

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I tried to write a TV play set in a watering hole that caters for the theatrical chattering set. I modelled it on Orso's, a popular and very good London restaurant. It follows an evening after a first night at the theatre and it was an attempt to parody those precious dahlings and those utterly self-important creatures whose lives desperately depend on the outside world to give them form and shape, adulation and importance, having very little substance of their own. They float in an ether of seriousness that they believe wafts from their every utterance but they are well-meaning in their theatre babble.

It was very tempting to parody certain figures and the fun is trying to identify who they might be. Their lives are demarcated by the slogans posing as wisdom which they emit and the narcissism which is their philosophy. I have not hesitated to use myself in the rogue's gallery of frauds since one easily slides along the muddy road from time to time and it can be difficult to extricate oneself. We live through the good words of others and hope we will be popular, get good reviews and be recognized for our temporal talents. In the end the world inside is a parody of real life and outside the real world is being destroyed as the riots inspired by the Poll Tax bludgeon their way down the Strand burning cars and looting. Meanwhile the chatter goes on regarding the latest revival of *The Three Sisters*.

Between the two deer frames
actors out of character. Change
as they step through

LX - colour

2, 11 @ 10

LX - B10

①

Moment piece

DL copy.
LX - 8, 12 @ 10

A fashionable cafe . . . crowded . . . clumps of people at various tables. Animated gestures and talk. Showbiz watering hole. Unimportant people trying to get a table and pleading unsuccessfully with the MAITRE D'. WAITERS are buzzing around and a small group of waiters are singing *Happy Birthday* round a celebrating table. As we pass round the tables we see another group celebrating a first night. A dozen or so GUESTS are present around the LEADING ACTOR. Glasses of all colours festoon the table.

FIRST GUEST: Hated the first act but it warmed up in the second.
SECOND GUEST: Like last week's stew you mean? Please! So predictable darling . . .

THIRD GUEST: So over the top, you know what I mean?

FOURTH GUEST: Yes, he must have had his mum out there!

(Squeals of laughter.)

FIFTH GUEST: Mind you I had the best sleep I've had in weeks.

SIX: You were lucky, I had to listen to that shit . . .

SEVEN: That love scene! I nearly heaved up . . .

EIGHT: Mind you in all fairness the direction didn't help him.

NINE: Didn't he use to direct traffic!

(Squeals of laughter.)

TEN: Wasn't it exciting when he forgot his lines?!

NINE: Oh! I was cringing with embarrassment.

TEN: Well, it was the most honest he had been all night! (He now turfs to the actor who is sitting next to him.) You were

marvellous tonight, no I really mean . . . super . . . well done!

ACTOR: Thanks, a bit of a sweat but we got through, I must admit I was shitting several bricks before the curtain went up!

NINE: I wouldn't have believed it, you looked so calm and confident, so in control!

TEN: Icy, like you'd been playing it for a month and that scene when you attacked your wife, powerful stuff.

ACTOR: Not O.T.T.?

TEN: You? Over the top, never. You could never be over the top Garry, (sotto voce) when you enter, the stage comes to life!

ACTOR: Aw come on!

TEN: No really, I mean you have . . . presence!

as the gap
back →
add in
7

DAHLLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

NINE: You have it or you don't . . .
EIGHT: Cheers Garry and a long, long run!
SEVEN: (*Sotto voce*) How long do you give it?
EIGHT: A month at most.
SEVEN: You're too generous . . . I'll make it a week.
SIX: He was outrageous!
FIVE: Nerves, poor man suffers terribly with first-night nerves . . .
FOUR: Well he sprayed the first three rows with spit.
FIVE: Live theatre darling . . .
THREE: Mind you he had a good reception at the curtain . . .
TWO: Sheer bloody relief sweetheart . . .!
ONE: Cheers darling Garry and bloody well done!!
ALL: Terrific, smashing, stunning for a first night, fab, brill . . .
ACTOR: Thank you all . . . a big thanks . . . and a special thanks to my director who unfortunately couldn't be with us tonight but we wish him luck at Channel Four . . . and to Frank Drekk who wrote words that actors would die for!
ALL: Here here!
ACTOR: To my leading lady Samantha who I know gave up a lucrative mini series to be able to do Frank's play . . .
SAMANTHA: (*Ecstatic*) Let's face it, that's why I came into the business, when do you get a chance to get your mouth around something like that . . .
ALL: Ooooooh! You are outrageous Sam . . .
(*Much giggling at her cheekiness.*)

Linda and Steve's Table

Camera wanders over to Linda and Steve's table or the waiter wanders over, who we follow while the chat continues naturally from the table we have left.

LINDA: I think you'd be a fabulous Macbeth . . .
STEVE: Yah? I'd love to get my teeth into that. I really would.
LINDA: You'd be super really, you ought to play it!
STEVE: I think I'm ready for it, yah . . .
LINDA: You are you know, you should do it somewhere . . .

DAHLLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

STEVE: I'd love to really, I think I'm right for it . . .
LINDA: You are, you'd be terrific, you're the right age . . .
STEVE: And temperament . . . I think I've got the temperament for it . . .
LINDA: You've definitely got that . . . you should have a go . . . you should . . . I think you'd be terrific . . .
STEVE: You think?
LINDA: Definitely!
STEVE: Not too old?
LINDA: No, no, you're just the right age, you've got the . . . maturity . . . he should be . . . mature. He's at the age when he wants . . . recognition.
STEVE: So he shouldn't be too young . . .
LINDA: No it's not interesting if he's too young . . .
STEVE: Some boring young fart won't give it . . . maturity!
LINDA: That's why you'd be good.
STEVE: I would?
LINDA: Definitely. I definitely think so, you'd be great, it's a great role for you . . . terribly sexy!
STEVE: Yeah, it is . . . it's got to have balls . . . you know I see him with balls . . . ballzy . . .
LINDA: He must have balls . . . It's terrible when he's played without balls . . .
STEVE: Awful! You know . . . you'd make a splendid Lady Macbeth . . . you would you know . . .
LINDA: Really . . . really . . . why??
STEVE: You've got balls!
LINDA: You are sweet . . .
STEVE: No . . . I mean it . . . you know what I mean, you've got more balls than most men in this place.
LINDA: Oh, do you mean it?
STEVE: I do really . . . we should do it together . . .
LINDA: Put all our balls in one basket . . . (*To waiter*) Two more Margaritas please . . . Look who's come in . . . Isn't it Sir Michael Wally? *add in S+6*
(*SIR MICHAEL enters with TART and ACTOR . . . goes from table to table, people rise and greet him unctiously, spilling their drinks*)

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

as they rise trying to be effortless. SIR M. navigates the room with everybody rising and falling, drinks spilling into the laps of their partners at the tables. Hugs, kisses and masses of 'Darling . . . it was super'.

SYCOPHANTS: So moving fab!

Again! I don't know how you do it . . .

Let's have a meeting next week.

You must come over.

Tremendous, Sir Michael, I mean really tremendous.

Simply genius, I was enthralled.

You haven't met my wife . . .

(SIR M. *moves on.*)

WIFE: (*Crushed*) I'm sure he didn't hear you.

SYCOPHANTS: Sir Mike, you bastard, you've done it again.

(*Hugs.*)

Did enjoy it, super brill!

(SIR M. *joins the Producer's table where sits the star actor,*

BRICK BERGMAN, and various SYCOPHANTS and

ASSISTANTS.)

PRODUCER: The advance is fabulous! I mean *fab* you *lads*! and the

word on the street is good . . .

ASSISTANT: Lionel Retch of *The Sunday Times* simply adored it.

. . . mind you he adores your work . . . loves everything you

do.

(*Next table, asides.*)

VOICE 1: Especially the blow jobs! *add in 5+6*

VOICE 2: Don't be so wicked.

PRODUCER: Also, Martin Billious was enthralled, simply

enthralled, and he loved you Brick. Thought you 'captured

the character'.

BRICK: (*American Movie Actor*) Yeah? . . . Fucking great . . . Hey!

I got through it didn't I, Sir Mike, at least shit, I didn't fall

on my arse. The lines, the lines, they stayed in my brain . . .!

SIR M.: You did awfully well, simply super brilliant and of course

your usually fabulously inventive, and intuitive street-wise

self but you must find the light . . . your special spots where

you do those marvellous soliloquies. We couldn't see you

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

Brick and we must see you . . .

PRODUCER: I saw him, I saw him . . .

SIR M.: Not completely, the punters have paid fifteen quid to sit

in a small hot smelly theatre with no air-conditioning in

order to see all of you! So find your spots!

BRICK: Yeah, I'm thinking too much about the fucking verse that

I miss the fucking lights . . . I must find them, I thought I

was in them . . . I swear I could feel the heat!

SIR M.: You were just on the edge of the light Brick and we see

the tip of your adorable nose which fortunately is a must

when you come to play Cyrano de Bergerac (save a fortune

on nose putty) so please I do beg of you, please do not have it

snipped off, but we must see the rest of you . . .

BRICK: Tomorrow I'll find the light . . . definitely . . .

SIR M.: I mean they haven't come to see the rest of the boring

farts I've cast . . . they're just there to give you the cues and

then piss off . . .

Reception

9, 10, 12 (cs area)

A couple of idiot tarts come in.

MATRE D': Hello! Long time no see . . . you're looking fabulous!

Hey that coat is AMAZING . . . and it suits you so well, the

reviews were MARVELLOUS . . . at least the ones I read!!

Who cares about the others . . . Of course we've got a table,

for you always, but if you could just wait at the bar.

(*A couple of nobodies come in*) Yes? Ooooh I am sorry, no I am

sorry we don't have a single table, not a thing, terribly busy,

try the cafe next door . . . yes . . . sorreeee . . .

(*A couple of regulars enter.*) Hello! Of course we booked your

usual table if you don't mind a short wait, have a drink at the

bar, you're looking very well, how was New York . . . Oh I

love the energy too, it's so ALIVE, you know, so

VIBRANT. Oh I love cities that stay awake, you feel the

power soaring through you, I love your jacket, from L.A., of

course you can tell, they have that zany laidback but very

cute, very sheek, très elegant . . .

5, 6, 7, 8, 12, e10

focus

Brick's Table

BRICK: What about the fucking verse? I think I got the rhythm better, no?

SIR M.: Yah! No question, the metre was almost perfect. (*Goes into a trance-like state*) You see the metre is the music and the music is the metre . . . once you find the pulse in the line Shakespeare does it for you, like . . . 'Now is the winter of our discontent' (*thumps table*) 'made glorious summer by this sun of York' (*thump*).

BRICK: . . . 'and all the clouds that lour'd upon our house' (*The whole table thumps.*) 'in the deep bosom of the ocean buried' . . . (*Whole table thumps.*) 'now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths' (*Thumps.*) Yeah, I'm getting closer . . . I can feel it . . . the metre . . . the music's in the metre and the metre's in the music . . . right!

'Now is the winter of our discontent' (*thumps the table, the glasses jump and spill.*)

SIR M.: Yes, yes, (*People are beginning to stare from the surrounding tables.*) You've got it . . . (*To WAITER*) Champagne and some mineral water . . . What mineral water do you have?

WAITER: (*Reels off the list*) Badoit, Perrier, Highland Springs, Malvern, Buxton Special . . .

PRODUCER: The advance is building up nicely, we're up on yesterday already . . .

ASSISTANT: I think Frank Bitch adored it . . . he was seen smiling when you did 'A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse'.

PRODUCER: That's right, he smiled, I heard that . . .

ASSISTANT: Yeah, he was seen smiling on very good authority, and at the curtain he did not rush out . . .

PRODUCER: No . . . he could have done but he stayed for the *curtain call!* Most unusual.

ASSISTANT: Very unusual, they usually rush out . . . to get their copy in . . .

PRODUCER: He stayed right to the last . . . most uncommon . . . (*Next table, asides.*)

VOICE 1: He was asleep.

VOICE 2: Don't be so wicked.

BRICK: (*Fractising*) 'Made glorious summer by this sun of York' (*thump, glasses jump*). That OK Sir Mike? . . . It's getting to me this fucking metre! (*Next table, asides.*)

VOICE 1: I left my car on a meter this afternoon, it over-ran and I got bloody towed . . .

VOICE 2: 'Cause you didn't pay attention to the meter! (*British film actor, TERRY ADAMS, enters and goes to Brick's table.*)

TERRY: Heard it went great . . . congrats . . .

BRICK: Yeah, well you know I got through it Terry . . .

TERRY: That's the main thing, as the actress said to the bishop . . . I'll be in to see it . . .

BRICK: (*Excited*) Great! But don't tell me when you're in. OK? I hate to know when anybody's in . . .

PRODUCER: Give it a few weeks . . .

SIR M.: It's true some actors are like that . . . they become terribly self-aware when they *know* when someone they know is in . . . it robs them of their character since they know that *they* know who he is under the make-up and the audience don't . . . the audience only know the mask . . . you know Brick, the man beneath the mask . . .

TERRY: I won't breathe a dicky bird.

BRICK: Bless you Terry, you're a sport but will you have dinner after?

TERRY: But you might be having dinner with someone else that night . . . mightn't you? And I can't let you know I'm coming in, less it interferes with your concentration . . . unless I take pot luck . . .

BRICK: Oh shit shit shit! I know! You let my secretary know when you're coming in and then she'll make a phoney dinner engagement . . . OK? So when you're in I won't know because I'll be having dinner with so and so . . . you

focus 7 on side tables - take out 5, 6, 8

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

arrive and then she says the other dinner is off!

TERRY: Double brill . . . you're terrific . . . (To SECRETARY.)

OK, book two tickets for Fri night . . .

BRICK: AAAAAAAAAAAH! I heard it! I heard it!

(TERRY wanders round tables.)

TART: Oh Terry, you're looking so well, you've lost weight . . . it suits you.

TERRY: Cambridge Diet darling . . . also don't mix carbs and protein, that's it, no carbs with protein . . .

Linda and Steve's Table

LINDA: You really would make a fabulous Macbeth . . .

STEVE: You sure? I mean you really think I should do it?

LINDA: Definitely, you've been talking about it for the last twenty-five years!

STEVE: OK . . . I'll do it . . . but who would direct me?

LINDA: That's a point, direct yourself! Like Keith Bragmugh!

STEVE: But I'm not like Bragmugh, I want guidance, someone to open me up . . .

LINDA: I wonder who . . . ??

STEVE: I mean that's the nub of it. In fact who will employ me? I haven't worked in five years except for two voice-overs.

LINDA: (Jealous) You get voice-overs? I've been trying to do voice-overs for years but it's a closed shop . . .

STEVE: Well I know a fabulous agent . . .

(TERRY ADAMS has just joined his table of four)

TERRY: (To BILLY TALL) You're looking more scrumptiously eatable each time I clap my minces on your delectable form . . .

BILLY: Ah bet you say that to all the crumpet!

FAT PRODUCER: Give us a piece of 'Marlon', Terry . . .

TERRY: (Ever obliging) I coulda been somebody, you shoulda looked after me a liddle more . . . we going for the odds on Wilson . . . it was you Charlie . . . you wuz my brudder . . . and I wind up with a one way ticket to Palookaville.

BILLY: Heyyy! That's fabulous . . . Ah think you're so clevah

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

you English actors . . .

FAT PRODUCER: Billy, I think you're pretty good yourself, I mean you got a standing ovation, right? I mean there you are, one of the most beautiful women in the universe and every shmuck thinks . . . aah wiv all that beauty you gotta be as thick as two planks and you get on those boards and knock them out . . .

BILLY: Aaaah, you're too kind, 'Ah have always depended on the kindness of strangers'.

FAT PRODUCER: Well darlin' . . . (Very aside) I'm hardly strange am I?

BILLY: I was quoting from the great master Tennessee Williams, you fat groping greasy pig, now get your hand off my leg before I catch your herpes!

TERRY: HAHHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

STEVE: I did a voice-over once for cornflakes playing the voice of a six year old . . . that was my voice . . .

LINDA: I saw that! That was your voice? You were MARVELLOUS!!

STEVE: (Little boy's voice) Mummy give me some more scrunchy cornflakes (beats spoon).

LINDA: Darling that was really fab, you've got the character so well . . . if I shut my eyes you could be a six-year-old toddler . . . how sweet!

STEVE: 'Mummy can I have some more cornflakes?' (beats plate with spoon enthusiastically.)

Terry's Table

PRODUCER'S SECRETARY: Terry do you have any plans to return to Hollywood?

TERRY: Funny you should ask me that . . . I was thinking abaht it but my agent woke up the other day and we're hanging about to encourage him to stay awake . . . it's all quite exciting and he's amazed at the changes in the industry since he's been asleep. Apparently he said there's a film being made here in England next year . . .

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

PRODUCER'S SECRETARY: What!! A film made here, in England!!

(Whole restaurant has stopped eating, silent, ears on stalks.)
You're joking.

TERRY: No it's a fact. I bet you didn't know that did you. They're going to make a film here . . . there might even . . . be . . . two!

(Noise returns to Adam, much gossiping and murmurs.)

FAT PRODUCER: So you're still with the Living Dead Agency, in case we need you?

TERRY: Of course, been with them since I was a super superstar, but when I was just a superstar I was with Skunk and Thief.

FAT PRODUCER: Whatever happened to them?

TERRY: They do mostly animal acts and rock singers . . .

PRODUCER'S SECRETARY: So you want to return to Hollywood . . . ooh, we'll be so happy!

TERRY: Dunno really, but I do like the lifestyle and the sun . . . I mean here it's always pissing down . . . mind you, you've got less chance of being shot dead. Do you know there were 6000 murders with hand guns in America in one year, while here there was eight!! Bet you didn't know that did you?

FAT PRODUCER: They're a violent people, what can I say, but the size of the sandwiches is remarkable and you get a second cup of coffee for free! So it's swings and roundabouts . . . and they love you in Hollywood . . . you get feedback.

TERRY: Not so sure, I've been taken off the 'A' list at parties!

FAT PRODUCER: You've got to be kidding me . . .!

BILLY: Oh no, that's terrible! Why should they do that to you.

You're never an empty seat at the dinner table . . . you always give so much! Terry . . . why?? I can't believe that . . . that's awful . . . I'm going to ring my agent and find out! That's really awful . . . off the 'A' list . . . I'm going to cry . . .

FAT PRODUCER: Terry Terry, why didn't you tell me this before . . .

TERRY: I didn't want to tell anyone, just the missus and me . . . the thing is I can take it . . . know what I mean . . . I've gone

190

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

through worse things in life . . . I was brought up in the East End . . . My dad was a bus conductor on the 38 bus. It was a bad route until you got to Piccadilly. Have you ever been on a number 19 bus from Walthamstow on a Saturday night, Billy?

BILLY: *(Thinks for moment)* No, Terry, I don't think so . . .

TERRY: Then don't, it's seriously unfunny . . .

FAT PRODUCER: *(Serious)* There's a film there Terry, there is the making of a film. Quick somebody give me a napkin, I wanna write down the synopsis, maybe we'll get some development money from Hemdale . . . but who can play Terry?! That's the thing, who could play you???

TERRY: Me??

FAT PRODUCER: No, no, not this one, you're not right for the part, but I'll think about it . . .

PRODUCER'S SECRETARY: What about Brick Bergman, he's here, you could mention it Terry, he likes you, you like him, you like each other. He respects your work, you respect his, you respect each other's, he's had ten tonies, four oscars, two monities, and never made a penny for his backers but he's respected and . . . and . . . he's on the 'A' list for parties . . .

TERRY: On the 'A' list, hmmm . . .

*DANCE Colour (12 onechairs)
Disco*

Brick's Table

BRICK: *(Getting pissed)* So you think I did OK. I mean really. I mean level with me . . . I mean I can take it, you know that . . . I mean you can say 'Brick, Brick, you acted tonight like a brick . . . I can take it . . . what, you think I can't take it, well I can take it . . . Look, last year I earned ten million dollars for one movie. Man that movie stunk and lost more money than your gross national product . . . So what I'm saying is I'm here to learn . . . right . . . so get that sword fish out of your mouth and speak . . .

SIR M.: *(Struggling and mumbling)* I can't, it's stuck in my throat! *(BRICK slaps him on the back and a bone shoots out of his mouth like an arrow and impales itself in the wall, if not in a WATER.)*

191

*Do changes of focus
Feel it.*

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

Aaah, that's better. You were saying, Brick?
(BRICK repeats last speech 'I mean I can take it... at five times the speed to get it over with.)

SIR M.: Ah... no... you did extraordinarily well, there's a certain rhythm, a textured sound that you got...
(Whole table sycophantically listens to the 'gurn'.)
You see Shakespeare sounded more like you in his time than like me today...

BRICK: (astounded) Wad! Like me... you gotta be kidding!
SIR M.: No, in fact the Pilgrim Fathers brought to America the southern English twang which you preserved so your rhythms and accent are closer to Bill Shakespeare than mine. I mean my accent sounds like someone straining over the loo... Yah! (demonstrates) you see... uuugh! Such strain, well that's years of public school and repression...

BRICK: Hey, that's good to know that old Bill spoke like me. How about that! Mind you Sir Michael, I really love that British accent... that straining at the loo effect... I wish I could get it...

SIR M.: Well it's not difficult... Imagine you're on the loo, right?

BRICK: (Adopts his hum on the chair as if he was on the loo) OK, I'm on the loo.

SIR M.: Now try a line in the play, any line and at the same time you're straining a stool.

PRODUCER'S SECRETARY: Oh Sir Michael, not now please, people are watching him...

BRICK: It's OK... I wanna learn... who cares who's watching... tonight I had a thousand people watching me at the Fleabox Theatre, so should I care if a few down and outs, who collectively make less in a year than I do in a week, are watching...

TART: Brick, preserve your dignity...

BRICK: OK, when you pay for it I'll preserve... they don't keep me! Right? That's what my Ma said to me... 'Don't be shy are they keeping you?' She said that... I'd come home after traipsing round the town... looking for work, anything! I'd

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

do anything... I'd go for an audition with a stain on my hat. and a shine on my shoes and be rejected... But Ma would wait up with a plate of borscht and a pumpernickel bagel... that's what kept me going... so I should care if they are watching me. Who are they? Huh! You tell me who are they?
(Table breaks into spontaneous applause which BRICK stily receives)

PRODUCER'S SECRETARY: I adore borscht... How did your mother make it?

BRICK: She'd cook the beets in water to which she'd add the yolk of two eggs... not cream! But eggs... with cream, that's the European way, where do you think they'd get double cream in the back streets of Kiev? But chickens they had... chicken everybody kept in the front room... laying eggs on the armchair... OK, Sir Michael, I'm sitting on the throne... not Richard the Third's throne... ha ha ha...

MORRIS WELDER, English Producer's table

WELDER: We're packed each night, we're grossing 110% but he won't play more than three months, so we only get our money back...

WOULD-BE PRODUCER: Oh dear, oh dear, that's too bad, I have a wonderful play I'd like you to...

WELDER: Mind you I love stars! I can't help it, but so do the public, the public love to see a star on the stage... you think the public want to see Doreen Sludge do *Mother Courage* again with a shmutter on her head and holes in her stockings... nah, they want stars... (confident) I want Marlon Brando to play Lear!

WOULD-BE PRODUCER: Oh, oh that's fabulous, what a unique fabulous idea, that's brill! Marlon!! Oh that's brill...

ACTOR: (At same table, as Brando) I coulda had class, but you sent me on a one-way ticket to Palookaville... not my night?... You wuz my brudder... you shoulda looked after me a little more.

WOULD-BE PRODUCER: Oh that's really superb, really, no really,

no really, no really, seriously though . . .
 ACTOR: *(continuing)* That's right, I'll make him an offer he can't refuse . . .
 WOULD-BE PRODUCER: Ha ha, you know Mr Welder, I have a play that would be . . .
 WELDER: *(Cuts him off)* He's good, the kid's good . . . I'm flying to New York tomorrow. I want Greta Garbo back on stage.
 WOULD-BE PRODUCER: But she's dead, she died last year . . .
 WELDER: She's dead? . . . you sure it's not just another PR job . . . You can never tell, film rentals will try anything to increase sales . . .
 WOULD-BE PRODUCER: No, she's definitely and very sadly . . .
 WELDER: Well, we'll try Anthony Quinn, Robert De Niro and Al Pacino . . . gimme the phone . . .
 WOULD-BE PRODUCER: *(Impressed)* No time like the present . . . *(hands him the mobile phone.)*
 WELDER: *(Punches out number)* But first Marlon!
 ACTOR: *(Brandos)* How come you don't come round for coffee . . .
 WELDER: Ooh! Marlon? Is that you? Or are you impersonating yourself. How do I know it's you? Yes, it certainly sounds like you . . . Give me a clue so that I know it's you . . . *(aside to table)* You see he doesn't want to talk to the press so all his staff are employed to impersonate him . . .
 TABLE: AAAAAH!
 WELDER: Now Marlon to make sure it is you, what were you doing in a stretch limo with your trousers half-way down, with a blonde bimbo called Marina . . . on the way to the airport in June 1979? . . . Yes! Yes! It is you! How are you? Now listen Marlon I have a fabulous idea for you . . .

Brick's Table

BRICK: *(Straining)* Now is the winter of our discontent
(TABLE thumps for him.)
 'Made glorious summer by this sun of York.'
(Thump.)

SIR M.: That's better . . . the accent's coming! It's really coming!
 BRICK: God it's hard at first but it's beautiful, I love it . . . I can feel it . . . Wow!
 TART: Be careful you don't have an accident!!
(BRICK looks at her in disgust.)

Linda and Steve's Table

STEVE: You don't think I'm too . . . how shall I say it . . . too mercurial for Macbeth, I mean I love the role, I do, but I think I'm more Iago-ish or Mercutio-ish.
 LINDA: You'd be a fabulous Iago . . . yes, you have that quicksilver mind. You'd make a very funny Mercutio.
 HAHAAHAHAHA.
 STEVE: You think?
 LINDA: Yah, very funny, very witty, but I'd love to see your Macbeth.
 STEVE: You don't think I'm too mature for it . . .
 LINDA: No, he should be mature . . . ready for the big one . . . and you've got the balls . . .
 STEVE: Sometimes Linda, I wonder where my balls are . . .
 LINDA: I suppose they're where they usually are . . . in the top drawer next to your dentures . . . HAHAAHAHAHAHA!
 STEVE: You're wicked Linda, you should know how 'artists' struggle with decisions . . .
 LINDA: Don't be so silly, I'm teasing you . . . Of course you've got balls, you've got the biggest pair of balls in this room!
 STEVE: What about Brick Bergman?
 LINDA: What about him?
 STEVE: He's a balzzy actor . . .
 LINDA: But you have a different type of balls, all he is balls but you have sensitive balls . . .
 STEVE: Ahh, you're just saying that . . .
 LINDA: I'm dying for a drink . . .
 STEVE: Sir Michael's totally without balls.
 LINDA: Not totally but small balls . . .
 STEVE: And Terry Adams?

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

LINDA: Medium-size balls, no, I will say I have seen him be convincing. Where's my bloody drink? . . .

TV Hacks' and Media Pimps' Table

HACK 1: So what you up to you old farter?? (To WAITRESS.)

Another Chablis . . . no make it Sancerre.

HACK 2: Channel Four.

(A byzz down the table, 'Channel Four, on Channel Four, Foyr, Channel Foyr')

I'm doing a film for Channel Four.

TABLE: Channel Foyr.

He works all the time for Channel Four.

Really the Channel Four?

I had a commission for Channel Four.

Chaznel Four promised me a commission.

Why don't you try Channel Four?

Who's at Four now?

HACK 2: It examines the role of Russian housewives engaging in prostitution in their lunch breaks. . . .

HACK 1: That sounds fascinating, did you submit it to Channel Four?

HACK 2: Oh no, Channel Four commissioned me!

HACK 1: Channel Four commissioned you! How fabulous. Good budget?

HACK 2: Enough, not grand, stuck to House Red

HAHAHAHA! Use stock newsreel, talking heads, prepared a treatment, they loved it, went upstairs, got the OK.

TABLE: Who do you know at Channel Foyr?

At Channel Four? Channel Foyr?

I used to know the secretary of the Commissioning Editor. Channel Four once asked me to do a thirty-minute chat show

but the buggers shelved it.

What was it about?

Culture in Nineties Britain.

Sounds fab, why shelve it?

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

Couldn't get enough material.

A VOICE: I nearly had my play on Channel Four, Channel Four saw it at the King's Head in part of their lunchtime Festival of Plays and simply adored it but some wanker at the top of Channel Four vetoes it, a jealous bastard who was afraid of its dynamic social implications.

VOICES: Channel Four

Channel Four

Channel Four

Channel Four

Channel Four

Two Left-wing Fringe Elitists' Table

SID: Yeah, the bloody Arts Council want to cut our grant, in real terms so we only got what we got last year in real terms, when what we need is more dosh just to stay alive in real terms. . . . I mean I'm alive, I'm very much alive but the poor fucking staff have to eat, nay survive on the thrown-out sandies from the brasserie next door. We need another million.

SYCOPHANT: Of course you do . . . your work is so . . . historic, and so vital . . . it's so relevant, I mean you've got your stink finger on the pulse of the monetarist society so to speak.

SID: We've got to have the right to fail . . . it's a God-given right, I mean we're not here to try out wanky musicals on taxpayers' money to line some investors' pockets . . . we're here to expose alternative Britain. I mean we're their voice! If they don't give me another mill I'm closing the theatre down!

SYCOPHANT: Oh God, that would be the grossest act of philistinism if the government was to let that happen . . . Look at Europe, France, you'd be honoured in France or Germany . . . (To WAITER) Another Pouilly-Fuissé '85.

Garry's First-Night Table

GARRY: So you think it went down well do you?

WOMAN: More than well, I mean for a First Night it was super . . . I

mean Garry it was your first night and the set didn't fall down!

WOMAN 2: I noticed that! Usually it falls down on the first night or wobbles precariously when you slam the door or the revolver gets stuck and the poor actors stand there with egg and have to make up the words, it's fabulous, but your set was firm and erect, it was a beautiful set . . . (*Turns to man nearby*) Well done Keith.

KEITH: Oh ta!

GUEST 1: Yah, congrats on set.

GUEST 2: Triffic design . . . a beaut.

GUEST 3: Oh I loved the way it scooped and twisted, its art nouveau line but that dash of German Expressionism?

KEITH: Oh yes, I do admit . . .

GUEST 3: Little nibbles from Max Rheinhardt's Thirties production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*?

KEITH: Spot on!

GARRY: (*To WOMAN FRIEND*) How was my last speech? (*Ignored*)

GUEST 4: Keith, correct me if I'm wrong but a dash, dare I say in a moment of tongue liberating inebriation, of shades of Gordon Craig?

KEITH: Yes!!

TABLE: (*All clap*)

Bravo.

Triffic!!

You are clevah Tom.

GUEST 4: And if I'm not pushing the boat out too far, a mere scintilla of the Kabuki?

KEITH: Yes, yes!

TABLE: Bravo.

Fab.

Cheers!

Bollacks!

GUEST 5: Yes, but I also thought I sensed a touch of Meyerhold's bio-mechanics!

TABLE: Boo!

Bravo!

Fab!

Supaah!

Brill darling!

KEITH: I'm going for a piss. 'Scuse us!

GARRY: So how was my *last scene*? I'm not paranoid but I'm an artist, not a butcher, or toss-pot director who learnt his trade at Oxford directing from the stalls while staring up the skirts of undergraduates or picking clinkers out of Sir's asshole!

WOMAN FRIEND: SHHH! Garry, you're a bit piddly!

GARRY: I'm not an animal, I'm a human being! I'm an artist! A creative artist! Fuck the set! Fuck it! The audience come to see me! Not the fucking set! Live human flesh, living tissue, not John Wankers and his 3000 light cues! Human being!

TABLE: Bravo, bravo!

Cheers Garry, Triffic!

Well done mate!

Channel Four!

Left-wing Fringe Elitists' Table

SID: I swear I'll close the theatre unless I get more dosh to put on artistic failures! It's my right to play to empty houses! How many paintings did bloody Van Gogh sell, eh?

SYCOPHANT: You're absolutely right.

SID: I mean we're not Andrew Lloyd Webber!

SYCOPHANT: Thank God for that. Oh dear, he's actually sitting across the way!

SID: Shit! You don't think he heard me?

SYCOPHANT: No, there's far too much noise.

SID: You sure?

SYCOPHANT: Positive . . .

SID: OK . . . I mean we're like pioneers like scientists and explorers and must have funding.

SYCOPHANT: So you should!

SID: How many people were in tonight?

SYCOPHANT: Seven I think and three comps . . .

SID: That's five more than last night . . . ten! So we're up fifty per

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

cent on the night before! You know we should inform the press about that! The only theatre in London up fifty per cent!

SYCOPHANT: That's right! Darling they're coming because you are part of that great tradition and I beg of you that no matter how hard you might fight and how tough things get, without you it would be a cheap *commercial* success but with you it's a fabulous *artistic* disaster!

SID: Darling . . . I've got a hard on! Darling . . . (*Look limpidly into each other's eyes.*)

THREE ACTRESSES *swan in. They pass Sid's table and stop for those brief encounters.*)

3 ACTRESSES: Hi.

Darling!

Hello.

SID: Hello . . . how are you? I heard you're doing great stuff.

3 ACTRESSES: So exciting!

Fab!

Wonderful!

SID: So what you up to?

3 ACTRESSES: We're doing the *Three Sisters*!

SID: That's so unusually fantastic.

3 ACTRESSES: It's such a moving play.

Really, quite beautiful.

There's such depth, such real power.

I adore Chekhov.

I love Chekhov.

I always have.

He understands the human soul.

Its 'gravitas'.

Its sonorous humour.

SID: So you three are playing the *eponymous* heroines.

3 ACTRESSES: Yes, isn't it too fab.

It's simply wonderful!

Ecstatically exciting.

I adore playing Russians!

Oh I love the roles.

The way he writes for women.

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

He seems to *understand* women.

SID: Who's directing you?

3 ACTRESSES: You won't believe it.

It's just too brill for verbs.

He's God of course, who do you think?

SID: Apart from from . . . aah?? . . . Hmnn . . .

3 ACTRESSES: Who's the most talented director of their generation?

The greatest exponent of physical theatre?

The man who lets the play 'breathe'.

Who doesn't stamp his director's boot in the face of the author?

Who lets the lines speak for themselves?

Who? Who? Who?

(*SID looks baffled.*)

Leslie Ponce!!

SID: Oh my God! I thought he was touring China with a fifty-hour version of *The Talmud*.

3 ACTRESSES: He was, but he's had to cancel it for political reasons and he's come back.

Specially for us.

It's so . . . awesome.

(*They head off round other tables exploding their greetings here and there.*)

SID: Shit! Leslie Ponce is back!

SYCOPHANT: So what darling!

SID: The press will hold him up like their saviour! He'll be in all the bloody supplements plus the *Guardian's* weekend feature.

SYCOPHANT: But darling, he's into bourgeois, revisionist eclecticism plus middle-class ethnic romanticism . . .

SID: That's true . . . I think I'll take a piss . . . order another champagne will you?

Terry's Table

TERRY: No, once I was off the 'A' list I thought sod this for a laugh.

FAT PRODUCER: You'll get back on it don't worry . . . a little

7
DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

jogging, a Cambridge Diet, a spot on the Johnny Carson show . . . you'll be up there with Kirk . . .

BILLY: Who's on the 'A' list?

TERRY: Well, Kirk for a kick off, Fonda, De Niro, Jimmy Stewart, Greg Peck, even Madonna . . .!

BILLY: My gawd! And they drop you, the wittiest, funniest, sweetest guy who ever filled a chair, and so who's who on the 'B' list?

TERRY: (*Almost weeping*) Tommy Lee Jones, Robert Duvall, Sydney Poitier, Jeff Goldblum!!

BILLY: Oh no! Don't tell me anymore . . . I can't bear it, you have to sit at the same table with Jeff 'The Fly' Goldblum . . . Uuuuuugh!

TERRY: Not only that . . . no . . . wait . . . I've got to tell you this . . . not only that my dear (*holding back the tears*) but, no

VALET PARKING!

TABLE: Shit!
I don't believe it!
Disgusting!
Ugh the Cheapos!

TERRY: Right! No valet parking, so you're walking all the way back to the party from where you've parked . . . sometimes you walk a hundred yards in an *ordinary* street with *ordinary* people.

TABLE: Eeesh! Ugh! Help! Oh no! . . .

TERRY: You know like ordinary people like those extras you see in movies for background who eat in their own canteen . . . I had to walk in the *same street*!

FAT PRODUCER: Am I hearing right!!! Is that what the bastards made you do!!!!? (*To SYCOPHANT*) Get me I.C.M. on the phone . . .!

TERRY: (*Bravely holding back tears*) Yeah, I try to look at the pavement and keep a low profile but they stared at me with those ordinary eyes!

BILLY: I feel sick . . . I'm going to the bathroom . . .

TERRY: Not only that, when I got in I was served *Californian* not French champagne!

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

FAT PRODUCER: Heads will topple for this . . . don't worry, heads will topple. Does Pepsico know about this?

TERRY: I guess it's all over town . . . Europe, Russia, maybe even China, there's not many places I can go . . .

FAT PRODUCER: Somebody will pay!

TERRY: But the worst is this (*Struggling*) . . . I was doing my impression of Marlon . . . you know . . .

FAT PRODUCER: Ah! You give too much of yourself . . . you're too generous . . . he's too generous . . .

TERRY: I don't mind, I was trying to adjust to a lower class, like mix in, show good will . . .

FAT PRODUCER: Oh my God, the man's a saint . . . heads will roll, believe me . . . I'll take it out on their skulls . . . Ron and Nancy will know about this . . .!

TERRY: So I was doing Marlon, you know . . . 'I coulda had class, you shoulda looked after me a liddle more' when Jeff Goldblum does an impersonation of a fly!

FAT PRODUCER: Tell me you're kidding! Please! Jest not!

TERRY: I swear, in the middle of my shtick. He buzzes around me as 'the fly' and everybody laughs and nobody pays attention to my impersonation.

FAT PRODUCER: The asshole! Did you say anything to him?

TERRY: I did, I said, 'Come on Jeff, give me a break . . . you'll have your moment when you're not an empty chair.'

FAT PRODUCER: So what did he reply?

TERRY: He said he was just being a fly in my scene . . . in *my scene*!

FAT PRODUCER: (*Shakes head, on mobile phone*) Hello, hello, I.C.M. OK give me the head of I.C.M., yeah that's right, look I don't care if he is working, wake him up! Heads will roll believe me.

(WAITER *passes by*)
Oh, do you have any more of that delicious pizza bread?

Linda and Steve's Table

STEVE: You don't think *Macbeth* has been done to death? I mean . . . it's so familiar . . .

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

LINDA: I'd love to see *your* Macbeth . . . I mean we've seen Larry's, Ian's, Tony's, Brian's, Paul's and now the public are *dying* to see yours . . . Don't forget you have *some* fans . . .
STEVE: So you think Macbeth is right?
LINDA: It's never been more right! Steve darlings, you've got to get your balls between your teeth and do it!
STEVE: (*Brainstorm*) You're right! Look, why don't we read the play together at your flat . . . and get the *feel*.

LINDA: SUPAH!!!
STEVE: Then we can test it and you read Lady Macbeth . . .

LINDA: Hippopotamus!!
(STEVE looks puzzled)

I always say that when I am *hugely* thrilled!

STEVE: Aah?! So get out your filo and book a time . . .
LINDA: Lovely! (*Thumbing through*) Well, um . . . Monday I have an audition, must keep my head clear that day, Tues, I've got my Zen chanting group, Wed, my ex-husband's coming to pick up Jeremy and God knows how long that will take. Thurs, I go to *his* home to pick up Sally, you see we baby-sit for each other. Friday, I do my stretch class and I'm useless after that . . . Oh he's so fabulous, and you do feel *wonderful* after. You really must come. Sat, we're off for the weekend. 'Sleep in' to save the 'Rose' . . . Umm? Next week's chocabloc with the kids' school play. What about Tues fortnight at four p.m. for an hour? At least kick it about a bit?

STEVE: (*Consults filofax*) Uuh . . . no, that day I'm seeing a new agent so it'll be lunch at Groucho's, Wednesday I'm doing a voice-over for 'Chockee Nuttees', Thurs I'm doing a re-birthing session, oh that is something you should have a go at, does get rid of birth trauma, Friday, my Mum's coming over for her golden wedding celeb but I could shift that . . .

LINDA: You can't shift that darling, that's once in fifty years!
STEVE: Well, I s'pose not . . . then that weekend I'm doing a yoga retreat in Suffolk. What about Monday in three weeks?

LINDA: Well, that lands *smack* in the middle of the kids' mid term and we did promise we'd go to their father's cottage in the

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

Lake District . . . can't duck out of that . . . that's a week, then back on Sunday when I *did* promise to sell programmes for an anti-poll tax play at the Palace Theatre which would be bad politically to duck out of since the directors are doing a play about the Greenham Common Women which I'm dead right for, 'fingers crossed' so we don't want to muddy those waters. Right?

STEVE: Oh no . . . quite . . .

(*They continue to study their filofaxes.*)

Morris Welder's Table

WELDER: It was Marlon, definitely . . .

SLOANEY FEMALE: So what *did* he do in the stretch limo with his trousers down and the blonde bimbo . . . I can't wait for you to tell me!

WELDER: Mooning darling!

SLOANEY FEMALE: What on earth is that?

WELDER: She doesn't know what mooning is?

ALL: AHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!

WELDER: You can tell how young she is . . . Sweet young thing that you are, well mooning is baring your bum darling . . .

SLOANEY FEMALE: Baring your bum? My what exciting times you old hairy renegades had in the Sixties!

WELDER: He stuck his bum out of the window can you imagine . . . I mean in the street you would see two white spotty moons . . . and never guess it was Marlon's! HAHHAHA! I mean he's incredible . . . brilliant mind you . . . a genius . . .

WOULD-BE PRODUCER: Ah definitely he is and was and will be and should be and will continue to be . . . and has been and really should always have been . . . unique . . .

SLOANEY FEMALE: Why did he bare his arse, I mean what a pointless Sixties thing to do, no wonder you made such awful spotty films!

WELDER: *Marlon* (pronounced with emphasis on both syllables) Said to me, 'Morris', he said 'Morris, I love working with you . . . I feel released, open', and in a moment of exultation he moons . . . it's a rebel's way of expressing himself . . .

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

SLOANEY FEMALE: I thought you meant that he wanted to crap out of the window!

WELDER: Oh she's so sweet and innocent, you see we were all rebels...

WOULD-BE PRODUCER: I have this screenplay about rebels I'd like to pass by you...

WELDER: (Cut short) He would say 'Morris' or 'Morry' or sometimes Mo... yes in a good mood/Mo!

WOULD-BE PRODUCER: (Trying to be helpful) Or even Moisher...

WELDER: GETOUTOFIT! Never did he call me that word, never. It would be 'Morry', but more than often as not, Mo... Morris on the set of course in front of the crew... but at Tramp's at night surrounded by our mates, Roman, Jack and Marlon, it was Mo!

WOULD-BE PRODUCER: (Trying to be helpful) In a way he was saying perhaps unconsciously that although the world sees him as some kind of God-like figure, in real life he's just another guy, with a spotty bum.

SLOANEY FEMALE: AAAAAAAAAAAH! See, how awfully cute... (DICK TONG, the vicious drama critic, enters and the room echoes with his name.)

Garry's First-Night Table

ONE: There's Dicky Tong!

TWO: Oh no.

THREE: He slaughtered my last play.

FOUR: Bastard, what did he say?

THREE: That it could have been written by an orang utang.

FOUR: That's not so bad.

FIVE: Tong! He nearly wiped my career off the map.

FOUR: What did he write?

FIVE: My Othello reminded him of Al Jolson singing 'Mammy'.

SIX: That's OK... He killed me.

SEVEN: What did he scribble?

SIX: Next time I decide to act, try not to do it publicly!

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

SEVEN: It could be worse, mine was.

EIGHT: How much worse?

SEVEN: Said I directed *Hamlet* as if it was *West Side Story* performed by the Co-op's Amateur Dramatic Society?

EIGHT: Why Co-op?

SEVEN: Don't look for sense in his pathological eruptions, please! EIGHT: Well he hates me.

SEVEN: Said I emptied theatres quicker than the bubonic plague!

NINE: Vicious bitch! I'd like to kill him, he once penned that my presence on stage could cure insomnia. Imagine reading that the next morning with your muesli?

FIVE: I could barely go on stage the next night...

SIX: I'm not surprised, I had to see a shrink!

SEVEN: We closed after a week!

EIGHT: I became unemployable for five years... five years until the stink wore off.

NINE: He's just a vicious, nasty, jealous, sick, twisted...

(DICKY TONG passes their table.)

ONE: Oh hi Dicky.

TWO: How are you?

THREE: Great to see you.

FOUR: Loved your article on the state of lunch-time theatre in Glasgow.

ALL: Yes, wonderful, needed to be said, so interesting, fascinating, hmnnn.

FIVE: You're looking really well.

SIX: How are things?

SEVEN: Been to a show?

EIGHT: What did you see?

DICKY: *Richard the Third*.

ALL: Ooooooooh!!

ONE: How was it?

DICKY: (Pause for effect) Memorable!... More at this moment it would not be appropriate to say... (He wanders in the direction of the THREE SISTERS.)

ALL: (Screaming with laughter) Hahahahahahaha!

ONE: Well, wait to read it!

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

TWO: I hope he crucifies him!
THREE: I want to see the blood dripping down the page.
FOUR: He deserves to get clobbered.
FIVE: Oh he will, he will.
SIX: Did you see the way his lip quivered on 'memorable'?
SEVEN: I saw it!
EIGHT: Very menacing quiver.
NINE: Sent a shudder down my spine.
EIGHT: I'd hate to be Brick Bergman tomorrow morning.
SEVEN: Horror, horror, horror . . . (Sees WAITER) Oh can we see the puddings menu *please!*

Left-wing Fringe Elitists' Table

SID *returns to his SYCOPHANT bird.*
SYCOPHANT: Hello darling, feel better . . . your flies are undone . . .
SID: Oh bollocks, I've just been through the restaurant saying hello to the three sisters . . . oh shit, I wonder if they noticed!
SYCOPHANT: Doesn't matter darling really . . . they understand . . . I mean geniuses are forgetful . . . it's really rather endearing . . . lots of directors go around with their flies undone, specially in Brighton.
SID: Yes, but I'm supposed to be the head of a vital revolutionary theatre . . . you don't go round with your flies undone . . . and I want them to be in my poll-tax play . . . !
SYCOPHANT: Do you want me to subtly find out if they noticed? They probably weren't staring at your crotch . . . Come on now . . .
SID: Can you mention it . . . like . . . subtly . . . don't make a thing of it . . . but casually like joking . . . you know . . . like sound them out . . . if they noticed anything, well unusual . . . just approach them on the way for a piss . . .
SYCOPHANT: Sid, please! Do not use that vile expression, women do not piss! Men piss! Women spend a penny or pee . . . but I'll pass them on the way to the loo . . .
SID: Come off it, you Sloane Ranger, you half-baked tart, poncing

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

off Daddy until he booted your supine lazy arse into a paid flat in Ovington Square and threw in a BMW . . . you superrating media whore, dying to get into Nigel's column, you star fucker, don't you preach your Home Counties, *Sunday Times* Arts Magazine morality to me . . . you bitch . . . before you met me the only work you ever did was writing the occasional rejected review for the *Good Food Guide!*
SYCOPHANT: Oh darling, you were quite wonderful . . . you're so . . . Jimmy Porter!!
SID: Oh noooooooooo!

Linda and Steve's Table

STEVE: (*Still looking through filofax*) Well next month looks fairly clear, although that's the summer season and I am short-listed for a couple of plays in Bexhill-on-Sea, fingers crossed, so I don't want to say now just in case I mess you around and you book it and then have to cancel . . . like you find you've got a couple of hours one afternoon . . . give me a bell, jump in the jam jar . . . that might be better . . . keep it casual . . . like oh . . . I've got a couple of free hours . . . let's do *Macbeth* . . .
LINDA: Yes, let's keep it light, otherwise it gets heavy . . . I'll call you or you call me . . . just tickle the play . . . read it over a cuppa . . . no big deal. Any time.
STEVE: Exactly, don't plan it, let it happen . . .
LINDA: Very Zen, let it pop into your mind spontaneously . . .
STEVE: Yah! Like for example Monday you might find you've got a couple of hours, it's Parkinson's Law, there's always time . . .
LINDA: (*Consulting filofax*) Well Monday I have my audition Tuesday I have my Zen Buddhist chanting group . . .

Brick's Table

BRICK: (*Still spinning after the stock effect*) 'Now are our brews bound with victorious wreaths' . . .
(TABLE thumps.)

'Our brui-seed arms hung up for monuments' . . .
(*Thump.*)

Hey it's definitely better . . .
SIR M.: You're getting the rhythm, the music, it's like playing an instrument, (*To WAITER*) Another large gin, you're an instrument, *you* . . . a living human instrument.

HANGER-ON 1: My tuna was awful, how was yours?

HANGER-ON 2: Mine was OK, a bit dry, mind you I'm getting fed up with tuna . . .

HANGER-ON 3: Mine was lovely, I had it with the sauce, that hot chilli sauce.

HANGER-ON 1: He never offered the sauce to me.

HANGER-ON 2: Nor me, I wonder why?

HANGER-ON 3: Had it made specially, Giovanni knows I like that sauce.

HANGER-ON 2: Cheeky bitch . . .

HANGER-ON 3: Well I used to work in the kitchens when I was just a young pretty ingenue . . .

HANGER-ON 1: That was centuries ago ducky, the restaurant wasn't even thought of then!

HANGER-ON 3: Don't be such a bloody cow just because your tuna's all dried up!

BRICK: You're right, you're right, I'm an instrument, I must learn to use my 'instrument' .

SIR M.: Aaaah you see, you are a humble player, playing your . . .

BRICK: Instrument! I see, I see, it's beautiful, I love my instrument . . . Oh Sir Michael (*takes hand and kisses it*) You are the conductor of my . . .

SIR M.: . . . instrument!

BRICK: Now I'm ready for Othello, Macbeth, Romeo. I can't wait to use this fantastic marvellous . . .

ALL: INSTRUMENT!

BRICK: I'll go to New York, I'll show them the new, renovated and baptised Brick Bergman (*to SECRETARY*) Get New York on the phone, I wanna talk to Joe Papp! Hey I wanna surprise Joe . . . We'll get Meryl for Lady Anne and Robert De Niro for Buckingham, yeah his career needs a kick in the

butt! And if he don't get too self important like, 'the-sun-shines-out-of-my-ass-trap', we'll offer Gloucester to Pacino . . . I can't wait to show you Noo York, I know places where you get the biggest corned beef sandwiches you ever saw . . . your eyes will pop out of your head . . . huge . . . you can't even open your mouth . . .

Morris Welder's Table

WELDER: So Marlon said, 'Mo, I love you . . . I love you Mo,' because Marlon was a prince . . . mind you he's a genius, he is a genius and I allowed his genius to grow . . .

WOULD-BE-PRODUCER: Talking of genius, I have a play about genius that . . .

ACTOR: Hey, I'm gonna make you an offer you can't refuse, how come you don't come round for coffee, pay your respects . . . to the family . . .

WELDER: He's wonderful, the kid's wonderful, I love impersonators . . .

ACTOR: 'OK, we'll make a deal that's honourable for the family, but drugs we do not do, prostitution, gambling, these are human needs but not drugs . . . (*Syzyching movies*) 'You shoulda looked afta me a liddle more . . .'

WELDER: I love him!

ACTOR: (*Streetcar*) 'Take a look at yourself in that worn-out Mardi Gras outfit . . . What kind of queen do you think you are?'

WELDER: He kills me!

WOULD-BE-PRODUCER: I have a play in mind for him that . . .

WELDER: SHHH! Go on . . . go on . . .

ACTOR: (*Getting excited, stands up*) 'You gave it to Joey who was one of your own . . . I'm glad what I done to you . . . You hear me . . . I'm glad . . .'

WELDER: Marvellous!

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

Brick's Table

BRICK: (*On phone*) Joey, hey . . . how are ya? Yeah it was terrific . . . Frank Bitch flew in . . . he was seen smiling at the end . . . No I kid you not, we got witnesses . . . you going to Florida for the weekend . . . no I don't miss New York, what you kidding me! I miss the food, yeah . . . fly me over a few kilos of pastrami . . . Thanks Joe . . . Now listen . . . (*adopts stool position*)
'Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York'
How's that sound to you? It's my new sound? What, it sounds like I'm taking a crap . . . you kidding me? It's the line (*telephone*) . . . hey fuck you! You think I need you? You need me!

Three Sister's Table

They are joined by TONG (the critic).

SISTER ONE: I love what Chekhov says . . . the way that he says it . . .
SISTER TWO: That's right . . . it's the way . . . it just seems so right.
SISTER THREE: He lets you fly . . . it's somehow open . . . you know . . .
TONG: Yaaah.
SISTER ONE: He loves human beings . . . you feel that love . . .
SISTER TWO: Oh yes, he allows you to love your character . . .
SISTER THREE: I mean you must love your character.
SISTER ONE: I want to reach the people with it . . . play it in factories and schools.
SISTER TWO: And prisons, I adore playing in prisons . . .
SISTER THREE: They're a wonderful audience and so appreciative . . .
TONG: I was in prison once . . .
SISTER THREE: Oh wonderful, did you give a lecture on theatrical criticism?
TONG: God no, I did two weeks in Pentonville for flashing at minors . . .

212

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

SISTER TWO: Oh, how horrid for you . . .
SISTER ONE: Prisons are the bourgeois way of dealing with the nonconformist . . .

SISTER THREE: (*As WAITRESS passes*) Excuse me can we have another champagne . . . same as before . . .

WAITRESS: We've only the Moët left.

SISTER THREE: Oh no . . . none of that lovely Chrystal?

WAITRESS: Soitree . . .

SISTER THREE: Oh well, disappointment is good for the character . . . the Moët then . . .

Terry's Table

BILLY: Well it's been a fabulous evenin' . . . ah loved meetin' ya and I hope we'll get together real soon . . .

TERRY: Definitely, we're doing a charity concert for starving kids in Calcutta, there'll be a traffic party after, if you fancy bowling along . . .

BILLY: That sounds wonderful, do you have a pen?

FAT PRODUCER: I'll get the bill.

TERRY: No, I'll get it.

FAT PRODUCER: I'll get it . . . come on it's my treat . . .

TERRY: You're always getting it, (*Voiceover*: You fat adorable ponce!) Sit down, I'll get it . . .

FAT PRODUCER: Please Terry, please, I'll be offended . . . it's mine . . .

TERRY: Come on, I'll be very upset . . . (*Voiceover*: You wobbly mass of unpaid profits) . . . I'll do it . . .

FAT PRODUCER: I won't hear a word of it . . .

TERRY: Shut up, it's my treat this time, OK?

FAT PRODUCER: No way, I invited you . . .

TERRY: Just this once . . . you're too generous . . . (*Voiceover*: With all the money you thieved!)

FAT PRODUCER: It's my pleasure . . .

TERRY: Next time! (*Voiceover*: You vile boring and repetitive scumbag!)

FAT PRODUCER: OK, you get it next time, OK. (*To WAITRESS*) You take plastic . . . ?

213

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

WAITRESS: Sorry we don't take credit cards, only cheques . . .
(Voiceover: We told you this last time! Asshole!)

FAT PRODUCER: Oooops, I have only my cards . . . you don't even take AMEX Goldcard!!!

WAITRESS: Money or cheque . . . Sorrrrrrrrrrrrrrr . . . (Voiceover: Do you use shit for brains!)

TERRY: I've only got plastic too, I haven't seen a cheque book in years . . .!

FAT PRODUCER: Hey Billy, I'm sorry but . . .

BILLY: Sure I've got a cheque book . . . (Voiceover: *Surlly and cross*) Bunch of wankers! (*With a smile in voice*) Bore me to death and then I pay!

Left-wing Fringe Elitists' Table

SID: (*Studying bill*) What a sodding rip-off, how many champagnes did we drink?

SYCOPHANT: Two bottles . . .

SID: Jesus Christ, you certainly knocked it back.

SYCOPHANT: I hardly touched it . . .

SID: You know, we've got to get a bigger grant . . .

SYCOPHANT: You should, it's the philistine government that puts a price on everything . . . even art.

SID: Bastards, look how much they pour away into that khazi down the road full of seriously overweight pasta noshers warbling their guts out. Can't give them *enough!*

SYCOPHANT: Of course the opera's a show place for the Tories to bring their Japanese investors . . .

SID: Still we'll rock the bastards with our poll-tax play! Those riots are like music in my ears . . .

SYCOPHANT: Terribly exciting!!!

SID: It's the pounding heart of the people!

SYCOPHANT: It's just like the French Revolution.

SID: Smashing all those capitalist shops!

SYCOPHANT: A surging mass of humanity, there's your audience Sid, if only they would come to your theatre . . .

SID: They can't afford theatre you idiot, that's why we're doing

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

the play . . . we're reflecting THAT TCHERITE BRITAIN!!

SYCOPHANT: Sid, you're making me feel . . . terribly horny . . .!

Linda and Steve's Table

STEVE: I'll get it . . .

LINDA: You sure?

STEVE: Sure, you got it last time.

LINDA: No, you got it last time.

STEVE: You sure?

LINDA: Yes, I remember because we were at this same table . . .

STEVE: I don't remember that . . .

LINDA: Yes you do, we had tuna and you had this big obsession.

STEVE: I did? What about?

LINDA: Whether you should play Macbeth . . .

STEVE: Oh yes . . . (Voiceover: I don't think I'll have her in my Macbeth - bitch!)

Garry's First-Night Table

GARRY: Sodden awful night and I've got to go on the next and the next . . .

VOICE 1: Fabulous evening, keep it up and thanks for the dinner, tuna was wonderful.

VOICE 2: Wonderful night Garry, all the best, must fly.

VOICE 3: Will you be safe getting home, you know what it's like out there . . . it's a jungle!

VOICE 4: The rioters have gone home by now and my car's outside.

VOICE 5: Love you, you were so good tonight . . . chin chin . . .

WOMAN FRIEND: Darling you are generous getting the whole bill . . .!

GARRY: Tax deductible darling . . .

VOICE 6: If the critics don't simply adore it, then there's no hope in this country!
(MANAGER enters room and stands on step)

DAHLING YOU WERE MARVELLOUS

DOG

MANAGER: Excuse me ladies and gentlemen, no alarm needed but please leave by the back exit, the rioters have passed by and have been smashing cars . . . anyone own a silver grey Volvo parked just outside the door . . .

SID: Shit! That's my car!

SYCOPHANT: Oh NO . . . !!

MANAGER: Unfortunately it's been set on fire . . .

SID: Crummy, dirty, anarchist bastards!!

(RESTAURANT *leaves in a mild frenzy of excitement.*)

VARIOUS: Oh my God. How exciting. Let's go together. Form into small groups. My chauffeur's outside.

MANAGER: Please be careful.

VARIOUS: It's like World War Two.

BRICK: It's worse than the Bronx on Saturday night.

ACTOR: I'll take it out on their skulls?

WELDER: I wish Marlon was with us.

VARIOUS: Billy come with us. We'll be safe down Tramp's. Let's link arms. It seems quiet out there now. Better be careful.

SID: You got money for a cab?

VARIOUS: Have I got time to go to the loo?

(*Restaurant slowly queues its occupants out*)

(*Restaurant slowly queues its occupants out*)

(*Restaurant slowly queues its occupants out*)

STAFF and STEVE and LINDA are left.)

STEVE: So you do think I should play Macbeth?

LINDA: You'd be marvellous darling . . .

(*We leave them pondering the bleakness of their fate and dreams.*)

(*We leave them pondering the bleakness of their fate and dreams.*)

ALL

(*We leave them pondering the bleakness of their fate and dreams.*)

(*We leave them pondering the bleakness of their fate and dreams.*)