

JEREMY Hmm, well I'll let it go on this occasion. However, I will be making notes of anything that doesn't meet with my approval.

RONNIE Please accept my sincere apologies. Can I take your suitcases to the room?

TAMSIN No, we're fine thank you.

RONNIE If you need anything else, then don't hesitate to press this bell for service. *(points to a bell on reception)* By all means hang up your jackets on the coat stand. I'll go and turn on the heating. *(goes through the archway)*

JEREMY & TAMSIN hang their coats up

TAMSIN Oh dear, I'm not sure I can do this. I nearly called you Jeremy.

JEREMY Do not worry my flourishing bluebell. We're only here for a couple of days and then we'll never see them again. Just remember to call me James okay?

TAMSIN Yes alright, I'll do my best.

JEREMY That's my girl! Right, you go on up to the bedroom and I'll get Petula, before she starts barking or does a doo-doo in the Saab. You can handle the suitcases can't you. *(walks out the front door)*

TAMSIN I suppose I'll have to! *(walks to bedroom 1 struggling with the two suitcases)*

HEATHER comes in followed by RONNIE carrying a duster, etc

HEATHER I was not being rude to them at all. That couple are here for a long steamy session of rough and tumble, I'll put money on it. I just wish they'd be honest and say so.

RONNIE We desperately need the business and if you don't mind me saying, you're not exactly *honest* at times. I felt terribly sorry for your last fiancé, Nigel.

HEATHER What Nigel didn't know, couldn't hurt him. He *was* well-endowed, but didn't have a lot to offer aside from that. Whereas, Ralf had a second home in Brittany. And Hugh was a jobbing actor; so he took me to fancy restaurants and the like; until he left me high and dry for a posh tart called Liz.

RONNIE To get back on track, please can you leave me to take the strain today...

HEATHER You'd never cope without me. That's why my mum and your father left this place jointly to us. *(looks Ronnie up & down)* Apparently, *your* mother always said you were a great mistake. She tried to give you up for adoption, but they gave you back...

RONNIE I will not react to your cheap jibes. Now, if you'll please excuse me, I must get on with the washing up. *(starts to go through the archway)*

HEATHER Oh by the way, I forgot to mention it, but a hotel inspector is coming today...

RONNIE *(stops)* Hotel inspector?

HEATHER Yes, it must have slipped my mind. *(produces a letter)* Here's the letter with the details.

RONNIE reads the letter

RONNIE When did you receive this?

HEATHER I'm not sure exactly. Time flies doesn't it? Four... five... weeks I'd imagine. *(sarcastically)* I'm so sorry that I forgot about it.

RONNIE Four or five weeks? If I didn't know you better, I'd say that you've kept this from me on purpose, so the inspector will see the guest house at it's worst and shut us down. Then we'll be forced to sell up and you'll get half the money.

HEATHER What a spiteful thing to say. The idea never entered my head.

RONNIE *(starts pacing)* Blast. Oh blast it. I don't know where to start, he could be here any minute. Most of the beds aren't made up, everywhere needs vacuuming, bathrooms need cleaning, kitchen needs scrubbing and I haven't got much food in. Good Lord, what happens if one of *them* is the inspector? That chap made his name up. Oh blast it. First, I'd better get through the mountain of washing up. *(bustles off through the archway)*

HEATHER I'll give you a hand Ronnie. How silly of me to forget about something so important. *(smiles at the audience & then follows Ronnie)*

the front doorbell rings

BARRY & DAWN enter through the front door

BARRY *(he is nervous, clumsy, a dimwit & has bad sunburn : wearing acid wash jeans, a sweater, doc martens & bomber jacket)* Umm, well, umm, what do you think Dawn? Is this gonna be any good?

DAWN *(she is rude & a bully : wearing jeans, sweater, doc martens & denim jacket)* Yeah Barry, it will have to do and besides we ain't got any choice; this is the only place with rooms free. I can't believe you lost the directions to this village; you really are as thick as two short planks!

BARRY But, I'm really upset because I missed the funeral.

DAWN I only got with you, because your dad promised before he kicked the bucket, that if you were married; you'd get all his money and a roof over your head. Last thing I expected was 50 quid and a two man tent!

BARRY I couldn't work out 'ow he could afford to buy us a flat, what with 'im being on the dole. Dad always said, it's Thatcher's fault that 'im and mum 'ad no money.

DAWN We've only been married a year, and now we're living in a tent in your parents backyard.

BARRY It's getting 'arder to make a decent living from nicking gear and flogging it on. I did say I wanna go back to window cleaning.

DAWN But you only clean ground floor windows!

BARRY You know I can't go up a ladder again. The last time was on that farm, when I got all dizzy and fell on their goat... They didn't know whether to call a vet or a doctor... I still 'ave nightmares about them pulling the goat's horn out of my...

DAWN Yeah well, we can't rely on my job at the Whippet Club... I don't mind the stripping, but giving the extras gets dead boring.

BARRY Why can't you stick to being a phone box actress?

DAWN I get really cold being stuck in that phone box, listening to customer's making strange noises. And anyway, I prefer to be called an erotic performer; but I can give it up now because I've thought of this brilliant plan.

BARRY I thought my quick getaway was really good.

DAWN Just remember that I'm the criminal mastermind; so leave the thinking to me. And don't even get me started on that car you nicked. I said to go for something really fast...

the front doorbell rings

JEREMY comes in holding a bag which contains his dog; the tail is showing

JEREMY Oh, good afternoon. I must say, I feel a little moist!

DAWN You what?

JEREMY A little moist from the drizzle. Is that your Morris Minor outside?

BARRY Umm yeah, why?

JEREMY I was just admiring it. A few years back I purchased George Harrison's 1964 Aston Martin. But I had to sell the old girl eventually, because the wife was moaning that it was taking up too much room by the indoor swimming pool. Oh well, nice speaking to you. Toodle-oo. *(heads to bedroom 1)*

BARRY There was summat moving in his bag.

DAWN Who cares! Right, let's get a room sorted - if there's anyone about.

BARRY I'm still not sure we've done the right thing.

DAWN We've only gotta stay here until tomorrow; then we can disappear and never be seen again. Did you leave a window down in the car? We don't want it dying, or else we'll have to send it back stuffed.

BARRY Yeah, but we shouldn't leave it in there too long; poor thing might get scared.

DAWN You're the scared one, you cry-baby!

BARRY I feel all peculiar about this Dawn. Sir Laurence Ashcroft is so well-known on the telly. Everyone will hate us for kidnapping his dog.

DAWN Oi, you dimwit! Do you want to say that a bit louder?

BARRY *(louder)* I said, we'll be hated for kidnapping his dog.

DAWN Shut your mouth, you idiot. Ashcroft deserves it for sacking me when I was his cleaner. We'll drive to Brandon Park tomorrow at 10am. He'll put the 250 grand in a bag, we'll leave the dog, take the money and hey presto!

BARRY But what 'appens if summat goes wrong and we get caught by the fuzz?

DAWN Ashcroft won't get hold of the fuzz because we threatened to turn his stupid dog into a kebab. What worries me more, is that you stick out like a sore thumb with your sunburn. *(presses the bell on reception)*

BARRY I love Cannon and Ball but you said to be more like Crockett and Stubbs in Miami Vice. Weren't my fault they didn't wake me up in the sunbed shop!

DAWN Once we get the money we'll shoot back here; make sure someone see us which gives us an alibi, then sneak away in the middle of the night, drive to Plymouth and catch the ferry to France. Easy.

BARRY But, I reckon I'll get homesick and Mum won't cope without me. *(he picks up an ornament by reception studying it)*

RONNIE rushes out wearing marigolds that are covered in soapy bubbles

DAWN Tough! We've gotta stick to the plan. When we get a room, we'd better mingle with the other guests, so they don't suspect who we really are.

BARRY notices Ronnie; yelps in surprise & drops the ornament, which breaks

DAWN Oi! Who are you? You can't go sneaking up on people.

RONNIE I'm terribly sorry I didn't mean to startle you, my name is Ronnie and I'd like to welcome you to Pinewood Lodge. *(shakes their hands)* Oh, I do apologise, I was doing the washing up...

DAWN We want a double room with its own bog.

RONNIE Thank you, yes of course. Well, I see that room 2 is available. *(gives them the key)* Before I show you the way, could you fill in the visitors book please?

BARRY *(starts to write in the visitors book)* Oh right yeah, it's umm, it's umm, it's James Bond and... Mary Goodnight.

RONNIE Okay then! Will you be requiring breakfast in the morning?

BARRY Nah, we'd better not, because the eggs are affected with semolina.

RONNIE Well yes, quite! Your bedroom is just up those stairs. Have you got any suitcases that you'd like me to take up there for you?

DAWN Barry... I mean James will get them from the car later.

RONNIE That's no problem at all. Just out of curiosity, are you here for the estate agents seminar?

DAWN Estate agents seminar? Oh yeah that's it, that's why we're here. Yeah.

RONNIE Another couple staying are also going, you might see them later. Well do excuse me, I'd better get a dustpan and brush. *(goes through the archway)*

DAWN Why did you say we're called James Bond and Mary Goodnight?

BARRY It just popped in me 'ead. I watched The Man with the Golden Gun the other night, on Mum's telly. I thought we should 'ave different names; case the police do a manhunt for us.

DAWN It's a bloody dog! We're not on the run with Hannibal Lecter!

BARRY Who's Cannonball Lester?

DAWN Hannibal is a serial killer in a book. One of my regulars was telling me all about him, when I was stripping the other night.

BARRY I'm just feeling peculiar about the whole thing. And summat's playing on me mind; why's the dog called Hamlet?... That's a cigar 'aint it?

DAWN Just leave it to me to work out the technical stuff. *(sees Tamsin's coat hung up & tries it on)* Oh yeah, that's classy that is; I'll have that. I'm going to the bedroom; you go and get the dog.

BARRY I'm so gutted that I missed Holly's funeral today. I'm gonna regret it for the rest of my life. *(he goes out the front door)*

DAWN I can't believe he's getting so upset over a hamster. *(she goes to bedroom 2)*
RONNIE hurriedly comes out with a sign, a bag & a dustpan & brush

RONNIE Yes, I know how important the inspector's visit is!
HEATHER comes out following Ronnie

HEATHER Well all you seem to be doing, is running around cluelessly. There is no time for dilly-dallying. What are you doing with that tatty handmade sign?

RONNIE I don't want to explain to any more guests that we can't serve eggs with the breakfast. So I'll put this up which is self-explanatory. *(puts the sign up)*

HEATHER Why should we believe Edwina Currie? She's stuck up there in London with all those other, slimy, out of touch, liars in parliament, starting controversy and getting paid ridiculous amounts of money. The newspapers are just as much to blame for printing it.

RONNIE There is no way that I'm taking the chance. If someone gets food poisoning, that will definitely finish us. *(brushes up the ornament into a bag)*

HEATHER We've only got one couple staying, so just calm down. By the way, have you heard that Kylie Minogue on the radio? One minute she's in that Neighbours programme and now she's supposed to be a pop star; it will never last.

RONNIE Heather please just listen to me, we've now got a *second* couple staying and for all I know, one of them could be the blasted inspector...

HEATHER *(ignoring Ronnie)* I can't stand pop music. That new band from America, Guns N Roses, now they do get me excited. There's something about the singer...

RONNIE I overheard them saying about mingling with other guests, so we don't suspect who they really are. They signed in with alias names as well.

HEATHER You're becoming paranoid! I'll put money on it, that they're also here for a dirty weekend.

the front doorbell rings

BARRY comes in with a bag containing the dog inside; the tail is showing

RONNIE I've no idea if they're having a dirty... *(sees Barry)* Oh hello there. This is Heather and this is Mr James Bond. Can I assist you with your bag?

BARRY *(defensively)* No!

HEATHER Did Ronnie say, you were called...

BARRY Umm, yeah... *(makes up a lie)* Me mum and dad are called Bond and they thought it'd be funny to call me James after...

HEATHER Yes we do get it, that's very original. Dear me, suddenly all I can smell is cheese. May I suggest that you make a purchase, of some deodorant or occasionally wash under your armpits.

BARRY Okay. I should get upstairs to Mary, she'll be wondering where I am.

HEATHER Are you having a dirty weekend? Just be honest, we're all adults here.

BARRY No, we've got our own soap. Me and Mary are 'ere for the semaphore.

HEATHER Semaphore? Don't you mean seminar?

BARRY Yeah, that as well. *(he skulks off to bedroom 1, tripping up the stairs)*

HEATHER Well, he was extremely strange and what is it with the 007 fixation? Why can't they model themselves on real men like Bruce Willis or Arnold Schwarze... thingummy...

BARRY opens the door to bedroom 1

TAMSIN screams offstage

JEREMY *(offstage)* I say, do you mind old bean.

BARRY Sorry. *(shuts the door & goes into bedroom 2)*

RONNIE Quite frankly, I'm just relieved to have any customers at all. Right, I really must get on and check the other bedrooms. Please can you hang around reception for the next half an hour?

HEATHER Yes, I suppose so. But first I want a cup of tea.

RONNIE Thanks so much for being helpful! *(briskly goes to bedroom 4)*

HEATHER What an awful shame it will be, when we get closed down. *(goes through the archway smiling)*

the front doorbell rings

Mrs O'Nion enters through the front door, she leaves her suitcase by the door, shakes her umbrella & hangs it on the coat stand. She carries a notebook

Mrs O'Nion *(she takes everything seriously & is prim & proper : wearing clothing similar to Margaret Thatcher)* First impressions are frightful; it looks like the Addams Family reside here! The outside looks terribly neglected and the overgrown garden is obviously a litter tray for all the neighbouring cats and dogs. It's a sure-fire way to put people off. *(making notes for her review)*

(presses the bell on reception) This is by far the worst I've inspected in months. Thank goodness it's nearly Christmas. Driving from one gruesome place to the next is exhausting and I'm in a foul mood today, so they'd better treat me well or else, I will annihilate them. *(sees the egg sign & reads it)*

HEATHER comes out with a cuppa

HEATHER Oh hello. What do you want?

Mrs O'Nion *(hides the notebook)* Good afternoon! Well, I was hoping to get a room for the night if that's possible?

HEATHER I see. It's just you then?

Mrs O'Nion Yes, that's not a problem is it?

HEATHER No I suppose not. Why've you come to Chartwell? Is it for the estate agents seminar?

Mrs O’Nion *(thinking on the spot)* Oh yes, that is correct. I am attending the seminar and combining that with a minibreak, to get some sea air into me.

HEATHER Humph, it’s alright for some! *(checking the book for available rooms)* Well, bedroom 4 is a single room so you can have that.

Mrs O’Nion I’d much rather have a double room if you have one available?

HEATHER *(mimicking under her breath)* I’d much rather have a double room.

Mrs O’Nion Sorry, did you utter something?

HEATHER I just announced that bedroom 3 is a double and I sincerely hope that it’s up to your expectations, your majesty.

Mrs O’Nion Thank you very much, I’m quite positive that it will be delightful. Could someone assist me with my suitcase please?

HEATHER *(under her breath)* What did your last slave die of! *(to Mrs O’Nion)* Hang on a minute, if you’d be so kind. *(shouts)* Ronnie.

Mrs O’Nion If it’s any trouble then...

HEATHER No, it’s absolutely fine. It’s just that normal guests manage to carry their belongings, unaided. *(shouts again)* Ronnie.

Mrs O’Nion It’s abundantly obvious that it would be easier if I take it..
RONNIE comes out of bedroom 4

RONNIE Yes Heather. *(rushes down)*

HEATHER *(points at the suitcase)* Can you take this *old bag* to room 3? The guest is apparently unable to carry it, though strangely, she managed competently to manhandle the awfully heavy bag from her car to our entrance.

Mrs O’Nion I don’t like your attitude at all. Do you want my custom or not?

RONNIE I’m sorry yes of course we do, I’m Ronnie, it’s nice to meet you. I presume my stepsister has got you to sign the visitors book?

Mrs O’Nion No, she has not. So far, she’s been extraordinarily rude to me. *(writes her details in the visitors book)*

HEATHER I just said that *normal* guests carry their own belongings.

Mrs O’Nion If I was given a chance to explain, I would’ve said that I’m recovering from a very serious knee operation. And carrying a suitcase up or down steps could cause dramatic pain, which might go on to affect me for the rest of my life.

HEATHER What a shame!

RONNIE If at any point you need assistance, then please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Mrs O’Nion Thank you. There you are, I’ve filled in my details.

HEATHER *(reading the book)* Mrs Onion.

Mrs O’Nion Actually, it is pronounced O’Nion.

HEATHER Well it says Onion here...

Mrs O’Nion You’ve missed the apostrophe and I’m telling you it’s O’Nion. Now, if it’s not too much to ask, can we stop the Spanish inquisition and let me go to my room. After my arduous journey here, I need a lie down.

HEATHER *(to Ronnie)* I’d get a vet to have her put down!

JEREMY comes downstairs

JEREMY I say, there are no towels in our bedroom, let alone any flannels, sponges, shower caps, bathrobes or slippers. It’s pretty shabby if you ask me. Surely one shouldn’t have to go hunting around the room for simple amenities...

RONNIE *(slightly flustered)* I’m terribly sorry sir. I’ll bring some towels up, just as soon as I move the old bag...

Mrs O’Nion What did you just say?

RONNIE I mean, this old bag as in the suitcase and show this lady to her room.

JEREMY Also, I don’t like to complain but the television doesn’t appear to be working. It’s just not on. Yah?

HEATHER *(to Jeremy)* You really are just a pain in the...

RONNIE Thank you Heather. Please can you put the kettle on?

HEATHER *(to Ronnie)* I can’t stand whining little weasels. *(goes through the archway)*

RONNIE I’ll check on your television in a minute sir, and I apologise for any inconvenience caused. Sorry about that madam...

JEREMY Oh and lastly, I must tell you that I’ve got a faulty knob!

RONNIE I beg your pardon?

JEREMY The one on our bedroom door. It’s all wonky! *(goes back to his room)*

Mrs O’Nion No one has asked me yet if I require breakfast in the morning.

RONNIE Oh yes of course, would you prefer a full English or continental?

Mrs O’Nion A full English please, though obviously without the eggs.

BARRY comes downstairs & trips over the last couple steps

BARRY I was wondering, if we could ‘ave some sandwiches?

RONNIE Yes, that's no problem at all. If you just press that bell and Heather will be out in a moment to serve you.

BARRY presses the bell on reception

RONNIE Right you are then Mrs Onion... I mean O'Nion... If you'd like to follow me please and I'll show you to your bedroom. *(takes her case)*

they both exit to bedroom 3

BARRY *(presses the bell again)* Hello, is there anybody there?

HEATHER comes out

HEATHER Oh, it's you! What do you want?

BARRY Umm well, could you send some sandwiches to our room?

HEATHER Oh yes sir, yes sir, three bags full sir. Is there anything else? How about when you have a bath later, I come in and scrub your back for you. It's not like I've got anything else to do. I'll get Ronnie to bring some up later. *(filing her nails)*

the front doorbell rings

REGINALD enters through the front door

REGINALD *(he is an undercover police detective inspector, straight-talking & irritable, occasionally he rapidly blinks when tense; as Guillaume the Frenchman, he speaks with a charming French accent : wearing trousers, a shirt & an overcoat : he pronounces Guillaume like William)* Excuse-moi, mademoiselle...

HEATHER Can't you see that I'm talking to someone, just wait your turn.

REGINALD Ah, oui, oui, oui. I apologise for my bad manners.

BARRY I 'aven't told you what sandwiches we want yet.

HEATHER Humph, you'll get what you're given and be thankful... Mr Bond.

BARRY Mr Bond? Oh that's me... Umm, and the toilet in our bathroom ain't working.

HEATHER Right, well I'll add it to the very long list of things to do. Don't you worry about us; obviously the main priority is that you have a nice relaxing time. *(under her breath)* Idiot!

BARRY What should we do until you fix the toilet?

HEATHER Well I suggest, that there are two options; either tie a knot in it or use an empty bottle.

BARRY Oh, okay. *(sees Mrs O'Nion's umbrella; he steals it & retreats to bedroom 2)*

HEATHER *(to Reginald)* Right, so what do you want then?