

ACT ONE – SCENE ONE

Henry and Albert sit in their favorite seats when the general manager, Johnny Smith (who they nickname Johnny Walker) leaves his office and walks pass their view.

Henry: 'Johnny Walker is having a bad day.'

Albert: 'What do you mean?'

Henry: 'Well, it's 10 in the morning and he's still awake.'

Albert: 'He obviously forgot to bring his scotch.'

Both snicker.

Henry: 'But seriously, that's about all he's good at.'

Albert: 'What?'

Henry: 'Draining a bottle of scotch before 10.'

Albert: 'And I don't think that was part of his job description.'

Henry: 'No, it certainly wasn't. He's been in the job for two years and hasn't put in a good day's work yet. He agrees to expensive plays that don't make any money, and employs staff nearly as inept as him.'

Albert: 'Not to mention, he hasn't been able to raise funds to fix the structural interior of the place. It's only due to the stroke of sheerest luck the roof and the lighting bars haven't collapsed yet. Which reminds me ... where is my bloody helmet?'

Albert's building site helmet is placed in the seat next to him. He grabs and puts it firmly onto his head.

ACT ONE – SCENE TWO

Brewster, the theatre's play selector (nickname: 1000) walks up the corridor and passes their view.

Albert: 'There comes Brewster, the play selector. Probably looking for Johnny Walker.'

Henry: 'This time the idiot brings us Hamlet!'

Albert: 'Yes, but to his credit, he managed to keep the cast down to 12.'

Henry: 'How often do I have to tell you, anything more than 7 ... the cast outnumbering the audience, is bad news!'

Albert: 'What about culture?'

Henry: 'Stuff culture! Firstly, that much culture doesn't pay the bills, and anyhow, Hamlet is not really what we need to see. Brings back bad memories ... with everyone ending up dead I mean.'

ACT ONE – SCENE THREE

Randy, stage manager brings his girlfriend and takes her into the office.

Henry: 'There is Randy with his fluff draped around him. Making a beeline for the office.'

Albert overjoyed, throwing his helmet up in the air: 'It's always the same play these two put on, but it's the kind of play even I'd pay money to see ... evvverrry time.'

Henry: 'Exactly, somebody ought to advise Johnny Walker to put it on for public viewing. For once the Theatre would make money.'

Albert: 'Look, look. He locked the door.'

Henry: 'He's the cautious type.'

Albert: 'Yeah, but that won't help him ... he obviously doesn't believe in ghosts.'

Both burst out in scornful laughter.

They leave their seats and walk towards the office. Just as they are about to enter, Mary comes up behind them.

Mary: 'I want to come too!'

Henry: 'No way!'

Albert: 'You must be joking! It's X rated!'

Henry: 'You are far too young for this kind of stuff, Mary!'

Mary: *(protesting)* 'But I'll always be too young. I'm a ghost and don't get any older, remember?'

Albert and Henry dart despairing glances at each other.

Albert: 'Don't you start arguing with us, little girl!'

Henry: *(mumbles)* ‘Yeah, particularly now ... we are about to miss foreplay. Then picks up a more serious tone: ‘We’ll discuss this later. Now go, and play with the lighting desk.’

Albert: ‘No ... can’t have her play with that. That piece of crap is nearly as old as we are dead ... totally unsafe. She’ll get electrocuted.’

ACT ONE – SCENE FOUR

Henry and Albert sit in their favorite seats, when suddenly Albert spots Mary playing with the knobs of the lighting desk.

Albert: ‘Suit, there is little Mary, playing with the knobs of the lighting desk.’

Henry: ‘How many times does that kid have to be told to stay away from those...’

Albert: ‘It’s your fault, you know?’

Henry: ‘What do you mean?’

Albert: ‘Well, I remember when you told little Mary to bugger off and play with the lighting desk.’

Henry: ‘Yeah, but you then told her not to.’

Albert: ‘Well exactly, you order a kid not to do something, it will only spur it on to...’

Henry: ‘Yeah, yeah, shut up!’ Then darts an angry glance up at Mary who plays the lighting desk like a piano. ‘Mary, stop playing with the lighting desk, it’s too dangerous...!’

The next moment the whole lighting room is immersed in sparks. Mary instantly keels over backwards. The room is imbued in puffs of smoke.

Albert and Henry look at each other in a stupor.

Albert: ‘Bloody hell! That’s the third time that kid has killed herself this week! Where is this going to end?’

Henry: ‘It’s your fault, you know?’

Albert: ‘Why would it be my fault?’

Henry: ‘Well listen Sparky, you are the bloody engineer, you should point out to her the danger spots in this building...’

Albert: *(quite incensed)* ‘You are kidding me ... where shall I start? It’d take me a century to do that!’

Henry: ‘So what ... it’s not like time is of the essence here!’

Albert: 'What about you? You've got plenty of time to look after her!'

Henry: 'I'm wrecking my brains how to keep this place afloat. Don't have time to play Nanny!'

After a serene moment Mary lifts out of her body the third time this week.

Albert: 'Are you alright, Darling.'

Mary: 'Yes, Uncle Sparky, I'm fine.'

Henry: 'One thing is certain.'

Albert: 'What?'

Henry: 'She needs a mother.'

Albert: 'Ah yeah, and you can arrange that?'

Henry clasps his chin in deep thoughts. Suddenly with pursed lips gives Albert a sideways look.

Henry: 'It's possible.'

Albert looks at Henry, at first not sure what he meant by that.

Albert: 'It's possible? How?' Then it clicks. He's it outraged. 'You must be joking!'

Henry: 'You've got a better idea?'

Pause.

Albert: 'No. But if Top Dog finds out, we are in deep shit! Whilst I haven't read the "Rules, Regulations, Conduct and Correct Procedure for Ghosts" lately, I'm sure it reads somewhere, we may audibly creak, but not kill people.'

Henry: 'What can he do to us he hasn't already done?'

Pause.

Albert: 'Well, can't argue with that.'

Henry: 'Exactly! A murderer out there gets life, we are in this slammer for eternity! So, if you ask me; Stuff him!'

Albert: 'Yeah, stuff him!'

Henry: 'So, who could we help along to the other ... our side?'

Albert: 'Well, she would have to be suitable for looking after Mary of course...'
Then wanting to say something else, but pauses instead, glancing at Henry.
'Are you thinking what I'm thinking?'

Henry: 'I don't know. I don't know what you are thinking?'

Albert: 'I'm thinking, it wouldn't harm if she were pretty as well.'

Henry: 'It wouldn't be a disadvantage.'

Pause.

Albert: 'Not that it makes a difference to us.'

Henry: 'Top Dog forbid! Couldn't give a damn, personally!'

Albert: 'But it might be important for little Mary to have a Mum she could look up to...'

Henry: (*interrupts*) 'Look up to and not having to think; 'Christ, you are ugly?'

Pensive pause.

Albert: 'Yes.'

ACT ONE – SCENE FIVE

Albert and Henry sit in their favorite seats, when the Lighting Designer Neville (nickname: Useless) trundles onto the stage.

Henry: 'What's Useless up to now?'

Albert: 'Stuffing his face with another chocolate bar!'

Henry: 'As if he doesn't already look like he is wearing an assortment of pipes beneath his t-shirt.'

Albert: 'As if the lighting bars aren't already not up to code. Whenever he climbs on top of those I'm cacking in my pants...'

And is immediately interrupted.

Henry: 'You can't shit yourself anymore.'

Albert: 'Shut up! You know what I mean. This guy will cause the whole interior to come down one day...'

Henry: 'And that wouldn't be the end of bad news!'

Albert: 'You're saying?'

Henry: 'He'll come down with it ... and splash.'

Albert: 'Don't say that! It's not even remotely funny.'

Neville: 'Lucy, where are you ... I'm here on stage!'

Albert: 'Who is he calling?'

Henry: 'Most likely talking to himself again.'

The next moment this beautiful 20-25 year old woman appears, glides past the seating rows into Henry's and Albert's view.

Lucy: 'Ah Neville, there you are.'

Henry and Albert can be seen holding on to their seats. Mouths gaping. Unable to speak at first. Then Albert shrieks. Even audible to the living.

Lucy: 'Did you hear that?'

Neville: 'Yeah, I sometimes hear that exact same noise when I climb onto the bars.'

Lucy: 'Sounded like somebody was shrieking.'

Neville: 'It's an old building. Makes funny noises. Now listen Lucy, I hope you are not scared of heights, 'cause as my assistant your tasks include climbing up those bars setting up the lights.'

Lucy: 'There it was again.'

Neville: 'What?'

Lucy: 'The shrieking. You don't have ghosts in here, do you?' she jokes.

Albert (exults) 'She'll soon find out!'

Henry: (blurts out) 'Yeah, she'll be one herself!'

ACT ONE – SCENE SIX

Lucy and Neville climb up the ladder towards the bars to arrange the lights for the next show.

Henry: 'How are you going to do it? You can't physically make contact and push her off.'

Albert who climbs right behind her: 'No, but the shrieking bit seems to startle her. I'll make sure I'm right next to her ear when she gets onto those bars!'

Henry's brows suddenly furrow, and he sounds uneasy: 'Albert, wait! I am not so sure now we should go ahead with this. She is so young. Got the whole life ahead of her...'

Albert: 'Shut up! Too late for 2nd thoughts. We apologize to her later.'

Neville: 'You are good at it. Like you've done this before...'

Lucy: 'I used to be a gymnast. I am comfortable in all sorts of positions.'

Causing shrieks from Henry, Albert and Neville. Only that Neville loses his balance and plummets onto the stage belly first.

Henry spins back, throws up his arms, emitting mournful noises.

Lucy: 'Neville, Neville, are you alright?'

No answer.

Henry: *(motions Albert down)* 'Come down immediately! He's unconscious, but still alive!'

Albert: 'I'm coming! I'm coming!'

Henry: 'I mean, jump!'

Albert: 'I'm not jumping from here! I could get killed!' and continues climbing down the ladder.

Henry: 'You need to resuscitate him!'

Albert: *(protesting)* 'Why me? You are next to him ... you do it!'

Henry: 'You are the engineer! You are up with health and safety procedures! You must do it!'

Albert: 'Do what?'

Henry: 'Resuscitate.'

Albert: *(arrives)* 'In my day, we would have slapped him across the face a few times.'

Henry *(steps aside)* 'Yes, but these days, they do mouth to mouth!'

Albert: *(loses his countenance)* 'Rack off! I'm not doing mouth to mouth, and besides, I can't blow any air. Remember ... I'm fucking dead!'

Lucy arrives, kneels next to Neville and applies mouth to mouth.

Albert's and Henry's eyes fly wide open, holding on to each other. Henry seemingly gasping for air.

Albert: (eyes him askance) 'What are you doing?'

Henry: 'Gasping for air!'

Neville's eyes too suddenly fly wide open.

Lucy: 'Thank god you are alright!'

Albert: 'Top Dog has nothing to do it with it. As long he makes impact belly first, he'll survive a fall like this every time.'

Henry: 'Yeah, I bet he wants to do that again!'

Albert: 'What an asshole.'

ACT ONE – SCENE SEVEN

Henry comes up the aisle and sits himself next to Albert.

Henry: 'Just received a message from the Celestial Office. Top Dog is sending the Chief Whip down to have a word with us.'

Albert: (*nervously*) 'Shit, you reckon it's about the incident involving Useless?'

Henry: 'I reckon.'

Albert: 'Should we be worried?'

Henry: 'I don't know, but it would help to make a good impression.'

Albert: 'Meaning?'

Henry: 'For once you dress properly, and ... take that bloody helmet off.'

Albert: 'No way! The moment I do that would be the exact same moment shit will happen. I wear a suit, but the helmet stays on!'

Henry: 'That would look ridiculous!'

Albert: 'Don't care.'

Mary is playing on stage. Henry motions her over to have a word with her:

Henry: 'Mary darling, we are expecting a visitor. Please go, wash your hands and put on your Sunday dress.'

Mary: 'Uncle Whip?'

Pause.

Henry: 'Yes.'

Mary: 'Have you been naughty again?'

Albert: 'No.'

Henry: 'Just controversial.'

Mary: 'Why does he always yell at you?'

Albert: 'Because he is an assh...'

Henry: *(interrupts)* 'Because he is nearly deaf, and the deaf tend to yell.'

Mary: 'Ahhh...'

ACT ONE – SCENE EIGHT

All three sit in the stands waiting for Chief Whip to arrive. Suddenly the back stage door swings open and Chief Whip enters. A middle aged ghost with a grey mustache, immaculately dressed, and confident gait walks onto stage. Briefly halts, his arms folded across his chest, shooting Henry and Albert a disapproving look.

Chief Whip: 'Are you coming down, or will you make me come up?'

Albert: 'Ye...'

And is immediately interrupted by Henry

Henry: 'We come down!' Then glimpses at Albert, and hisses with clinched teeth, 'Better let me do the talking.'

Mary hurtles down the steps towards Chief Whip and yells at him with all her might

Mary: 'Uncle Whip, Uncle Whip! How are you!'

And throws her arms around him.

Chief Whip: 'I am fine, little Mary.' Then kneels down to be face to face with her. 'But there is no need to yell like that, you know?'

Mary yells even louder than before

Mary: 'Why, you're not deaf anymore?'

Chief Whip wipes the spittle of his face.

Chief Whip: 'Deaf?'

Before Henry, who hurries down the aisle, can diffuse the situation.

Mary: 'Uncle Henry said you are rather deaf...'

Henry arrives and yanks little Mary out of the way.

Henry: 'I said dead ... like all of us.'

Mary: 'No, you said...'

Henry: 'Off you go!'

Mary: 'But...'

Henry: 'Go, play with the lighting desk ... now!'

As if Mary was provoking this reaction intentionally.

Mary: 'Are you sure?'

Henry: 'Go!'

Mary scuttles off.

Chief Whip, Albert and Henry sit around a table on stage.

Chief Whip: 'Deaf eh?'

Albert and Henry look down, avoiding eye contact.

Chief Whip: 'Now tell me ... what is going on here?'

Albert: 'What...'

He is immediately nudged by Henry.

Henry: '... do you mean?'

Chief Whip: 'Apart from a little bit of creaking and shrieking here and there you are not to interact with the living.'

Albert: 'We haven't!'

Chief Whip: 'You haven't eh?' Takes a deep breath, then yells. 'Not just that you have, but worse, you lot turned murderous!'

Mary up in the lighting room mumbling to herself

Mary: 'He's yelling again.'

Henry: 'No we haven't.'

Chief Whip: 'How stupid do you think we are?!'

Albert: 'Not sur...'

And again is nudged by Henry, this time violently.

Chief Whip: 'We have a department in the Celestial Office just observing all rules and regulations of the Memorandum of Articles and Associations for Ghosts are strictly adhered to! In that context a little slip up is recorded immediately! When members make physical contact with the living all sirens go off, causing the office to shake like it were hit by a heaven quake! But when some of our members turn murderous, the whole building starts to crumble! Because of you assholes we had to call the builders in...!'

Albert: *(interrupts)* 'Builders? You've got builders up there? Have you got any jobs going?'

Henry regards Albert with a lingering sideways look, then seethes

Henry: 'Shut the fuck up!' *(And continues)* 'I don't know what caused your alarms to go off, but it shouldn't have been caused by anything we did...'

Chief Whip: *(interrupts)* 'Pardon me...?'

Henry: 'Well, admittedly we might have schemed something along those lines you suggested, but we never followed through with it.'

Albert: 'That's right. It was an accident...'

Henry: 'When Useless, I mean Neville, the lighting designer fell off the bars *(then emphasizes)* by accident, we even contemplated resuscitating him.'

Albert: 'It was Lucy who caused him to fall off the bars.'

Chief Whip: 'Who's Lucy?'

Henry: *(surprised)* 'I thought you know everything...'

Chief Whip: 'I haven't seen the bloody tape, personally! I just read the report! So, who's Lucy?'