sighs*). We'll have to try another tack.

They exit.

Music 8a. 'Snot Fair' -- play-off

Scene Seven

The Headmistress's study.

It's empty and the desk is clear.

Knock at the door.

Then another knock.

Then BRENDA puts her head round the door.

BRENDA. Miss?

She sidles in, and within seconds is compulsively taking a snoop in the desk drawer -- to find the photo frame and to puzzle... And she only just covers her tracks before MISS BLEACHER enters, carrying an envelope.

MISS BLEACHER. Ah, Brenda. Mission accomplished?

BRENDA. Yes, Miss. The art room's now fully equipped as science room two and all the art equipment's in the cellar awaiting shipment to the poor primitive children in Africa.

MISS BLEACHER. Excellent.

BRENDA. But it wasn't easy or enjoyable, Miss. I did have to escape an ambush and defend my integrity.

MISS BLEACHER. Well, don't bleat about it, girl. Opposition is the engine of endeavour.

BRENDA. Yes, Miss.

MISS BLEACHER. So here's your next task, Brenda -- if I can entrust it to your utmost stealth and secrecy?

BRENDA. On my honour or hope to die, Miss!

MISS BLEACHER. Then take this to the post office straight after school and have it sent 'special delivery'.

MISS BLEACHER gives her the envelope -- and BRENDA glims as she reads the address.

BRENDA. To Susan Smart's parents?

MISS BLEACHER. Thanks to your dogged fieldwork, Brenda, as of tomorrow morning I shall truly turn the tide in this school. And you will be rewarded with the honour of being my Head Girl!

BRENDA. Gosh, Miss... Jubilate!

She scurries out.

MISS BLEACHER retrieves the photo frame from the desk drawer and gazes at it, with messianic zeal.

MISS BLEACHER. Thy will will be done...

Music 8b. Future Mothers -- reprise

We strive to educate
So you may better procreate
And that henceforth shall be --
The function of this school
The function of this school....

She exits.

Transition to next morning:

BRENDA