

Fogies

A musical about growing old but living young!

A musical play by Cenarth Fox
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ISBN 0 949175 08 0

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Published by **FOX PLAYS** - www.foxplays.com

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Reviews of this popular musical staged by schools and theatre companies

The musical was extremely well received by the audiences. It was an outstanding success.

Scarborough Senior HS

Fogies was a big success. **Singleton Heights PS**

Fogies ran for four nights and was an outstanding success. It genuinely entertained four packed houses because it had a direct plot, catchy songs and memorable characters. **Braybrook HS**

Congratulations on your script. We loved doing *Fogies* for the second time. It's a wonderful show. **Gemco Players**

Fogies is a top show – not to be missed. *Fogies* may not sound like your normal sort of play – and it isn't. The play's message is to show that the elderly aren't powerless or helpless, that older people are still quite valuable and capable of contributing to society. *Fogies* provides a challenge that is quite unusual for high school plays. *Fogies* is a good vehicle for kids of any shape or size **South Grafton HS**

We thoroughly enjoyed performing *Fogies* and would like a brochure of all your musicals
Helena College

Fogies was sensational! Cast and audience had a fantastic time **Singleton PS**

The show was a huge success and the kids did a great job. The performances were even better than those in *Rat Race*. The crowds loved it. Thanks for all your help **Dimboola Memorial HS**

Fogies was very successful and was greeted enthusiastically by participants and audience alike. All found it very entertaining. We appreciate your guidance and assistance in arranging such a successful event. **Finley HS**

Fogies was a tremendous success. **Burwood Heights HS**

Thank you for *Fogies*. It proved to be very popular. **Shelford CEGGS**

Most of the audience had a good laugh and some were literally rolling in their seats.
Wonthaggi TS

The students really enjoyed the musical. **Rockhampton SHS**

Very successful theatrical production. **Maryborough SHS**

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Synopsis

“ ... old age needn't be nearly so dreary and sad as it's supposed to be, provided you greet it with humour and live it with courage.”

Noel Coward

Smileaway is a home for elderly ladies and gentlemen. Their twilight years would be fine if their families took more of an interest and if their despicable Matron and their greedy and crooked Mayor were not trying to cheat them. Sometimes it can be tough when you're body grows old. Having to contend with absent families and nasty so-called helpers really adds a strain. And when a mysterious offer to buy *Smileaway* is made, the security of the old folk is seriously threatened. Can the fogies survive?

Now don't go thinking because you're old, you're feeble. Go fogies!

Musical Items

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Overture | Orchestra |
| 2. | How Do You Do | Company |
| 3. | We Love You, Matron – 1 | Company |
| 4. | We Love You, Matron – 2 | Company |
| 5. | Old Age | Jerome, Milly & Company |
| 6. | Get Fit | Ms Muscle & Company |
| 7. | Love At Ninety-Nine | Jack & Fred |
| 8. | Goodnight Garden | Rupert |
| 9. | Orchestral Interlude | Orchestra |
| 10. | Optional Entr'acte | Orchestra |
| 11. | Little Things Mean A Lot | Fogies |
| 12. | On The Fiddle | Matron & Mayor |
| 13. | Writing Cheques | Freda & Agent |
| 14. | Get Fit Reprise | Ms Muscle & Mayor |
| 15. | We Love You, Freda | Company |
| 16. | Life Has Only Begun | Company |
| 17. | Curtain Calls | Company |
| 18. | Playoff | Orchestra |

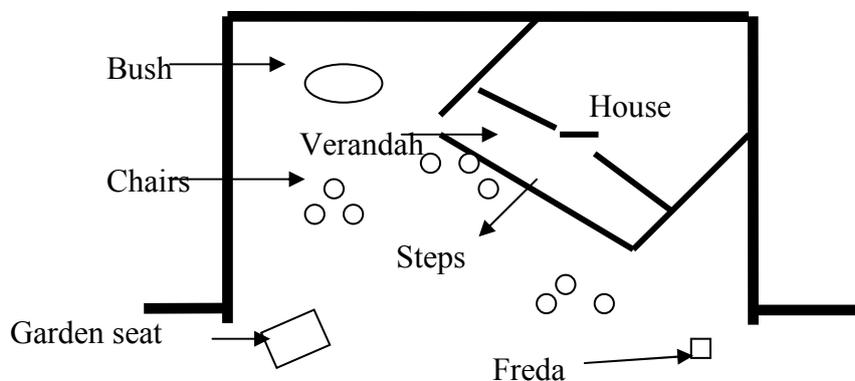
3 *Fogies!*

Characters

JOYCE – fogie, strong, a leader, the spokeswoman for fogies
DAPHNE – fogie, Joyce’s friend and supporter
MATRON – greedy, heartless, selfish supervisor of the fogies
MAYOR – local politician, smarmy, greedy, lecherous and stupid
JEROME – terribly correct and proper, old-school tie fogie
MILLY – terribly correct and proper, old-school gloves and hat fogie
GLORIA – friendly fogie, dreamer, idealist, hopes her son will return one day
FREDA – fogie, ditherer, absent-minded, often asleep
JACK – cheeky fogie, all mouth and trousers, thinks he’s the Don Juan of *Smileaway*
FRED – Jack’s mate, old soldier, philosopher, well-read, modest
MURIEL – active fogie and strong supporter of Joyce
BERT – active fogie and strong supporter of Joyce
EDDIE – very old fogie with a passion for physical fitness
FLO – very old fogie, Eddie’s friend and personal trainer
RUPERT – seemingly a simpleton, the gardener, loves his plants at *Smileaway*
MS MUSCLE – fitness expert who runs get-fit classes for fogies
AGENT – friendly, local real estate agent
FOGIES – the chorus of your company

Set Design

The house dominates. The garden is lush and beautiful and could slope down to the front. Keep room for movement downstage. Chairs should move easily. Decorate your stage with fogies – on the verandah and throughout the garden. Here’s a bird’s-eye view of how your set might look. There is only one set so make it interesting.



4 Fogies!

No. 1 Overture

[The OVERTURE begins. Gradually raise curtain and/or bring up lights from bar 68. Before us is the magnificent house called Smileaway. The building is upstage to one side. We see part of the house. It could be a white, double-storey weatherboard with potted plants on the verandah, creepers/ivy on the posts and walls and bright opened shutters on the windows. Beside the house, the garden stretches down towards the stage in tiers. There are shrubs, flowers, trees and a bush in which someone could hide. It's a warm, sunny afternoon and the residents are enjoying the sun. Some sit on the veranda, some stroll or sit in the garden. Most of the principals may be downstage. JACK and FRED are on the swinging garden-seat. Everyone is doing something – reading, playing chess or cards, maybe knitting, chatting, fanning themselves or even dozing. FREDA is asleep with a newspaper over her face. Overture finishes and immediately we hear sound effects. FX Sound of a car approaching. The car stops. We hear car doors open and close. The off-stage voices could be on tape like the sound effects. A fogie enters UR wearing a light coat and hat and carrying a suitcase. FOGIES turn and look UR]

Voice *[Offstage] Have a good time Mum [or Dad].*

Fogie *[Calling back] I will. Please don't forget to visit.*

Voice *[Offstage] We won't. See you next year.*

Fogie *[Calling back and waving] Goodbye. And thank you. ... Bye.*

[We hear sounds of car doors again and then car engine as it drives away. The FOGIE continues waving even after the sound has gone. The new arrival then turns to face the others. Everyone is staring at the FOGIE. Even FREDA wakes up. The new arrival is unsure and moves downstage. MUSIC BEGINS]

Fogie Excuse me. I'm looking for the Smileaway Retirement Home. Have I come to the right place?

Joyce *[Moves with friendly extended hand] You certainly have. And if you're a new resident, well, we've only got one thing to say to folk like you.*

No. 2 How Do You Do

Company *Welcome. Welcome.*

Come on in and make yourself at home.

Hello. Howdy

Bert/Solo *[Suitcase taken] Let me take that*

Muriel/Solo *[Coat taken] Let me help you*

Milly *[Introducing herself] My name's Milly*

Jerome *[Introducing himself] I'm Jerome*

Fogies *It's nice to meet you, let's start a friendship new*

So welcome. Welcome. How do you do!

Group A *We may be old but we are young inside*

Group B *We may be dim but not yet certified*

Group C *We may seem frail but watch us hit our stride*

Company *As a golden oldie boldly sings with pride.*

It's nice to meet you, let's start a friendship new

So welcome. Welcome. How do you do!

[JACK'S speech]

Company *Welcome. Welcome.*

Come on in and make yourself at home.

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- Hello. Howdy*
- Solo** [Chair is indicated] *Let me show you*
- Solo** [Help offered] *Let me guide you*
- Solo** [Garden indicated] *There's the garden*
- Solo** [Smileaway indicated] *There's your home*
- Fogies** *It's nice to meet you, let's start a friendship new
So welcome. Welcome.
How do you, how do you, how do you do!
How do, do, do you do! Welcome!*
- Jack** [*Rapid-fire monologue during song*] Now listen my friend. There are things you oughta know about this place. First, y'stoma-ch. You do munch I hunch? [*FOGIE nods but JACK waits for no-one*] Good. 'Cos here the food's unique, bizarre, grotesque. And last month we had only *three* cases of food poisonin'. [*FOGIE stunned but OTHERS join JACK'S game, express mock horror*] Then there's romance. That glorious experience of love in full bloom. You do bloom I presume? [*FOGIE bewildered*] Good. 'Cos here your passionate experiences will be little short of sensational. Last week one resident flirted with sixteen others and is *still alive*. [*FOGIES gasp and react in mock pleasure. JACK gives big wink/nudge to FOGIE*] Good luck love. [*"mate" if to a male*]
- [Chorus is repeated with everyone in fine voice. Song ends and new FOGIE is being greeted by all. Much warmth/happiness as MATRON bursts through door, enters veranda and bellows. The happiness is instantly extinguished]*
- Matron** All right, knock off that noise! [*Gloom and doom descends. MATRON moves among them*] I've warned you, all of you, time and time again. But now you've gone too far!
- Joyce** We were only singing, Matron. [*A few agree*]
- Matron** Rule Thirty-eight. No singing.
- Jerome** [*Obsequious and subservient*] Matron, if I may be permitted. On behalf of the residents of *Smileaway*, I wish to humbly apologise for this recent disturbance and give you my word it won't happen again.
[*Murmurs from OTHERS. MATRON ignores JEROME and seethes. She doesn't like niceness*]
- Matron** Don't you understand? The rules are for your benefit. Unless you obey the rules I cannot guarantee your happiness. [*Pause. No-one reacts. MATRON indignant*] Well? You are happy aren't you?
- Fogies** [*Pause then all speak at once*] Oh yes, Matron ... Of course, Matron ... Very happy, thank you, Matron ... *etc*
- Matron** Good. Because if you're not happy you're breaking rule thirty-two which is ...
- Fogies** [*Parrot fashion*] Everyone must be happy.
- Matron** And don't you ever forget it.
- Gloria** [*Approaches MATRON*] Excuse me, Matron. I think my son is coming to visit me today.

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- Matron** *[Sarcastic]* Oh, really? Gloria, you said that yesterday, the day before, the week before, in fact every week since you got here several centuries ago! Now watch my lips. Your son is not here. He's never been and he never will be. Face it, Gloria. *[Emphatic]* You've been forgotten. *[GLORIA sadly shakes her head, returns to her spot muttering]*
- Gloria** *[Muttering]* I'm sure he said he'd be here today.
- Bert** That's a bit cruel, Matron. There's no need to rub it in.
- Matron** Why not? I mean why pretend? Your families don't care. Token attention is the best you'll get. Some of you get a visit at Christmas – if you're lucky. Face facts - we don't have visitors.
- Fogie** Pardon me, Matron. But I'm a visitor.
- Matron** What? These are not the visiting hours. I'm sorry, you'll have to leave.
- Fogie** No, I'm not a visitor. I mean I'm a new resident.
- Matron** New resident! That's impossible. You're not due till tomorrow.
- Fogie** My family said they couldn't look after me any more and I had to come here today. I hope it's all right.
- Matron** Of course it's not all right. How can I run a happy home with you lot just swanning in whenever you feel like it?
- Joyce** She's only a little bit early, Matron. Surely you can't send her away.
- Matron** Can't? Says who? *[Stares at pleading faces. Begrudgingly gives in]* Oh all right. But you'll need to share someone's sausage. I run a very tight ship here. At *Smileaway* we're one big, happy family. Right?
- Fogies** Right. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
- Matron** *[Starts tidying]* Just ask anyone. I'm the nicest Matron in the world.

No. 3 We Love You, Matron – 1

- Fogies** *Oh Matron, we love you, we love you, Matron yes we do
Oh Matron, we adore you, for you there's nothing we won't do.
You feed us, speed us, heed us, lead us each exciting day
Your caring, bearing, trouble-sharing, we cannot repay
Oh Matron, we love you, we love you, Matron yes we do.
Oh yes it's love.*
- [FOGIES sing sincerely despite MATRON being so rude and difficult. Maybe it's because the FOGIES just love to sing. During song, MATRON is the only one to move. She ignores their singing. She tips contents of their unfinished cups of coffee into a slops bucket then pushes new FOGIE and points so that new FOGIE exits to house with instructions to unpack. Song ends]*
- Matron** Now I hope you noticed the way I collected your left-over coffee.
- Bert** Very kind of you, Matron but I hadn't finished mine.
- Matron** Well you'll have to drink faster, won't you? Anyway *[Indicates slops bucket]* I'll re-heat this lot for tonight. *[FOGIES shake their heads]*
- Milly** Thank you, Matron. Waste not, want not, that's what I always say.
- Jerome** *[JEROME approves]* Exactly. Everything in its place and a place for everything.

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- Matron** Now I've made some changes to the evening meal. Starting tonight, puddings will be cancelled on days with a y in them. *[FOGIES upset]*
- Jack** *[Shocked]* No puddings! Oh Matron, please, you can't be serious.
- Milly** They're bad for your figure, Jack.
- Matron** And the power bill has been increased again so I've been forced to cancel all television programs after 6pm.
- Fogies** *[Distressed]* No TV!
- Muriel** But that means I'll miss *[Insert popular evening TV show]*
- Matron** And due to inflation, as from next week your board will rise by an it'sy-bitsy twenty per cent.
- Fogies** *[Stunned]* Twenty per cent!
- Joyce** But Matron, that's the third increase this year!
- Matron** And all these changes are just for you. Just so I can give you a wonderful life here at *Smileaway*. Everything I do I do because I care about you and love you, every one of you. Right?
- Fogies** *[Almost robot-like]* Right. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
- Matron** *[Starts tidying]* It's no wonder everybody loves me.

No. 4 We Love You, Matron – 2

- Fogies** *Oh Matron, we love you, we love you, Matron yes we do
Oh Matron, we adore you, for you there's nothing we won't do.
You shine, entwine us, wine and dine us like a real gourmet
It's true it's you we cannot do without and so we say
Oh Matron, we love you, we love you, Matron yes we do.
Oh yes it's love.
[During singing, MATRON again moves around this time tidying magazines, folding papers, packing up unfinished games of chess or draughts. She ignores their sincere singing. They have seemingly lost their independence but not their love of singing. MATRON tries to remove FREDAS paper but the old dear grabs it back and returns to sleep. New FOGIE enters sans hat, coat and suitcase]*
- Matron** Now I hope you noticed that I've tidied up your mess – *again* – and packed away your stupid games.
- Milly** Oh yes, we must be tidy. Cleanliness is next to godliness you know.
- Matron** And I notice there's a game of chess here. Well I've packed that away.
- Fogie** Oh Matron, did you have to? I was winning that game.
- Matron** You're too old. You can't possibly understand chess. Don't you know old people lose their marbles. You're supposed to watch day time TV with the volume up really loud. Just find something appropriate.
- Daphne** Well sleeping doesn't always appeal, Matron.
- Matron** Yes, sleeping, that's very good for you. And for all the thanks I get I wonder if you lot really appreciate what I do around here.
- Jerome** *[Stepping forward]* Matron, if I may be permitted. *[MATRON thinks JEROME is a boring old twit. He IS a boring old twit]* On behalf of all the *Smileaway* residents, I wish to thank you for your magnificent kindness, your unceasing goodwill and your abundant generosity.

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- Matron** *[Brushing JEROME aside]* Yes, all right, Jerome. We get the message. *[JEROME bows and retreats]* Now one other thing. As a very special treat, a one-off treat, you're going to have a visitor. *[FOGIES react]*
- Gloria** *[Overjoyed]* Oh my son, my son, he's coming to see me at last. I knew he would. He said he would. Oh I am so happy. Oh thank you, Matron. *[Kisses MATRON'S hand which is withdrawn. Yuk! One of them touched me!]* Thank you from the bottom of my heart. *[Bubbles away]*
- Matron** Gloria. Is your son the Mayor?
- Gloria** *[Slows a little]* The Mayor? Um. Well he might be. I haven't seen him for quite a while but he was very popular at school. And he was ...
- Matron** Gloria, shut up! *[Pause. GLORIA hurt, OTHERS shake their heads at this cruelty]* Look, when did your son last visit, write or telephone? *[Pause]* Well? *[Sarcastic]* Oh of course. He's probably sent you an e-mail!
- Gloria** I'm not sure. I can't remember. But he's very busy.
- Matron** Busy! *Busy!!* He's never once written, phoned or paid you a visit. Face it, Gloria, for all he cares you might as well be dead. *[Gasp from FOGIES. That's really cruel. GLORIA is stunned. She looks at OTHERS. They are ashamed and helpless. She retreats muttering]*
- Gloria** It's hard to forget your only son. *[She is comforted]*
- Matron** Now, before I was so rudely interrupted, I was about to give you some good news, some wonderful news. Further proof of the way I care for you here at *Smileaway*. *[Pause]* Well?
- Fogies** Oh yes, Matron ... Thank you, Matron ... You're too kind ... *etc.*
- Matron** Now I know you'll be absolutely thrilled to hear that our extremely popular and hard-working Mayor has found the time to pay you a visit. *[Pause. MATRON angry]* Well?
- Fogies** Oh, thank you, Matron ... That's wonderful ... How exciting ... *etc.*
- Muriel** I've still got my 1944 *[or appropriate year]* going-away outfit, Matron. Do you think I could wear that?
- Joyce** Oh yes. And what about those two balloons you gave us last Christmas, Matron. Should we re-inflate them in honour of his Worship the Mayor? *[MATRON not sure if they're being sarcastic]*
- Matron** There's no need to go overboard. Just remember to behave. No stupid questions, no runny noses and no passing wind.
- Jerome** *[Another humble approach]* If I may beg leave to interrupt, Matron.
- Matron** *[Running out of patience]* Oh what now, Jerome? This had better be important.
- Jerome** On behalf of the *Smileaway* residents, may I say how delighted we are at your news of the Mayor's impending visit and ...
- Matron** *[Starts to exit]* Yes, all right, Jerome, we get the picture.
- Jerome** *[Persists, calling]* You've arranged it all, Matron. You care for us like ... like a chook. *[Oh no! A chook is a hen, a domestic fowl. A "silly old chook" is a silly old woman. Substitute "hen" if necessary and "chicken" for "hen". MATRON freezes on verandah. Pause. Silence]*
- Matron** *[Through clenched teeth]* What did you say? *[She heads down to JEROME]*

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Jerome *[Unaware of faux pas and MATRON'S fury]* You care for us and in return we feel an enormous sense of gratitude. *[MATRON interrupts when beside JEROME]* You're ever so kind and thoughtful, Matron. We think ...

Matron *[Beside JEROME]* I said, "What did you say?"

Milly *[Thinks she's being helpful]* He called you a "chook", Matron.

Fred An old chook. *[FOGIES transfixed]*

Matron *[Steam escapes from her ears]* You called me what!?

Jerome *[Thrown by MATRON'S anger]* W W What I m m meant was ...

Joyce I think he meant *hen*, *[chicken]* Matron. Isn't that right, Stan?

Jerome *[Grateful for a lifeline]* Oh yes, that's correct. You care for us, Matron, like a hen cares for her chicks.

Matron *[Threatens terrified JEROME]* I'm warning you.

Jack Blimey, Matron, if we're the chicks, you must be pre-historic.

[Nervous laughter from FOGIES stopped instantly by MATRON]

Matron *[At JACK]* Watch it, buster. I've got a very long memory. *[Pause. MATRON looks around. FRED comes awake]* And that goes for all of you. Cross swords with me and look out. You're old, you're feeble. You're on the scrap-heap. Without me, without my unselfish devotion to duty you all would've kicked the bucket years ago.

[Subtly FRED or someone kicks a bucket which rolls around – we hope - then stops. Silence. Pause. Tension. MATRON looks at FRED who stares back all innocent like. Butter wouldn't melt in his mouth]

Jerome *[Stumbles forward – again]* Matron, I wish to humbly and sincerely apologise for calling you an old chook.

Matron *Hen!* It's *hen!* And I am not old!!

Jerome Hen. Hen. Of course it's hen. And I wish to apologise for ...

Matron And stop apologising. I'm sick to death of you saying you're sorry. You're like a ... a chook with its head cut off.

[This last sentence could fade as MATRON realises her unintended pun. Pause]

Jerome Oh dear. Well that being the case I'd like to apologise for apologising.

[MATRON fumes and looks like she'll explode. Instead she storms off up the steps onto the verandah watched by all]

Matron *[Under her breath]* Talk about a bunch of cretins.

Jerome *[Calling]* I didn't mean "chook", Matron.

Matron *[From verandah]* And for the last time. I am not a chook.

Joyce Excuse me, Matron. What are we having for tea? *[supper]*

Matron What!?! Ah, eggs. *[Realises then fumes and exits inside slamming door]* Ooooooh!

[Pause. Suddenly most of the FOGIES erupt with laughter. MILLY and JEROME take it seriously. It's easy for the FOGIES to laugh. It's a release from the horrid atmosphere created by the horrid Matron]

Jack *[Between laughs]* Hey, nice one, Jerome – you old chook! *[Laughter]*

Jerome *[Horrified]* No, no, you misunderstood.

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- Joyce** *[Mimics herself]* Excuse me, Matron. What are we having for tea?
- Daphne** *[Mimics MATRON]* Eggs! *[More laughter]*
- Jerome** *[Angry – well sort of]* No! That's not fair. You know I didn't mean "chook".
[Laughter] You know I meant "hen". *Hen!*
[Milk these puns. Some could even repeat the punchline/word]
- Muriel** Hey Jerry. You sure cracked a terrific yoke! *[Laughter]*
- Bert** And it's been ages since we've had a fowl story. *[On it goes]*
- Eddie** *[Waits for a lull]* Yeah but don't forget they're as scarce as hen's teeth.
[After each pun, the FOGIES laugh and repeat the punch line or word]
- Daphne** Hey, listen everyone. Listen. *[They settle]* Remember what Matron said yesterday.
- Fogies** *[Wiping eyes]* What?
- Daphne** *[Imitates chicken]* Cluck, cluck!
[More gales of laughter. Some are crying with laughter. Some imitate DAPHNE'S chicken routine and say "Cluck, cluck". MILLY comforts a distressed JEROME. JOYCE brings them back down to earth]
- Joyce** Hey, hey, settle down. Listen.
- Bert** *[Rooster impersonation]* Cock-a-doodle-do! *[Laughter]*
- Joyce** Stop it! Listen! *[Slowly FOGIES stop laughing]* We're all forgetting the news from Matron.
- Jack** *[Still happy]* What's your problem, Joyce? Bet it's nothing an old rooster can't fix. *[Some laugh but the good times are fading]*
- Joyce** We've all been laughing so much we've forgotten the new rules.
- Gloria** Hey, that's right. Can you believe *another* fee increase? And by twenty per cent?
- Jack** Yeah, sorry. This is serious. I mean what can be more serious than no puddings? It's bloomin' outrageous. *[FOGIES agree]*
- Muriel** And she's going to ban TV after six o'clock. We'll have to go to bed in the afternoon! *[More reaction, despair]*
- Freda** I do that already.
- Joyce** We can't let Matron continue to treat us like this. She's getting away with murder. We've got to do something. Anything. *[Agreement]*
- Bert** We don't have a choice, Joyce. When you get to our age we have to take whatever's on offer. We're old, we're past it. *[OTHERS scoff, react]* No, hear me out. We may not be living in paradise but at least we've got a roof over our heads and one another for company.
- Joyce** Now you listen to me Bert Ainsworth. And this goes for the rest of you too. Age has got nothing to do with it. Old fogies like us have as much right as anyone to a life of decency and hope. And no mean-minded Matron is going to stop us living life to the full. *[Agreement]*
- Jack** But how can I be full without me puddings?
- Joyce** How many times must I tell you that age is irrelevant. And I reckon it's time we stood up to that devious, detestable dictator. *[More agreement]*
- Daphne** Atta girl, Joycey. You tell 'em.
- Jerome** Well if you ask me, I don't think we should speak that way about Matron.
- Jack** Well we're not asking you, Jezza, so go put a sock in it.

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- Milly** [*JEROME shocked*]
[*Standing up for her JEROME*] Now that is unforgivable. Rude behaviour, intemperate language and all because Jerome is trying his best to make *Smileaway* a better place.
- Jerome** Thank you, Millicent.
- Bert** [*To MILLY*] And you're as bad as he is. Old-fashioned fuddy-duddies.
- Jerome** [*Almost angry. At BERT*] Right, that's enough. I will not stand here and allow you to insult a fellow resident. You will apologise immediately.
- Jack** Keep your shirt on, Jerome. You ain't exactly the Karate Kid!
- Bert** [*Preparing to fight*] You wanna come outside, Mister Big Mouth!
- Muriel** [*Intervening*] Aw, knock it off! You're pathetic, both of you. A puff of wind'd knock you over. Besides it'll take you half an hour to roll up y'sleeves.
[*Touch of laughter/teasing. Everyone sees funny side. The fight is cancelled*]
- Jerome** Yes, I apologise. I don't know what came over me.
- Milly** [*Kindly*] Thank you, Jerome. To me, you will always be a gentleman.
- Jerome** Thank you, Millicent. [*To OTHERS*] But what I find difficult is your refusal to acknowledge we're old. Very old. [*Reaction*]
- Daphne** Old age is not a crime, Jerome. You can't be arrested for turning seventy.
- Joyce**[*To JEROME*] So you reckon Matron's a kind-hearted sweetheart who'd do anything for us? Matron Marvellous. Is that what you think?
- Jerome** She's not perfect. [*Scorn from some*] Well you'd get cross too if you had to care for a bunch of crotchety fogies. It can't be easy caring for us.
- Jack** So old age equals quitting. You're talking through y'hat, mate. And I'm being polite cos there's ladies present. You're a loser, Jerome.
- Milly** No he's not. He's a gentleman. I doubt you could even spell the word.
- Jerome** I just think we'd be happier if we admitted we're old. I don't say give up. But I do say we should admit the truth. [*MUSIC BEGINS*] I mean let's face it. None of us is getting any younger.

No. 5 Old Age

- Jerome** [Recitative] *Our noses run, our bladders burst
Arthritis rules the roost*
- Milly** *We need specs, hearing aids and sticks to give our bods a boost*
- Jerome** *We're popping pills for this and that, essential so we're told*
- Duet** *It's a life you may encounter whenever you grow old.
You forget what you had for breakfast
You forget where you put your specs
Your bones creak and groan, you can't hear the phone
Your wrinkles like road-maps all littered with wrecks.
You forget if you've had your medication
And those stumbles and fumbles enrage
It's the price that you pay, every night, every day
It's the way when you reach old age.*

12 Fogies!

[Dialogue during song]

- Fogie 1** You know the worst part about growing old is losing your memory.
- Fogie 2** Oh we all do that.
- Fogie 1** I'm always forgetting things. I put down something and next minute it's gone and I can't remember where I put it.
- Fogie 3** That's me. I'm always losing my specs.
- Fogie 4** They're on y'head.
- Fogie 3** *[Discovers specs]* Oh!
- Fogie 1** The other morning I looked at this person and do you know, for the life of me I couldn't remember their name.
- Fogie 2** We all forget names.
- Fogie 1** I just stared and stared. Nothing. And I knew I'd seen this person many times before. Then I realised. *[Pause]* I was looking in a mirror!
[Big laugh and all sing reprise]

[It's a moving song about growing old and it unites the FOGIES albeit sadly. They all know about growing old. Song ends and JOYCE takes control]

- Joyce** Okay, I've got something to say. *[They pay attention]* We all agree we're old. But that doesn't mean we can't enjoy ourselves. And that certainly doesn't mean we let ourselves get pushed around. We all know Matron's got it in for us and I've got a plan so come in close. And somebody please wake Freda.
[Some FOGIES move towards JOYCE. Someone wakes FREDA who takes a long time to get the message and then to get mobile]
- Jack** Oh I love plans, Joycey. You're a great one for ideas. So come on, tell us, what's it all about?
- Joyce** I'm not starting yet. I'm waiting for Freda. *[FOGIES groan]* She's been here for years, she's part of the team and I value her opinion.
- Bert** *[Calling]* Come on, Freda, we haven't got all day.
- Freda** *[Battling to stand up]* Wait for me. I want to hear this.
- Muriel** Start without her. It'll be Christmas before she gets here.
- Jack** Why don't we go to her? It'll be a darn sight quicker.
- Daphne** Good idea. *[DAPHNE leads FOGIES to FREDA]* Over here everyone.
- Freda** What's happening? Where are you going?
- Joyce** It's all right, love. We're having the meeting at your place.
[FREDA sits again]
- Freda** Well why did you make me get up in the first place?
- Daphne** Sorry, Freda.
- Freda** You know I've got arthritis. You know it takes me ages to get moving.
- Jack** Yes Freda, we know. You've been telling us for the last ten years.
- Muriel** Eleven.
- Bert** But we're here now so let's be quiet and listen to Joyce.
- Freda** I haven't told you about my new cure for arthritis. *[FOGIES groan. They've heard this many times before]* You take two lemons, a bowl of hot water and a phone book.

13 Fogies!

- Jack** Oh for Pete's sake. Freda, love, just be quiet for two minutes while Joyce tells us her very important plan.
- Jerome** Would you like a chair, Joyce? You're most welcome to take mine.
- Joyce** I'm fine, Jerome, thanks. *[To the Group]* Okay, listen to this.
- Jerome** But I insist. It's a gentleman's duty to offer his seat to a lady.
[The exasperation builds slowly but steadily]
- Freda** Is that Jerome being a pompous twit again?
- Bert** Oh please, can we stop all this messing about and start the bloody meeting!
[Shock from some]
- Milly** *[Shock]* Oh my goodness! I've never heard such disgraceful language!
- Bert** What's wrong with "messing about"?
- Jerome** Indeed, there is no place for that type of language. Albert. I insist you apologise immediately.
- Daphne** Oh come on, let's stop squabbling and listen to Joyce.
- Freda** It's the best arthritis cure in the world.
- Milly** Matron would be horrified if she knew we behaved like that.
- Jerome** We're still waiting for that apology, Albert.
- Freda** You squeeze the lemons, put the juice in the hot water then stick the phone book up y'jumper *[cardigan]*.
- Jack** *[Loud and breaks the cycle]* Right, that's it! Will you please just *shut up* and listen to Joyce.
[Pause. Everyone shocked. MILLY and JEROME mutter about bad language]
- Joyce** Thank you, Jack. Now listen. I've got this fantastic idea. If it works, it'll mean big changes here at *Smileaway*. But I need your advice. So tell me, what do you think of this? *[They lean in to hear but ...]*
[Loud whistle is heard and FOGIES freeze]
- Ms Muscle** *[Loud voice from upstage]* Right, places everyone! *Move!*

[Sudden activity. The meeting is abandoned. MS MUSCLE bounds in and FOGIES hasten, well stumble, to prepare. MUSIC BEGINS. FOGIES move into formation for their daily exercise routine. They move slowly of course. MS MUSCLE is all fitness and enthusiasm. The super elderly EDDIE and his trainer FLO move to one side. EDDIE begins to disrobe revealing his extra long shorts and old-fashioned singlet/vest. FLO helps him but this takes ages – the whole song in fact. FLO could fan EDDIE with a towel. EDDIE could wear a headband to show his "modern" outlook to fitness. His singlet/tee-shirt could have "Marathon Man" or similar The back could read "Fogies Rule. OK!" or some such. JACK pretends to have a sore back. He doubles over and holds his back. All this during the musical intro]

- Jack** Oh, me back. Oh it's agony. I can't do it, Miss. Oh it's terrible ...
[He continues muttering until MS MUSCLE grabs his shoulders from behind {do this carefully} and straightens him in a flash. JACK shrieks in mock pain and is spun into position. MS MUSCLE performs out front and is super-fit. Behind her, the FOGIES copy but with difficulty and, of course, with far less success than the instructor]

No. 6 Get Fit

Ms Muscle *Make your body look divine, get your muscles into line*

14 Fogies!

*Shove your corporation into orporation
Only then will you feel fine.
Do exactly as I do, kick your legs and follow through
Find your thrilling moments in these drilling moments
This is just the thing for you. And bend*

Fogies *Two, three, four. One!*

Ms Muscle *And hop a little bit, extend*

Fogies *Two, three, four. One!*

Ms Muscle *Your top a little bit, ascend*

Fogies *Two, three, four. One!*

Ms Muscle *Then drop a little bit, oh you will get so fit.*

Brace your arms and give a thrust

It will strengthen butt and bust

If you're smart be thinner

Make your heart a winner, exercising is a must.

[DANCE BREAK]

Exercising is a – one, two, three, four

Come on fogies, give some more

A five, six, seven, eight, you're in the swing and feeling great

Oh come on everybody, get fit!

[FOGIES are elderly but sincere and it's a fine line between laughing at them and with them. It should be amusing to see them trying to touch their toes – make that knees – etc. MS MUSCLE is full of encouragement and loves her "pupils". JACK tries to get out of the routine but is caught each time. During Dance Break FOGIES could stand back to back and one try and lift the other off the ground albeit two centimetres. JEROME becomes MS MUSCLE'S partner and he is rocketed {safely} into space screaming "I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" EDDIE is still getting ready. Song over, MS MUSCLE is as fresh as a daisy but the FOGIES are exhausted. Maybe she keeps jogging as she speaks]

Ms Muscle Well done, well done. Jerome, you were brilliant. Muriel, that was absolutely first-rate. And Jack, all that trying to escape just makes you so much fitter.
[Calls to everyone] So, did we all enjoy ourselves?

Fogies [Groan]

Ms Muscle I'm sorry, I missed that. [Louder] Are we happy?

Fogies [Louder groan]

Ms Muscle That's the spirit. Excellent. [Starts a jogging exit] Okay, I'll be off. Same time tomorrow, fogies. Bye! [Waving and jogging she exits]

Fogies [Another groan]

[EDDIE is finally in his Bombay bloomers etc and moves centre still being fanned by FLO]

Eddie Okay, Flo. I'm ready. Tell the lady she can start the get-fit session.

Flo All right, Eddie. [She turns and sees exhausted FOGIES] Oh dear.

Eddie [Doing small on-the-spot movements] I'll kill 'em. I'll thrash 'em. Today I'm ready for anything. Tell 'em, Flo. Tell 'em Eddie is ready.

Flo [Back to EDDIE] Ah, listen Eddie. There's something you oughta know.

Eddie I've even got me new headband. It collects all me perspiration. Is it on straight?

15 Fogies!

- Flo** No. It's upside down.
- Eddie** *[Upset]* Upside down! Aw no! I can't run round the rosebush like this. Help me, Flo.
- Flo** It's no use, Eddie. It's finished.
- Eddie** *[Indignant]* I'm not finished. I haven't even started. *[Fired up]* Blow the starting whistle. Stoke up me boiler. It's time for fitness and for Eddie to get down and get dirty.
- Flo** No, I mean the fitness session is finished. Ms Muscle has gone.
- Eddie** *[Stunned]* Finished? Gone? But ... *[Looks back, realises]* Oh well, better go and get changed. Again. *[Heads to one side]* I think I'll get some snazzy sweatbands. What do you think?
- Matron** *[Enters from house to verandah and speaks through megaphone]* Right, pay attention. Your food is on the table and the dining-room closes in exactly twelve minutes. *[Barks order]* So get a move on! *[Exits]*
- [Immediate reaction as FOGIES help one another to head off for their meal. EDDIE doesn't bother to re-dress just grabs his gear and goes, FLO still fanning him. Everyone exits except JACK and FRED who remain on the garden seat. FOGIES exit up steps onto verandah and into house or even DL and LC if you have large numbers. They all chat as they go. "Give us a hand, love" "Thanks for helping me" "Wonder what's for tea? {supper?}" "I'm feeling hungry. Are you?" etc. Crossfade lights as FOGIES depart. Concentrate on garden seat/swing. Night draws in. It's quiet. A few birds sing before retiring or maybe it's the crickets playing night cricket. Peace reigns. Pause. It's reflective. Don't rush. Initially JACK is talking to himself]*
- Jack** You know this is the third time this week we've gone without our tucker. Keep this up and we'll be on a hunger strike. Funny though 'cos I never thought I'd die of starvation.
- Jack** Old age, heart attack, run over by an irate husband, beat up by some jealous toy boy - but never starvation. *[Pause]* Actually me favourite method of dying is exhaustion. I'd like to be wrecked on a desert island with two hundred gorgeous women and me the only fella. What a way to go. *[FRED gives small snort. Pause]* Okay, so the food here is bad. No, not bad, it's terrible. But right now I'm so hungry I could just about stomach one of them culinary disasters. *[Pause]* Ah, now here's a choice for you. What do you fancy? One of Matron's rissoles or a workout with Ms Muscle? *[FRED gives small snort again]* Talk about torture. *[Pause. Crickets are the only sound]*
- Fred** Want my opinion?
- Jack** *[Shocked]* He speaks. Frederick, dear boy, I'm all ears.
- Fred** I've been through two wars. Two. I was shot at, buried in mud and snow and baked alive in the blazing sun.
- Jack** Ah yes, mate, but you're still in one piece. You're still alive.
- Fred** I survived because I avoided the danger areas.
- Jack** Avoided danger! You've gotta be joking. You were in the front line, mate. You saw action, eyeball to eyeball. You put your life on the line.
- Fred** You're right and it was bloody dangerous. But not as dangerous as women ... and cooks.

- Jack** *[Laughs, mocks]* Women and cooks! What are you talking about?
- Fred** The women softened you up and the cooks finished you off. So that's why we're out here enjoying the beautiful night air.
- Jack** Blimey Fred, I never know when you're serious. And I can't believe you don't like women.
- Fred** Oh I like them all right. They're marvellous. But at my age, with a dicky ticker, wobbly pins and the odd plastic part, well a twilight romance is a bit like playing with fire.
- Jack** You are going have to stop talking in riddles, Fred.
- Fred** *[Thinking]* Twilight romance. Actually that sounds like an oxymoron.
- Jack** *[Mild offence]* Hey, there's no need get personal. And the last bloke who called me a moron, well he got a right good ... *[Thinks]* actually it was so long ago I can't remember what happened.
- Fred** An oxymoron, young fella, is a figure of speech. It's a sort of ... self-contradiction.
- Jack** I still don't know what you're talking about.
- Fred** The sex life of a septuagenarian. That's an oxymoron.
- Jack** What's a septuagenarian?
- Fred** You're talking to one.
- Jack** Hey?
- Fred** How old are you?
- Jack** I'll be seventy-six next month.
- Fred** Well you're one too.
- Jack** *[Puzzled]* I think I prefer Matron's cooking to talking to you.
- Fred** I mean let's face it, love is eternal and there are many different ways to express love but I think old Oscar was spot on when he said that the trouble with youth is it's wasted on the young.
- Jack** *[Pause]* Is that another oxymoron?
- Fred** No, that's a bon mot.
- Jack** Right little philosopher, aren't we? *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
- Fred** Just one of the benefits of old age, my friend. We can pontificate with pride.

No. 7 Love At Ninety-Nine

- Fred** *They say that growing old means none of this and that must stop
No midnight cruising, late-night boozing, all soon get the chop
But just because the years roll by and hair and teeth depart
There ain't no halt or hindrance with matters of the heart.
There's nothing wrong with love at sixty
Life for you can be sublime
And at seventy-five you'll come alive
Holding hands and hugging into overtime
There's nothing wrong with love at eighty
The older make the sweetest wine
But romance is neat, your life complete*

17 Fogies!

*When you fall in love at ninety-nine, oh yeah
When you fall in love at ninety, fall in love at ninety-,
Fall in love at ninety-nine.*

[They dance a soft-shoe and celebrate the right of all people to love for as long as they live. Song finishes with hat and cane finale. JACK and FRED wander off into house discussing falling in love. "I think I might be in love, Fred" "Well go for it my son, go for it" etc. Lights dim even more. Increase sound effects of crickets. Pause. It's now quite dark. Maybe some lights from the house sneak out into the garden. MUSIC BEGINS. RUPERT wanders in with watering-can and attends to his plants as he sings in the moonlight]

No. 8 Goodnight Garden

Rupert *When I say goodnight to my garden and tuck my little flowers in bed
My heart it skips a beat at such a lovely treat
And more than once a tiny tear I've shed.
When I bid farewell to the foliage
Making sure that first it's all been fed
My mind's a little hazy, perhaps a wee bit crazy
Remem'bring what these plants to me have said.
The rose told me I smell nice
The cacti said, "You're sharp today"
The bonsai from below quipped, "I wish that I could grow,
I'd love to be like you in every way".
"I'd love to feel ya," the camellia spoke sincerely
"I'd love a thrill," the daffodil then said
But the carnations lost control with "I love your button-hole"
Every time I tuck them into bed.
Little plants, little plants, let us see you dance.
To bed. Goodnight. To bed. Goodnight.
Good -, Good -, Goodnight!*

[DANCE BREAK gives you the chance to enact a masque, a glorious moonlit parade of dancing plants and flowers – or not as your budget and cast size dictate. RUPERT loves it all. The dancing plants could depart after the DANCE or remain and sing reprise with RUPERT. Song ends and everyone departs. Pause. Eerie glow returns to the garden. Flashlight/torch flashes from bush in garden. Pause. It flashes again. Pause. Door opens and figure emerges from house to verandah. It's dark and hard to see]

Mayor *[From inside/behind bush] Psst. [Great opening line for the villain]*
Matron *[From verandah] Will you be quiet! [She checks to see if they're alone]*
Mayor *[Pause] Psst.*
Matron *[Moves to bush] Be quiet. Right, we're alone. Now, let' see them.*
Mayor *Iris, I'm gob-smacked, speechless. You look absolutely fabulous.*
Matron *I hate people who say "absolutely". Now cut the baloney and show me the stuff.*
Mayor *I love these meetings. I love the danger, the thrill of being discovered. Oh and your ravishing beauty of course.*

- Matron** And don't call me, Iris.
- Mayor** You've made me a new man. I've shaved, sprayed, scented and shampooed. What do you think?
- Matron** You're standing on my foot.
- Mayor** I've had a facelift, tummy-tuck and hair transplant. What do you think?
- Matron** You're a middle-aged male moron. You're about as sexy as stale milk.
- Mayor** Oh I love it when you talk like that.
- Matron** Just show me the documents? And they'd better be ready this time.
- Mayor** How about we go away this weekend? I know a quiet little hotel.
- Matron** [*Hisses*] Will you show me the documents.
- Mayor** All right, all right, no need to get shirty. They're here in my jacket.
- Matron** Come on, come on. One of those old cretins might stumble into the garden.
- Mayor** [*Can't find them*] That's funny. I thought they were here in my jacket.
- Matron** You klutz! Give me the jacket. Come on. Hurry up!
- Mayor** [*Removing jacket*] Oh Iris. I love it when you boss me like that. You're so ... commanding.
- Matron** [*Searching jacket*] They're not here.
- Mayor** What? They have to be.
- Matron** If you've lost them I'll have your guts for garters.
- Mayor** Oh Iris. A matron in garters. I'd love to see that.
- Matron** Shut up and try your trousers. Look in your pockets. [*Pats his pocket*] Here they are. In here.
- Mayor** Oh Iris, pat my pocket again. Please.
- Matron** You'll get more than a pat, pal.
- Mayor** [*Distressed*] Oh no. There's a hole in my pocket. The documents have slipped into the lining.
- Matron** Well take off your trousers. I want to see those documents.
- Mayor** That's not all you'll see. [*She helps/hassles him*] All right. I can do it. Ow! Do you mind? I hope you don't think I do this all the time.
- Matron** [*Bored*] Oh you middle-aged males, you're so pathetically vain.
- Mayor** [*Offended*] Well there's no need to be personal.
- Matron** [*Looks at papers*] You blithering idiot! These are the wrong papers.
- Mayor** They can't be.
- Matron** You've mucked it up again.
- Mayor** I'm sorry, I was in a hurry.
- Matron** You've got a death-wish, Horace.
- Mayor** And now I'm cold, Iris. Give me a hand with my strides.
- Matron** Listen Oil-can. I suffer your juvenile chauvinism just to get my hands on the deeds to *Smileaway*. The only feeling you've ever aroused in me is nausea. So bring me those documents or I'll expose you good 'n proper.
- Mayor** I'm exposed already.
- Matron** Final warning. Tomorrow is D for documents Day. Papers or punishment, pal. It's up to you.
[*MATRON storms towards house. She carries MAYOR'S pants*]
- Mayor** [*Frantic whisper*] Wait, Iris, please. You've got my trousers.

19 Fogies!

- Matron** *[Stops, realises] What? Oh. [She tosses them towards bush. They land short of the mark] Just remember those documents. [She exits into house]*
- [Pause. MAYOR pokes out his head. Nothing. He creeps out towards his trousers. Suddenly RUPERT enters humming his song. MAYOR scampers back into bush sans strides. RUPERT passes bush]*
- Mayor** Psst. *[RUPERT stops]*
- Rupert** Who's that? Is that you little pansy?
- Mayor** No, it's me. *[Bush shakes a little]* Over here.
- Rupert** Oh it's you, Mister Bush. You be all right then?
- Mayor** *[Hoarse whisper]* My trousers. *[Coughs]* I need my trousers.
- Rupert** That be a nasty cough, Mister Bush. How about a drink?
- Mayor** Oh yes. Yes please.
- Rupert** Okay. Hold on.
[RUPERT moves upstage or offstage for a moment]
- Mayor** *[Hoarse whisper]* And could you please grab my trousers?
- Rupert** *[Returning with small watering-can]* Now this'll make you better. Here's a nice drink, Mister Bush.
- Mayor** *[Splutters as mimed act of pouring water takes place]* Hey! Stop! That's water! Hey! Stop! *[Splutters ad lib]*
- Rupert** There you be, Mister Bush. Feeling better?
- Mayor** You fool, you idiot! Oh hell! Ah ... ah ... choo!
- Rupert** Mister Bush. That be a cold.
- Mayor** I'm dying. I'm freezing. Ah choo! *[Splutters ad lib]*
- Rupert** *[Moves to one side]* I've got just the thing for colds. You hold on now, Mister Bush.
- Mayor** I'm dying. I'm drowning. *[Splutters continue]*
- Rupert** *[Returns with bucket]* Okay then, Mister Bush, this'll make you warm.
[Mimes tipping contents onto base of bush]
- Mayor** *[Now frightened]* Hey! What are you doing. Hey! This stuff smells!
- Rupert** Just the stuff for exposed limbs, Mister Bush. A nice fresh load of manure.
- Mayor** *Manure!!*
- Rupert** Feeling warmer are we?
- Mayor** I'll murder you.
- Rupert** Oh dear, you've got some dead branches, Mister Bush. You need a trim. Hang on. I'll get me clippers.
[RUPERT exits. Spluttering, wet and smelly MAYOR has had enough. He creeps out and bends to pick up his trousers]
- Mayor** This is insane. I've been assaulted. I'm freezing. I smell. Iris, where are you? I'll murder that gardener!
- Daphne** *[From and in the darkness]* Oh Mister Mayor.
- Mayor** *[Frightened]* What was that? Who's there?
- Joyce** *[From and in the darkness]* Smile please.
[A camera flashlight goes off. This could be done with a powerful spot illuminating the MAYOR who is revealed with dropped jaw and polka-dot underwear for a moment or two. Briefly the briefs]

20 Fogies!

- Mayor** *[Devastated]* What the devil!?! Oh my goodness! *[Clutching trousers and jacket, MAYOR makes hasty exit]* I'm leaving. I was never here. *[Exits]*
- Joyce** *[From the darkness]* Thank you, sir. We'll send the prints to your office!
[Pause. Silence. RUPERT enters with shears]
- Rupert** Here we are, Mister Bush. Now which limb first? *[Pause]* Mister Bush? *[Pause]* You gone to sleep? *[Pause]* Okay, we'll *leaf* it till later. *[Pause]* That's a little joke, Mister Bush. *Leaf* it till later. *[Pause]* Oh never mind. Besides, I'm *[clicks shears twice]* *shear* exhausted. Get it? *[No response]* Blimey, you don't *twig* to nothin'. *[Starts to exit but pauses en route before adding each new pun]* I can see I'm *barkin'* up the wrong tree ... I'll *shoot* off, then, Mister Bush ... This is me final *bough* ... But I'll be *bark*, Mister Bush, I'll be *bark*. *[Exits chuckling]*
[Pause. JOYCE and DAPHNE emerge and can just be seen in the eerie light. DAPHNE has camera and JOYCE a small tape-recorder]
- Joyce** Now that's what I call a good night's work.
- Daphne** Oh Joyce. What have we done?
- Joyce** Let me see that photo and I'll tell you.
[A torch/flashlight is used and the women study their handiwork]
- Daphne** My goodness. We could be in real trouble.
- Joyce** *We*, Daphne? What about him? The last time I saw a mouth like that it had a hook in it. *[They giggle]*
- Daphne** Well go on, play the tape. See if it worked. *[JOYCE touches machine]*
- Matron** *[On tape]* Listen Oil-can. I suffer your juvenile chauvinism just to get my hands on the deeds to *Smileaway*. The only feeling you've ever aroused in me is nausea. So bring me those documents or I'll expose you good 'n proper. *[Tape is stopped]*
- Daphne** We've done it, Joyce, we've done it. But what does it all mean?
- Joyce** It means, my friend, the tables are about to turn. Come on, the fogies are fighting back!

[MUSIC BEGINS as the fogies exit in the darkness. If you are having an interval, this is where it occurs. If you are not having an interval, ignore the Optional Entr'acte and go straight on after the Orchestral Interlude]

No. 9 Orchestral Interlude

End of Act One

No. 10 Optional Entr'acte

Act Two

[Lights/curtain up after the Entr'acte – or Orchestral Interlude if Entr'acte not used . It's the morning after the night before. FOGIES are spread out in the grounds as per the opening of Act One. It's a sunny mild morn. FREDA is asleep under her newspaper. The FOGIES are quiet and tense. Word has got around. They play games, read, knit, etc but are quiet. MATRON enters from house to verandah. She is dressed for a trip into town wearing hat and coat and carrying handbag/purse and gloves. JEROME rises and doffs hat as MATRON speaks and moves down amongst them]

- Matron** Well, well, well, we're all very quiet this morning. That's a change.
- Jerome** Good morning, Matron. May I say how attractive you look this morning. Of course you always ...
- Matron** *[Threatens JEROME]* You! Not another word.
- Jerome** Of course. Thank you, Matron. Most kind.
- Matron** *[To FOGIES]* I'm going into town. I won't be long. You'll be all right on your own. And it's no use trying anything. I've switched on the alarms, disconnected the phone and locked the door to the kitchen.
- Jack** But what about our morning tea?
- Matron** That's off. *[FOGIES shake heads]* And don't forget His Worship the Mayor will be paying you all a visit today. *[Pause]* Well?
- Fogies** Oh thank you, Matron ... Most kind, Matron ... *etc*
- Gloria** *[Full of hope]* Excuse me, Matron.
- Matron** No and no.
- Gloria** I was wondering if my son was coming today.
- Matron** *[Sarcastic]* Your son? Oh of course, Gloria. Didn't I tell you? I'm surprised he's not here already.
- Gloria** *[Thrilled]* Really? Oh, Matron, that's wonderful. Listen everyone. Matron says my son is coming to *Smileaway* today.
- Matron** *[Snaps]* Gloria. That was a joke. I was being sarcastic.
- Gloria** *[Confused]* Pardon? I don't understand.
- Matron** Oh, somebody tell the dozy old cow. Somebody tell the crone to wake up. *[JEROME and MILLY take GLORIA to one side and explain. She is hurt and shakes her head in despair]*
- Joyce** Maybe she doesn't want to wake up. Maybe the only thing that keeps her going is hope. But I'm sure you've got a rule somewhere which bans that. Number sixty-three. No-one may hope and dreaming is against the law.
- Matron** Oh my, quite the little philosopher aren't we? And what's your position on bed pans and dementia? Hope and dreams are fine, madam, but they don't pay the rent or clean up your mess. *[She moves off but stops]* Somebody's got to wipe your dribbles. *[She exits]*
- Jack** *[Sarcastic]* Yeah and a Merry Christmas to you, too.
[FOGIES murmur sarcastic agreement. One checks MATRON'S exit]

22 Fogies!

- Fogie** *[Calling]* It's all right. She's gone.
[Immediately hubbub breaks out. Lots of noise and gesticulation. FOGIES all talk at once. Most tackle JOYCE and DAPHNE but some could talk amongst themselves relating the news of last night]
- Fogies** Did he really get soaked? ... What did Rupert really do? ... There's a photo and a tape ... Does Matron know about this? ... What sort of documents? ...
etc
- Joyce** *[Calling]* All right, settle down. *[Hubbub continues]* Settle down. *[Silence but eager anticipation]* Now last night what Daphne and I told you happened, really did happen. *[Gasps]* We saw and heard everything. *[Another buzz]*
- Jerome** Joyce, if I may. Milly and I are not comfortable with this situation.
[FOGIES rubbish JEROME and MILLY who are further offended]
- Jack** *[Mimics JEROME]* Ooooh, we're not happy with this situation.
- Milly** We need to remember that good manners cost nothing.
- Jerome** And two wrongs will never make a right.
- Bert** Oh buzz off ... you old chook!
[Agreement and laughter and anger as JEROME and MILLY are incensed]
- Joyce** *[Intervening]* Now that's enough. *[Decorum returns]* Don't you realise this stupid bickering plays right into Matron's hands? *[OTHERS settle]* Whether you two agree with us or not, you can't deny there's a crime being committed right under our noses. *[Agreement]* This is not rudeness to old folk. This is a criminal conspiracy! *[Hubbub]*
- Daphne** The Matron and Mayor plan to steal ownership of *Smileaway*. They're breaking the law. It's fraud. They're the crooks and we're the victims. *[More agreement]*
- Milly** Perhaps there's been a misunderstanding. *[Scoffing]*
- Fred** Get a life, Milly. Take off those rose-coloured glasses and face facts. Our beloved Matron's a crim! *[Agreement]*
- Joyce** And if we don't do something, we're as good as dead. If we allow Matron to control *Smileaway*, our lives just won't be worth living.
- Jerome** Well if what you say is true, surely it's a matter for the police.
- Bert** It's no use going to the police. The tape doesn't prove anything. They'll just laugh at us. Maybe even charge us with spying!
- Muriel** And you know Matron. She'll wriggle out of anything. We have to do it our own way by ourselves. *[Agreement]*
- Daphne** You're on the wrong bus, Jerome. You too, Milly. When anyone is treated badly, especially old fogies, it's time to stand up and fight.
- Fred** If you want something done properly, you've gotta do it yourself.
- Jack** And here's our chance to show we can still think and act for ourselves. *[More agreement]*
- Joyce** *[Goes to JEROME and MILLY]* Jerome, Milly. We know you mean well. And we respect your kindness, your chivalry, your ... lovely manners. But sometimes life is damn hard. Sometimes people are greedy and cruel. And sometimes justice is in very short supply.
- Daphne** Especially for old folks.
- Joyce** I'm sorry if our behaviour upsets you. I don't like being nasty and sneaky.

Jack I do.

Joyce But I'm totally convinced that what we're doing is right. We're making a stand for everyone, including you. Old folk have the right to as much independence, happiness and freedom as anyone.

Daphne They have *more* right. *[Agreement]*

Joyce Join us, Jerome. You too, Milly. Join us and I promise you a better *Smileaway*, a kinder, more polite and dignified *Smileaway*. We need you. United we stand and all that jazz. *[Pause]* What do you say?
[Pause. JEROME and MILLY look at one another. They whisper then nod]

Jerome Well speaking on behalf of Milly and myself ... *[A few groans]* I would like to say that we have decided to ... *[Pause. What will he say? JEROME happy]* ... give you our full support.
[Much cheering, clapping and back-slapping which hardly gets started before the MAYOR enters in mayoral robe and clean clothes]

Mayor Well, well, well, isn't this grand! *[Instant silence]* That's what I like to see. All my constituents being happy. One of my by-laws. You must be happy. *[Deathly silence. MAYOR moves amongst them]* And a very good morning to you, ladies and gentlemen. *[Pause]* It's all right, you may speak.

Milly *[Curtsey]* Good morning, your Worship.

Jerome *[Bowing]* Your Worship, on behalf of the residents of *Smileaway*, may I say how delighted we are to have ...

Mayor *[Even he cuts off JEROME]* Yes, yes, thank you. Now, how are we all?

Jack What would you care?

Mayor *[Turns in general direction]* I'm sorry. Somebody spoke?

Daphne He said it's nice that you care.

Mayor Well I do, I do. In fact caring is my middle name.

Bert *[Thrown away]* I thought it was Schmuck-Features.

Gloria Excuse me, Mister Mayor.

Mayor *[Gushing bonhomie]* Dear lady. How can I help?

Gloria Have you any news of my son? You promised to look into it.

Mayor I did? Of course I did. And I always keep my promises. They don't call me Honest Horrie for nothing.

Fred *[Aside]* That's not all they call you. *[MAYOR ignores these comments]*

Mayor Now tell me again, Mabel. Refresh my memory and I'll move heaven and earth to help you find your daughter.

Gloria Son. It's my son and I'm not Mabel. I'm Gloria.

Mayor Of course you are. And when did you last see your little boy?

Gloria Ah, well this Christmas it'll be fifteen ... or is it sixteen?

Mayor My, my. Fifteen weeks is a long time.

Gloria No it's fifteen years.

Mayor *[Even His Worship is a touch thrown]* Fifteen years!

Gloria Oh you don't think he's forgotten me do you?

Mayor No, no, no. Of course not. He's probably gone fishing or playing golf or something. I'm sure he's a typical middle-aged son. He'll come home when he wants something. Now just you leave things to me, Gladys.

Gloria Gloria.

24 Fogies!

Mayor As God is my witness, I'll find your daughter. [*MAYOR turns away*]
Gloria [*To MAYOR'S back*] Son! He's my son!
[*GLORIA is comforted and led away as MAYOR tries drumming up votes*]
Mayor Well now, ladies and gentlemen, how are we? All fighting fit I hope?
Fogies Yes thank you ... Yes, Your Worship ... Very well ... *etc*
Mayor That's the spirit. You'd have to be happy living here at *Smileaway* with the wonderfully kind Matron Blatt. [*Pause*] Well?
Fogies [*Pause then all speak at once*] Oh yes ... Definitely ... Absolutely ... Matron's wonderful ... *etc*
Joyce Excuse me, Your Worship.
Mayor Yes, my dear, what is it? Another lost relative?
Joyce I was wondering how you were getting on with your cold?
[*Pause. Tension. Is this the end of the charade?*]
Mayor [*Suddenly laughs it off*] Oh dear, how sweet you old fogies are. [*Suddenly more serious*] How did you know I had a cold? [*Suddenly lighthearted. He's worried*] Are you one of those psychic persons?
Daphne We heard it on the radio.
Mayor [*Stunned*] The radio? My cold was announced on the radio?
Jerome You're very famous, Mister Mayor.
Mayor I know that but I only caught the cold last week.
Joyce Don't you mean last night?
[*Pause. Another tense moment. Who will crack first?*]
Jack [*Breaks the ice*] Matron's not here, sir. You did come to see her? You see, we know Matron is someone you ... *admire*. [*Bluff continues*]
Mayor Indeed I do. But the real purpose of my visit is to see you. You see I've got a surprise for you.
Muriel Well isn't that remarkable. You see, we've got a surprise for *you*.
Mayor [*More tension. Pause. Not sure*] For me? Well, that's ... very nice.
Bert So how's your good lady, Mister Mayor. Keeping well is she?
Mayor [*Worried*] Very well, thank you. Actually she's away at present, staying with her mother.
Jack [*Nudge, nudge*] When the cats' a way, hey!
Mayor [*Is starting to lose it*] I beg your pardon?
Daphne So there's no-one to wash your shirts then?
Mayor [*Getting uppity*] I don't think I like your tone, madam.
Daphne I mean even though you're a New Age man, a top politician must be far too busy for domestic chores.
Mayor What a quaint old fogie you are. I assure you I'm quite capable of doing my own laundry.
Joyce What? Even your polka-dot underpants?
[*That's it. Bluff is over, the pretence is dead. The cards are on the table*]
Mayor Madam, I find your question both intrusive and extremely ill-mannered.
Jerome Yes, we apologise.
Bert No we don't. Shut up, Jerome.
Muriel *We ain't offended. The truth is just the truth.*

Mayor Oh I see. We're playing a little game. You're trying to say I was here last night.

Daphne We *know* you were here last night.

Joyce Over there, in that bush, with Matron, in your underpants.

Jack *Polka-dot* underpants.

Muriel *Red* polka-dot underpants.

Mayor Oh very droll. How eccentric you all are. But of course it's completely untrue. I was visiting my sick grandmother last night as she and five of my friends will certainly testify.

Bert Why would they need to testify? You've got nothing to hide.

Daphne Except your underpants.

Mayor I warn you this slanderous nonsense has gone far enough.

Joyce Not quite, your Worship. You see it's time for *your* surprise. We'd like you to hear some edited highlights.

[DAPHNE holds up/out machine and clicks button. Tape plays – perhaps FX. MAYOR'S face goes from anger to horror to panic]

Mayor Oh Iris, pat my pocket again. Please.

Matron You'll get more than a pat, pal.

Mayor Oh no. There's a hole in my pocket. The documents have slipped into the lining.

Matron Well take off your trousers. I want to see those documents.

Mayor That's not all you'll see.

[Back live]

Mayor Stop it! Turn it off! *[Tape stopped. Pause. Tension]* I don't know what you hope to achieve by this purile behaviour but I assure you it won't work.

Fred Wanna bet?

Mayor As far as blackmail goes, this is the most pathetic scheme I've ever seen.

Daphne Oh, so we've had a bit of blackmail experience have we?

Joyce It's not just the tape, Mister Mayor. We do have a scrapbook as well. *[Handing scrapbook to MAYOR]* We've got lots of copies. You're very popular. *[MAYOR looks at photos. Shock, horror – not his best angle]*

Jack You're the local pin-up boy, mate. There's half a dozen widows in here with your picture on their dressing-table.

[MAYOR hands photos back to JOYCE. He then moves to one side, removes wallet and starts counting bills]

Mayor Right, what's your price? *[Holds out cash]* This should keep you happy.

Joyce We're not interested in money.

[FRED is near the MAYOR. He grabs the money]

Fred Like hell we are! *[FRED moves amongst others counting money]*

Mayor Hey! Come back! Hey! *[MAYOR gives up. He's now frustrated as well as angry]*

Right, you've got your money. Now hand over the tape and photos.

Daphne We told you. We don't want your money. We want the papers you've brought for Matron.

Mayor Papers? What papers? I don't know what you're talking about.

- Joyce** *[Annoyed]* Oh come on, Horace. Let's cut to the chase. You and Matron are trying to illegally gain control of *Smileaway* to make even more money out of us fogies.
- Mayor** That's outrageous! I'll sue for slander.
- Daphne** Keep your shirt on. We're offering you a deal.
- Mayor** I'll drag you through every court in the land. I'll take you for every penny you've got. *[Suddenly desperate]* What sort of a deal?
- Muriel** Give us the papers and you'll see.
[Pause. MAYOR studies them. They all stare back. He's in a bind. Shaking his head he produces papers and hands them to JOYCE]
- Daphne** Now, that didn't hurt did it?
- Joyce** Listen to this. *[Reads]* "I, Horace Oleganious, hereby appoint Matron Iris Quakebuttock sole trustee of *Smileaway* for a period of twenty years."
- Fogies** *[React]* Twenty years! ... Matron! ... Hey! That's terrible! ... *etc*
- Mayor** *[Defending his decision]* You don't know when you're well off. She'll do an excellent job.
- Daphne** Yeah, at making our lives a misery. *[OTHERS agree]*
- Muriel** You know nothin', Buster. Your Matron's a monster, a malefactress. She's an 'orrible ogress. *[Agreement]*
- Bert** Exactly. Whatever that means.
- Joyce** *[Threatens MAYOR]* Now you listen, Sunshine, and listen good. You give Matron these papers and we give the tape and your pretty pictures to every media outlet in town.
- Mayor** *[Mock shock]* But that's blackmail.
- Daphne** Exactly. And in this case two wrongs make a wonderful right. *[Agreement]*
- Mayor** *[Realises he's caught]* Okay, all right, I'll do it. *[Desperate again]* No I can't! It'll never work. I've promised Matron these papers. If I don't cough up today, she'll go ballistic.
- Joyce** It's all right, stay calm. We haven't given you the full story. We don't mind if you give the papers to Matron. *[Others uncertain]*
- Mayor** *[Huge relief]* You don't!? I can!?! *[Could drop to his knees]* Oh thank you, thank you, thank you so very, very much.
- Daphne** After you make a couple of changes.
[Pause. MAYOR is frozen. What does she mean]
- Mayor** *[Back to uncertainty]* Changes? W W W W What sort of changes?
- Joyce** Nothing much. Just change the word "trustee" to "manager". *[FOGIES react. They don't know about this]*
- Bert** *[Alarmed]* Hang on, just a minute. Matron as manager!
- Muriel** *[Even more alarmed]* For the next twenty years! *[Hubbub, protests]*
- Joyce** *[Calling over the hubbub]* And two. You make the residents of *Smileaway* the trustees of *Smileaway*.
[Stunned silence. Everyone stares at the grinning JOYCE and DAPHNE. The penny drops. Buzz of excitement]
- Mayor** No way. No way, Jose. Absolutely not. Impossibile! *[Italian]*
- Bert** That's brilliant!
- Mayor** You want me to make Matron accountable to you!?

- Daphne** I think we'll settle for a five-fogie committee. *[Calling]* All right with you lot?
- Fogies** Fine ... Sounds great ... Bags be on the committee ... *etc*
- Mayor** I can't do that. I can't. She'll murder me. Look, you don't know what she's like. She can be an ...
- Fogies** *[Speak with MAYOR]* ... unprincipled, unscrupulous meglomaniac. *[MAYOR'S words fade as he realises they know all about MATRON]*
- Bert** We've had twenty years of the demon Matron.
- Mayor** *[Almost crying]* But how can I choose? What am I going to say? *[He is crying]* Help me. *[Blubs]*
- Muriel** Come on, big boy. You'll think of something. You're a politician.
- Joyce** Well it's either make the changes or see your pretty picture in every newspaper in town.
- Mayor** *[Pause. Stares at them then snaps]* All right. Give me the documents.
- Daphne** Good boy, Horrie. We knew you could do it.
- Mayor** *[MAYOR takes papers and scribbles]* She'll kill me, you know that.
- Fogie** *[Calls from garden]* Matron's coming.
[Controlled panic. FOGIES scatter to their positions. MAYOR ducks into crowd or to less obvious position. MATRON enters full of bluster and doesn't see MAYOR]
- Matron** Right, wake up, sit up, shut up. Come on, come on. *[She pushes and prods and shoving a fogie upstage]* That's not your place *[Discovers a bemused MAYOR]* Horace! I mean, Your Worship.
- Mayor** *[Sheepish with papers behind back]* Good morning, Matron. Lovely day.
- Matron** Indeed. But I thought you were not due until ... I'm sorry I wasn't here to greet you.
- Mayor** Oh that's perfectly all right. I've been chatting to the wonderful residents. *[To Fogies]* We've been having a lovely time, haven't we?
- Fogies** Oh yes ... Lovely time ... Yes, Mister Mayor ... *etc.*
- Matron** *[Looks at scene]* I'd like a word. *[She moves to one side. Pause. Then like obedient puppy, MAYOR moves to her. OTHERS fascinated]*
- Mayor** *[Loudish voice]* I've got a little surprise for you, Matron.
- Matron** *[Softer voice]* I don't like surprises and keep your voice down. I want the papers. Where are they?
- Mayor** *[Still loud]* I've got wonderful news, Matron. *[To OTHERS]* For everyone! *[They're hooked]* I've ordered a bus! *[Big reaction]*
- Fogies** A bus!
- Mayor** We're all going to take a trip!
- Fogie** *[Pointing offstage]* Hey, look! There's the bus now.
[Hubbub continues as FOGIES move towards or turn towards imaginary bus. MATRON is furious]
- Matron** *[Softer but angry at MAYOR]* Just what do you think you're doing? I didn't order a bus.
- Mayor** *[Softer to her]* No I did. I thought it might be good to get rid of them while we ... you know, attend to business.
- Matron** Oh yes, good thinking. But you know I hate to spoil them. Besides, they had a trip five years ago.
- Muriel** *[To MAYOR]* Oh Mister Mayor, what can we say? This is fantastic.

- Fogies** *[Turning back. Agreeing]* Oh yes, how kind ... Thank you, Mister Mayor .. It's wonderful ... *etc.*
- Matron** *[Nasty to Fogies]* All right, all right, it's only a bus. *[They settle]* Well if you don't hurry and get ready, you won't be able to go.
[Sudden panic as FOGIES "hurry" inside to prepare for trip. MATRON tries to converse with MAYOR but she is constantly interrupted as various fogies brush past with "Thank you, Matron" "God bless you, Matron" etc. MAYOR is patted on the back and thanked. "Nice one, Your Worship" "Well done, Mister Mayor" etc FLO and EDDIE are the last to depart after EDDIE'S usual getting-ready routine]
- Matron** *[Calling]* And don't you ever say I'm not generous.
- Mayor** *[Calling]* Don't mention it, folks. I'm just happy to be of assistance. Any time. And remember who to vote for next election. Bye!
- Matron** *[Dragging him to one side]* Shut up and get over here.
- Mayor** *[Being manhandled]* Hey!
- Matron** Right, what's going on? Where are those documents?
- Mayor** There's no hurry Iris. *[Patting inside pocket]* The documents are safe and sound.
- Matron** Exactly as I ordered? With all the correct changes?
- Mayor** Oh yes. I've definitely made some changes. But say, why don't we take the trip? We could ... hold hands in the back of the bus.
[If looks could kill, HORACE would be dead]
- Matron** Unless you hand over those papers immediately the only trip you'll take will be in an ambulance.
- Mayor** *[Annoyed, worried]* Oh, all right. Keep your shirt on. Here they are.
[MATRON takes papers and reads. MAYOR is waiting for the crunch]
- Matron** *[Fuming]* Manager!! Manager!!! This is your handwriting! I'll ...
[MAYOR waves arms or grabs MATRON'S arm stopping her] What?
- Mayor** *[Pointing to a sleeping FREDA under her newspaper. Stage whisper]* There's still one here.
- Matron** *[Scoffs]* Oh she's deaf, the silly old cow. Now what the hell do you mean by this?
- Mayor** It's all right, Iris, I will explain everything.
- Matron** Too right you will. And it'd better be good. *[Pause]* Well?
- Mayor** I'm thinking.
- Matron** *[Threatens]* You try and stitch me up, lover boy and you can kiss goodbye to your career, bank balance and a whole lot more. Now talk.
[Spot on timing required here as instantly music starts on cue]
[MUSIC BEGINS. MAYOR is saved by the song as FOGIES pile out from everywhere all dressed for a trip with picnic baskets, umbrellas, towels, sunglasses, sunburn cream, etc all in a bouyant mood. MATRON drags MAYOR to one side even offstage as the FOGIES celebrate]

No. 11 Little Things Mean A Lot

Fogies *It may not be Hawaii, it may not be the moon
But anywhere at any time can never be too soon
It may not cost a bundle, it may be short 'n sweet
But when you get to our age, a trip becomes a treat.
Little things they mean a lot
Especially when you're old and grey
A friendly wave, a cup of tea
Can lift your sagging spirits, banish misery
When you grow old and life seems short
When lots of time you haven't got
A cheery chat can make your day
'Cos little things mean a lot.*

Solo 1 *I really like a phone call from my grandkids far away*

Fogies *Little things mean a lot*

Solo 2 *I really like a cup of tea in bed to start each day*

Fogies *Little things mean a lot*

Solo 3 *I really like a helping hand to see that I'm okay*

Fogies *Little things mean a lot*

Solo 4 *I really like a visitor, someone who wants to stay*

Fogies *Little things mean a lot.*

[Song ends. FOGIES encourage one another to get going as they exit to bus. "Come on, we'll be late" "Get on the bus" etc. They could start exiting as the final bars are sung. Maybe add a sound effect of a bus tooting its horn. Lots of chatter and glee as they exit. MAYOR enters and calls to the exiting fogies]

Mayor *Have a great time ... Bon voyage ... [Some FOGIES briefly turn, wave, call goodbye etc but they are keen to exit] It's my pleasure ... Only to happy to oblige ... [MATRON enters still fuming about the changes]*

Matron *Okay, Horace, the vote-catching's over.*

Mayor *[Still waving and calling] I love you all ... bye! [They've gone]*

Matron *[Snaps] Horace! [MAYOR pathetically keeps waving to avoid facing MATRON] You can cut the pork-barrel baloney. [Snaps] Horace! [He turns, she threatens him with papers] Now, it's just you, me and this outrageous contract!*

Mayor *[Begging] Oh please, Iris, I couldn't help it. They've trapped me.*

Matron *You'd better have a good story, pal or ... What!? Who has? The fogies?*

Mayor *Yes, it's terrible. They know all about our relationship.*

Matron *[Blood pressure continues to rise] We haven't got a relationship.*

- Matron** Last night, when we had our rendezvous in the garden, they recorded the whole thing.
- Matron** *[In a blinding rage]* They did what?
- Mayor** And it gets worse. They've even got photographs.
- Matron** Photographs? *[Slight selfish concern]* None of me I hope?
- Mayor** After you left I was attacked by some lunatic gardener. He drenched me then covered me in manure. I staggered out in my underpants and the fogies took my photo.
- Matron** You nitwit, you numbskull, you ...
- Mayor** And now they're blackmailing me. They made me change the contract. Unless we agree to the changes, they'll expose me in the media. *[Breaks down]* Oh Iris, what can we do?
- Matron** You imbecile! You cretinous moron!
- Mayor** Oh Iris, I don't know what to do. *[Blubbers. MATRON ignores him]* I'm ruined. I'll never be party president after this. *[Continues to blubber]*
- Matron** *[Thinking]* There's got to be a way out of this. No scheming fogie's gonna make a fool outa me. Think, Iris, think.
- Mayor** *[Recovering]* There is one possibility.
- Matron** *[Suddenly notices him but sniffs]* Phew! You *have* stood in something.
- Mayor** I've heard a whisper that old Joe Digging wants to sell this place.
- Matron** *[Never listens to anyone]* If they wanna play dirty that's fine by me. They don't call me Iris the Terrible for nothing!
- Mayor** Iris, you're not listening. *[Emphatic]* *Smileaway's* for sale.
- Matron** *[Stunned. Now listens to him]* What? Why didn't you tell me?
- Mayor** I just did.
- Matron** *[Brain in overdrive]* That's fantastic news. That'll solve my problem.
- Mayor** It will? How?
- Matron** *[Thinking aloud]* If I could buy this place I could scrub the trustees and bring in owner-management.
- Mayor** Yes but what about the tape and the photos?
- Matron** Just the one problem of course. Have you got the cash?
- Mayor** Oh Iris, I trust you. I love you. I knew you'd find a way.
- Matron** *[Turns on MAYOR]* So, Horace, it's bottom-line time. How much have you got? Cash, shares, anything you can sell. Give me a figure.
- Mayor** You mean *we're* going to buy *Smileaway*?
- Matron** That's what I just said, stupid. Don't you ever listen? I'm not letting those buzzards do the dirty on me. We'll raise the deposit and you can make sure the deal goes through at the lowest possible price. Right?
- Mayor** Oh, sure, I can fix that. Ah but you realise, Iris, that once we become joint owners, we'll need to get together to ah, discuss business matters, go over the books, that sort of thing.

Matron *[Crescendo]* Listen you horrible, oily man, if it means I can increase fees when I feel like it, bung some fogies in the woodshed and make every one of those ratfinks pay for their lousy tricks, *[Explodes]* I'll even marry you! *[Instantly MUSIC BEGINS. Don't miss a beat. MAYOR's heart skips a beat. He faces front with face of blissful happiness. MATRON steps towards him and just as they are about to kiss they both suddenly face front and sing. Good timing required for their tango a la crooks]*

No. 12 On The Fiddle

Matron & Mayor *We're on the fiddle, we're on the fiddle
We're in ther middle of a twiddle and we like it
We're out to rob 'em, we're out to rob 'em
We're out to job 'em, really swab 'em every time.*

Matron *I want the house* **Mayor** *The house*
The land *The land*

Matron *With everything included
The trees, the lawn, the fence, these things
Let nothing be excluded*

Mayor *Give me fame* **Matron** *The fame*
The glory *Glory*
*Let me feel the power
Political security but not another shower*

Matron *Oh no, no, no* **Mayor** *Oh no, no, no*
Oh no, no, no *Oh no, no, no*

Duet *A little crime, now is the time
For us to climb, for us to climb, for us to climb.
We've got a racket, we've got a racket
We're goin' to crack it, make a packet
And we like it.
We're into riches, we're into riches
Without the hitches, we're the snitchers every time.
[Dialogue during song]*

Matron *[A new soft and kind personality]* Horace, I've been thinking. Do we really need this place?

Mayor Of course we do.

Matron But these dear old fogies need a home, a haven, a spot in which to retire with dignity.

Mayor *[Concerned. She's flipped]* Iris, are feeling all right?

Matron Here they are, some twenty-five *[or however many you have in your cast]* lost and lonely souls. Do you know what that means?

Mayor Twenty-five *[or however many]* pension cheques?

Matron *[Shocked]* Horace! *[Instantly evil again]* You're right!
[Uproarious laughter leading into dance and more singing]

Duet *We're into money, we're into money*
We're into funny, runny, honey and we like it
We'll make a million, we'll make a million
We'll make a billion, trillion, zillion

Mayor *Quadrillion* **Matron** *Quintillion*
Sextillion *Septillion*
Octillion *Centillion*
Pavilion *Pavilion?*
[Spoken] Would you believe "house"?

Duet *We're on the fiddle!*
[Song ends and our villains are over the moon]

Matron Right, Horace, it's raise the money time. Come on. *[Exits to house]*

Mayor *[Following]* Oh Iris, this is the start of something big.

Matron *[Exiting]* I'll fix those rotten fogies once and for all.

Mayor Listen Iris, about that smell
[They're gone. Silence. Pause. Slowly FREDA removes paper from her face]

Freda Well, well, well. How very interesting.
[FREDA starts folding her paper. Estate Agent enters via garden. He looks at house then spots FREDA. She gets fright when he first speaks]

Agent Good morning.

Freda Oh!

Agent *[Apologetic]* Oh I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to startle you.

Freda That's all right. We don't get many visitors and ... you look as if you're lost.

Agent Well actually I think I *have* found the right place. I'm looking for the retirement home called *Smileway*.

Freda This is *Smileaway* but I'm afraid I've got some bad news. *[Pause. Beckons. He moves a little closer]* They don't take anyone under sixty.

Agent *[Plays along with her]* Really? Then how come you're here?

Freda *[Enjoys the game]* Oooh, cheeky.

Agent Actually I'm here on business, about the sale of this wonderful property.

Freda Are you the owner? Are you old Joe Digging?

Agent Oh no, I'm the estate agent. My company is handling the sale. So if you'll excuse me, I need to take a look around and make a few notes. *[Moving closer to house]* Nice talking with you.

Freda Yes, likewise. *[Pause]* So how much is old Joe asking?

Agent *[Not listening to her]* Yes it's lovely isn't it. *[Goes on examining]*

Freda I say, are you deaf by any chance?

Agent *[Comes back to her]* Look I'm terribly sorry but I really have to make a report on the property. I'd love to stop and chat but maybe some other time. *[Turns away]*

Freda *[Matter of fact]* I'll buy it. *[AGENT freezes, turns slowly]*

Agent *[Thinks he misheard her]* I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch that.

Freda How much is old Joe asking? I'd like to buy the place.

Agent *[Shocked]* Oh. Ah. Well ...

Freda What's the matter? Cat got your tongue?

Agent Ah no, not at all.

Freda I'm serious. So come on, how much?

Agent Ah, I think there's a ball-park figure of about five hundred *[or other appropriate amount]*.

Freda Five hundred's not much.

Agent *[Now feels sorry for her]* Ah, that's five hundred thousand. Now I really must take a look inside. *[Moves off to house]*

Freda *[Grabbing handbag and calls]* Will you take a cheque?

Agent *[Again stunned, stops, turns, moves back. Is she for real]* I'm afraid I didn't hear you. Could you please repeat that.

Freda *[Finds cheque book]* Here it is. You do take cheques I presume?

Agent Of course, naturally, but are you sure? I mean ...

Freda I do so like buying things. Do *you* like buying things?

Agent *[Still in shock]* I do, yes, it's ... wonderful. And I like selling them too.

[MUSIC BEGINS. AGENT is mentally counting his commission]

Freda But I must pay by cheque. I've always paid by cheque.

Agent Well, let's face it, cash is so messy.
[FREDA writes as she sings with a little help from AGENT]

No. 13 Writing Cheques

Freda *I love writing cheques, I love writing cheques
Life's so exciting but nothing quite glows
As the feeling when reeling off little round O's
I love writing cheques.
I love signing cheques, I love signing cheques
There's no need for power, for title or fame
All the world is your oyster when signing your name
I love writing cheques.*

Agent *Thank you very much, quite a lovely touch
And all in order I'm very pleased and proud to announce
You are very kind, guess you wouldn't mind if I should
Speak up and check that this cheque does not bounce.
[Dialogue as part of the song]*

- Freda** *[Innocent]* Bounce? I'm afraid don't understand.
- Agent** Only kidding. Just my idea of a joke. I'm sorry.
- Freda** Oh dear, silly old me. I'm not very good at jokes.
- Agent** *[Smiling]* But you are an expert on cheques though.
- Freda** *[Smiling]* Oh yes.
- [They waltz, she sings then signs then tears out and hands over cheque as song ends. There could be a bit of her offering cheque with he extending hand to accept it only to have FREDa remove her hand to continue singing]*
- Freda** *I love giving cheques, I love giving cheques
To see someone happy, go wild in a flash
See their eyes, hear their sighs when I hand out the cash
I love giving cheques, I love giving cheques.
[Song ends. They shake hands warmly. Both are delighted]*
- Agent** Well many, many congratulations my dear. I'll just pop back to the office and fill in the paperwork. *[Reaches into pocket]* Oh and not forgetting your receipt of course. And here's my card.
- Freda** *[Bubbling]* Thank you. My, isn't it exciting? Is it mine already?
- Agent** Well not quite. But then again as you've already moved in, I guess in one way it is. Look I'll be back as soon as I can. Is that okay?
- Freda** Fine by me. I'm not going anywhere. Just look under the paper.
- Agent** Wonderful *[They shake hands again]* Well, once again many congratulations and I'll see you later. *[Exiting]* Goodbye.
- Freda** *[Calls back]* Goodbye. And thank you. *[Final wave from both. FREDa is alone. She kisses her cheque book, replaces it and settles back]* This'll give them something to talk about.
- [She draws paper over her face and is still. Pause. Suddenly MAYOR comes tumbling out of house, muttering and annoyed]*
- Mayor** *[Muttering to himself]* Measure the property. Whatever for? And I haven't even got a tape measure.
- Matron** *[Calling from inside]* Just do it, Horace. And be quick about it.
- [MAYOR looks around, shakes his head in disbelief then moves to one side and starts pacing]*
- Mayor** *[Measuring the land]* One ... two ... three ... *[Stops]* Oh this is useless. *[Goes back to starting position then starts again. This time he needs to step and speak at the correct tempo]* Right. A one, two, three, four ...
- [MUSIC BEGINS. Without meaning to, MAYOR has counted in the orchestra. His measuring magically becomes movement as he is suddenly in the swing of things. MS MUSCLE bounds in, grabs the hapless MAYOR and rips into a reprise of her exercise routine]*

No. 14 Get Fit Reprise

Ms Muscle *Make your body look divine, get your muscles into line
Shove your corporation into orporation
Only then will you feel fine.
Do exactly as I do, kick your legs and follow through
Find your thrilling moments in these drilling moments
This is just the thing for you. And bend*

Mayor *Two, three, four. One!*

Ms Muscle *And hop a little bit, extend*

Mayor *Two, three, four. One!*

Ms Muscle *Your top a little bit, ascend*

Mayor *Two, three, four. One!*

Ms Muscle *Then drop a little bit, oh you will get so fit.
Brace your arms and give a thrust
It will strengthen butt and bust
If you're smart be thinner
Make your heart a winner, exercising is a –
One, two, three, four
Come on fogies, give some more
A five, six, seven, eight, slim 'n trim you're feeling great
Oh come on boost y'body - get fit!*

[MAYOR is "led" through song by energetic MS MUSCLE. Whenever possible MAYOR tries to explain he is not a fogie, that he is the Mayor and that this activity is killing him. On one or two occasions, MAYOR could back away from MS MUSCLE only to be whacked/prodded by FRED A who does so almost without moving. MAYOR is confused and hurting. The whack comes from a motionless fogie asleep under a newspaper. Song ends and MAYOR is bruised, exhausted and dying]

Ms Muscle Well done, old fogie, well done. But look, you're in terrible shape.

Mayor *[Gasping]* You don't understand. I'm ... I'm really the ...

Ms Muscle Just look at you. Being old is no excuse. Everyone can take sensible exercise.

Mayor *[Still struggling]* But I'm the Mayor.

Ms Muscle I agree. I *am* being fair. *[Starts to exit – jogging of course]*

Mayor Not fair, *Mayor*.

Ms Muscle But get rid of that ridiculous outfit. You look like some pompous politician. Bye! *[She's gone. Farcical entrance with MATRON appearing]*

Matron *[Enters from house]* Horace!

Mayor *[MAYOR has hardly had time to catch his breath]* Owwww!

Matron Did you measure the property?

Mayor I've been attacked.

- Matron** I've managed to arrange the finance. We've now got the deposit.
- Mayor** *[Points to motionless FREDA]* She hit me!
- Matron** *[Looks at FREDA then back at MAYOR]* You've been drinking again. *[Grabs him]* Get inside. *[MAYOR yells in pain as he is pushed/dragged inside by a chiding MATRON. Cross-mingling with MATRON's haranguing and MAYOR's yelping we hear offstage unaccompanied singing, laughter, etc as the tired but happy fogies return. "Little things mean a lot ..." They enter through the garden looking sunburnt, hair and hats askew etc]*
- Milly** *[Calls]* Look, we left Freda, behind.
[Most of the singing, celebrating stops as FOGIES gather around FREDA who is still asleep under her paper. "Oh that's terrible" "What's happened?" etc. Suddenly MATRON and MAYOR appear on verandah]
- Matron** Back already I see. *[Instant silence. FOGIES turn and look at MATRON who moves down amongst them. MAYOR could have "put on" an instant sling and/or head bandage and limps along behind MATRON]* I trust you all had a wonderful time.
- Mayor** Yes, and there's no need to thank me just now.
[FOGIES are confused. Why is the MAYOR looking like this? Has MATRON signed the papers? What's going on? Why is MATRON smug and sarcastic?]
- Matron** Whilst you've been out gallivanting, the Mayor and I have had a little chat.
- Fred** *[Meaning the bandages]* I wouldn't let her get away with belting you up, mate.
- Jack** Yeah. Report her to the RSPCA.
- Matron** *[Ignoring their comments]* And during our little chat, His Worship told me of a certain scheme involving blackmail and the takeover of *Smileaway*.
[Tension]
- Joyce** Good. Well just remember that there were two crooks in the garden last night and if we get the chop, you're both coming with us.
- Matron** *[Sneering]* Ha! Don't make me laugh. You and what army?
- Daphne** Just you try and stop us.
- Mayor** *[Worried]* Now, now, now. There's no need to be nasty.
- Matron** Shut up, Horace.
- Muriel** Yeah, shut up, Horace. *[He's even more scared]*
- Matron** You see in your absence things have changed somewhat. There's been a new twist in your touching little soap opera. Following some skilful negotiations, the Mayor and I have raised some cash.
- Muriel** Oh so you think you can buy your way out. Well stiff cheddar, Matron. We ain't for sale. *[Agreement from FOGIES]*
- Matron** *[Sarcastic scoff]* Do you think I'd demean myself? Do you think I'd stoop so low as to pay you?
- Bert** You won't be stooping, Matron, you'll have to grovel. *[Agreement]*
- Joyce** Why don't you just get to the point?

- Matron** With pleasure. Well ladies and gentlemen, the Mayor and I have formed a little partnership.
- Jack** We know that. We've heard the tape.
- Matron** [*Louder over some giggles*] A partnership to buy *Smileaway*. [*Gasp then stunned silence*] Ah, not so smug and smart now are we? Not so conspiratorial now, hey? [*Laughs, mocks them*] Losers!
- Mayor** [*Tries the friendly tack*] Isn't it great news. *Smileaway's* just come on the market.
- Matron** [*Nothing friendly about her*] The finance is all arranged and we're just waiting for the agent to return our call. And as the Mayor is first-best friends with the owner of the real estate firm, I think we can safely say it's all over red rover – signed, sealed and delivered.
[*Stunned silence. The FOGIES are poleaxed*]
- Joyce** I see. So unless we hand over the tape and photos, we're all looking for a new home. Is that it?
- Matron** [*Mock horror*] Oh please. How could you even *think* such a thing? Would I throw anyone out.
- Bert** You'd not only throw us out, you'd laugh as you did it.
- Mayor** [*Trying to be the umpire*] Now, now there's no need for this. Nobody will be thrown out. Just return those ... items ... and you can all stay for as long as you like. Forever.
- Daphne** And with you and Matron as owner, you'll push the fees through the roof?
- Matron** Well naturally now that I'll have a mortgage, there will need to be a slight increase. [*Grumbles from FOGIES*]
- Joyce** Just as a matter of interest, what are you paying for *Smileaway*.
- Mayor** [*Condescending*] More than what's in your piggy-bank my dear.
- Matron** Ooooo, who's the little sticky-beak? How does four hundred and eighty [*Slightly less than FREDAS amount*] thousand sound? [*FOGIES gasp*] Thought that's make you jump.
- Freda** [*Without moving*] Actually it's five hundred [*or whatever*] thousand.
[*Pause. Silence. Who spoke? No-one is sure*]
- Matron** Who said that? Who was it? [*FOGIES around FREDAS step back and everyone looks at the silent and "sleeping" fogie*] I don't believe it.
[*MATRON moves to FREDAS, grasps the paper then suddenly pulls it away. FOGIES gasp. FREDAS is calm, MATRON furious*]
- Freda** Afternoon all.
- Matron** What did you say?
- Freda** Afternoon all.
- Matron** Before that.
- Mayor** You said she was deaf.
- Freda** [*To MAYOR*] Pardon?
- Matron** What do you know about the sale of *Smileaway*?

Freda *[Shrugs]* Not much.

Mayor She does know something. *[At FREDA]* How do you know it's for sale?

Freda It's not for sale. Well, not any more.

Matron What!? *[Everyone is fascinated]*

Freda It was for sale but not so long ago a very nice young man came along and sold it.

Mayor Sold it! But I had first refusal!

Matron *[Starting to worry]* If you're winding me up, Freda, so help me your feet won't touch the ground.

Freda *[Ignores the threats. Dreaming]* I guess I've always liked this place.

Matron *[Will she be sick?]* I don't believe it. *[Emphatic]* I do not believe it.

Freda Well you should believe it, Matron because it's certainly true.

Mayor *[Likewise dying]* It can't be. You can't do this. I'm too young to die!

Freda Well I'm sorry but it *is* true.

Joyce Freda, this is serious, love. This is not a game. Look me in the eye and tell me honestly. You haven't bought *Smileaway* – have you?

Freda Signed, sealed and ... *[produces receipt]* delivered.

Joyce *[Reads receipt then almost breathless]* Freda's bought *Smileaway!*
[MUSIC BEGINS. FOGIES cheer. FREDA is feted. MATRON snatches receipt and storms off or to one side with MAYOR. Big celebration]

No. 15 We Love You, Freda

Fogies *Oh Freda, we love you, we love Freda yes we do
 Oh Freda, we adore you
 For You there's nothing we won't do.
 You sought us, brought us, caught us, bought us
 When our chips were down
 In fact your tact, your pact, your act
 Puts Matron out of town
 Oh Freda, we love you, we love you Freda yes we do
 Oh yes it's love.*

[Song ends with everyone bubbling. FREDA is the star]

Freda Thank you, thank you. Oh my goodness. What do I do now?

Bert *[Calling over hubbub]* How about a cut in fees?

Freda Oh yes, good idea. *[Announcement]* As your new owner I hereby announce a fifty per cent cut in fees. *[Cheer]* Double helpings of pudding ... *[More cheers]* and non-stop telly! *[More clapping, cheering]*

Matron *[Pushes forward followed by MAYOR]* This is disgraceful. *[Open hostility from FOGIES]* It's illegal and I'm telling the government.

- Jack** Now don't go tryin' anything funny, Matron. We might be old but six of us'd make a real mess of that fancy uniform and hairstyle.
- Mayor** [*Moral outrage*] How dare you threaten this woman.
- Matron** [*Meaning FREDA*] This woman has huge cash reserves and not declared them. That's against the law.
- Daphne** Yeah well mistreatment of the elderly and conspiring with crooked politicians is also a crime. [*FOGIES agree with feeling "That's right" etc*]
- Matron** [*Referring to receipt*] And here's the evidence. Do you know she paid the entire deposit in cash. *Cash*.
- Freda** Ha! You're wrong. I paid by cheque.
- Matron** No mortgage, no loan, no phone call to family – just cash.
- Freda** [*Tetchy*] Don't you ever listen? I told you I paid by cheque. I don't carry tens of thousands of dollars [*pounds*] in my handbag.
- Joyce** Freda, love, Matron doesn't mean cash cash. She, like us, finds it hard to believe you have so much money in your cheque account. Not everyone is so rich.
- Freda** Me? Rich? You've gotta be joking. [*Sudden change comes over place*]
- Daphne** Well you're not cashed up any more, Freda. Look what you've just bought.
- Freda** And it's all due to my lovely little cheque book.
- Joyce** [*Almost nervous*] Ah, silly question, Freda but you haven't, maybe, overdrawn a little have you?
- Freda** Overdrawn what? [*Tension is building*]
- Mayor** [*Gets a sniff, pounces*] She's bluffing. I think she's bluffing.
- Muriel** Have you got enough money in your cheque account to cover the cheque you wrote as deposit for *Smileaway*?
- Freda** [*Ignorant*] I don't understand. [*FOGIES groan, MATRON swoops*]
- Matron** Right, cut the baloney, Freda. Have you got a bank account?
- Freda** I don't have to answer your questions.
- Mayor** Well what about your cheque book? Where did you get that?
- Freda** It's mine. You can't have it. When my husband died I found it in his best suit. [*More groans*] He left everything to me.
- Matron** And you've kept it ever since.
- Freda** Not the suit. I gave that to charity. I just kept the cheque book.
- Mayor** And you bought *Smileaway* with one of those cheques?
- Freda** I certainly did. [*Produces book*] It was this one. Look, it's even got my husband's name there on the cheques.
- Mayor** [*Excited*] She hasn't got a cheque account. [*More excited*] She hasn't got a cheque account!
- Matron** [*Nasty again*] Right. Fee reductions, hey! Getting rid of Matron means happiness does it?! You wait till I get my hands on this place. Your lives won't be worth living! [*FOGIES have no will to fight*]

Mayor Iris, wait, we haven't bought it yet. [*AGENT enters unnoticed*]

Matron So ring the agent. Now! [*MAYOR heads off inside*] And tell him Freda's cheque is a dud!

Agent I know that already. [*Everyone turns. MAYOR stops*]

Freda Oh it's that nice young man who sold me *Smileaway*.

Matron If you're the agent, her cheque's worthless. I should have warned you. They're all ga-ga in here. Freda's a complete fruitcake.

Freda [*Protests*] I did buy *Smileaway*. I know I did. You tell them I bought it.

Agent [*To FREDA*] In a way my dear, you certainly did. Unfortunately the cheque account you used was closed some twenty years ago.

Freda That's when my Alf passed away. We were married for fifty-six years. [*AGENT puts consoling hand on FREDA'S shoulder. MATRON beckons furiously to MAYOR who takes the hint*]

Mayor Hello. I'm Horace Oleganious, the Mayor. I spoke to your boss this morning. We're old buddies from way back.

Agent [*Shaking hands*] Oh yes, sir. I'm very pleased to meet you.

Matron We have some great news for you. Your commission is safe. There is a buyer for *Smileaway* after all.

Mayor We are the buyers and believe me our cheque won't bounce.

Agent Look I'm terribly sorry. I don't quite know how to put this. I'm afraid you're too late!

Matron [*Horrified*] Too late! What do you mean too late?

Mayor [*Panics*] We contacted you first. I know your boss! I'm the Mayor!

Matron I've just spent two hours raising the money. We can't be too late.

Agent Please, let me explain. *Smileaway* is no longer for sale. It's been given away.

Matron Given away!

Mayor That's criminal. I'll sue. I'll sue everyone!

Agent When I say given away, I mean bequeathed, as in a will. We've just heard from the solicitor of the late Joseph Diggings.

Matron You mean *Smileaway's* owner is dead!?

Agent Yes. Apparently he died peacefully in his sleep three days ago. Everything, including this lovely property, was left to his only relative, his nephew.

Mayor Well maybe *he* wants to sell. Have you contacted this nephew?

Agent I'm trying to. In fact that's why I'm here. [*Stunned reaction*] Apart from returning this dear lady her cheque. [*AGENT returns FREDA'S cheque. They smile, are friendly but MATRON is impatient*]

Freda Oh thank you very much. You're very kind.

Matron Come on, come on. What do you mean, "That's why I'm here"?

- Agent** Well the last known address for old Joe's nephew is here at *Smileaway*.
[Gasp from FOGIES. MATRON and MAYOR stunned]
- Fred** [Suddenly starts dancing] Oh boy! I'm rich, I'm rich. You little beauty, I'm rich ... [This continues as everyone stares at the celebrating FRED. Suddenly he realises others are looking at him and immediately switches to mourning] Oh, poor Uncle Joe. Rest in peace old chap. We're all going to miss you. [To OTHERS] Aren't we? [FOGIES nod, murmur agreement. What's going on?]
- Agent** Please accept my condolences Mister Green. I'm very sorry to hear ...
- Matron** Just a minute. You called him Green. He's not Green.
- Fred** No but you are – with envy. [Laughs, backs off. OTHERS chat with him]
- Matron** [Forgets FRED back to AGENT] There's no Green here. You've made a mistake.
- Agent** That's strange. The solicitor seemed quite certain. She said that a Mister R. Green has been living at *Smileaway* for many years.
[RUPERT starts singing offstage. "The rose told me I smell nice, the cacti said, "You're nice today". He enters checking plants and continues humming or whistling. FX Increase sounds of nature – birds, crickets, etc then gradually fade. That was Rupert's signature tune. Everyone turns to face the unsuspecting RUPERT]
- Matron** [In shock] Oh no! It can't be! Impossible!
- Mayor** [In greater shock] Not him! Oh please, please not him!
- Rupert** [Looks up. Stops music making] Oh. Hello. Back from your trip then?
- Agent** Excuse me sir. Would you happen to be Mister R. Green?
- Rupert** [Looks around then comes down] Yep. That's me. Rupert Green. Green by name and green by nature. [MATRON and MAYOR are dying]
- Agent** I'm terribly sorry, sir but I'm afraid I've got some very bad news.
- Rupert** Oh you'd be talkin' about old Uncle Joe. I 'eard he fell off the branch.
- Agent** Please accept my sincere condolences.
- Rupert** Well he had a good innings. Comes to all of us in the end, don't it? Say, you ain't the fella what delivers the manure?
- Agent** Ah no. I'm the real estate agent who was acting on behalf of your late Uncle.
- Rupert** [Looks above] Hmmm. You know, I think it's going to rain.
- Agent** I believe you have inherited everything from your uncle's estate, including *Smileaway*.
- Rupert** [Not impressed] Okay. Well we really do need the rain you know.
- Matron** [Swooping] Ah, Mister Green. May I call you Rupert? How lovely to have you as our new owner. I'll be honoured to work for you as faithfully and tirelessly as I did for your dear, sweet, kind, old uncle.
- Rupert** Dear, sweet and kind! He was a penny-pinchin' old skinflint.
- Matron** Ah yes. Well let's go inside and discuss our new partnership.

- Rupert** *[Removing MATRON'S guiding hand]* But I 'aven't finished me gardenin' yet. And I've got a new bed of pansies to plant.
- Matron** Of course and may I say how magnificent the gardens are looking. Have always looked. You're the Capability Brown of *Smileaway*. The Mayor was just saying that before, weren't you Mister Mayor?
- Mayor** Oh I was, I was. The best gardens in town.
- Rupert** Don't I know thee?
- Matron** Oh and the Mayor has some wonderful news for you Rupert. The council is about to announce a huge grant for the further development of the gardens here at *Smileaway*.
- Mayor** *[Gets the hint]* Oh yes, absolutely. A *huge* grant. We'll pay for everything. Anything! *[FOGIES stunned/furious at this opportunism]*
- Rupert** *[At MAYOR]* I do know thee. I know who you are.
- Mayor** *[Nervous]* Well of course. I'm the Mayor. Everyone knows me.
- Rupert** I seen you 'ere last night, in my garden.
- Mayor** *[Starts to panic]* No. That wasn't me. It's not true!
- Rupert** You've been tramplin' my pansies.
- Mayor** *[Giggling in fear]* Oh what a funny little man you are. *[Giggles]*
- Rupert** You've been carryin' on in my garden with some woman.
- Matron** What! A woman! That's disgraceful.
- Mayor** *[Don't you desert me]* Iris!
- Rupert** And a right old battleaxe she is too! 'Ere. I've got a photo.
[RUPERT produces crumpled snap which is snatched by MATRON]]
- Matron** Oh my goodness. It's true. Horace, how could you!
- Rupert** You squashed my seedlings.
- Matron** I suggest you leave, Mister Mayor and never come back.
- Mayor** *[Fighting back. Fogies love this]* Me! What about you? Have a closer look at that photo. A very close look.
- Joyce** *[Snatches photo from MATRON who now starts to panic]* Yes why don't we all have a look.
- Matron** This is outrageous. Give me that photo.
- Daphne** You've come up very well, Matron.
- Mayor** *[The double-cross is complete]* She's the woman in the photo. She's the one in your garden!
- Matron** And he's the one with IQ of a garden slug. You pathetic creep. *[She lunges at him. MAYOR protests. "No Iris!"]* Come here!
[He races inside with MATRON in pursuit. They both yell at once. She wants to get her hands on him. He wants mercy. FOGIES turn and laugh. We hear pots and pans being thrown but this only takes a few seconds. Lively barracking from the FOGIES. "Hey, Horace!" "You tell him, Matron" etc. Suddenly MAYOR comes flying out still begging for mercy with MATRON following still roaring her intention to give him a hiding.]

MATRON could wear a hat and coat and carry a battered suitcase. They make a loud and quick exit to the cheers, claps and jeers of the FOGIES. Big buzz from everyone now the baddies have departed]

- Bert** I reckon this time they've gone for good. *[Happy agreement]*
- Muriel** And good riddance to them both! *[More agreement]*
- Agent** Well now Mr. Green. If you don't mind my asking, what are your plans for the future of *Smileaway*?
- Rupert** *[Scratching head]* Oooh, I dunno. I need some petunias up by the back hedge an' I think I'll topdress the lawn round the back.
- Agent** I guess I was thinking more in terms of you selling *Smileaway*.
- Rupert** Oooh I won't be selling the place. I like it 'ere. I wanna stay for the rest of my life. *[FOGIES happy]* And I'd like all you old fogies to stay too. *[Happiness even some applause]*
- Joyce** That's wonderful, Rupert. But we're going to need a new Matron and a new board of trustees.
- Agent** You know, it's not really my place to say this but have you ever thought about running the place yourselves? *[Shock from FOGIES]*
- Muriel** Run it ourselves? But we're just a bunch of broken down old fogies.
- Agent** Nonsense. You could make yourselves the trustees and get a caring matron to handle the day to day stuff.
- Joyce** But that was our dream. That's what we've always wanted.
- Rupert** Sounds fine by me. Just so long as you keep off me daises.
- Bert** But do you think we can do it?
- Agent** Of course you can do it. You can do almost anything. This is one of the greatest tragedies of modern society. We shunt our old folks off to retirement villages, hostels and nursing homes and leave them there to quietly fade away.
- Joyce** Yes but that's where many of us get proper help and attention. Some of us need to be in care. *[Agreement]*
- Agent** I agree and that's fine. But why keep yourselves locked away? Why aren't your skills and talents and experiences made available to the rest of us?
- Daphne** Are you selling houses or running for political office?
- Agent** *[Smiles but continues]* Look, here's an example. Our schools are filled with kids and computers. That's fine. But imagine how much better it would be if kids could communicate with living folks like yourselves. You could tell young people all about life in another era, what it was like to shop and socialise and travel and how you survived all sorts of experiences. *[FOGIES are interested in this, they like it]*
- Jack** Fred's got more stories than you've had hot dinners.
- Fred** And Bert's the best model-ship builder in the country.

- Joyce** I grew up in the country and can remember all sorts of amazing adventures.
- Agent** Our senior citizens are a fabulous, fabulous resource and by making them a regular and permanent part of our schools we not only provide the students with wonderful tutors and subjects, we also give you, the communicators, a terrific experience and a new impetus for life.
- Jerome** Milly and I could teach young people about good manners. *[Laughter]*
- Agent** Don't put yourselves down. You folks have the right to be happy and you certainly have the brains to run your own *Smileaway*. As my dear old Mum used to say, "No matter your sex, no matter your years, tis only the the brave who ... who *[He's forgotten]*. Oh blimey, I've forgotten.
- Gloria** *[Nervous but brave]* Who conquer their fears.
[Pause. FOGIES open up. AGENT stunned]
- Agent** Mother?
- Gloria** *[Overjoyed]* Son?!
[Warm embrace, tears, happiness and congratulations]
- Gloria** I knew he's visit me. This is my son. He's here. He's here.
- Agent** Oh Mother, I thought you were ... I've searched everywhere.
- Gloria** This is the happiest day of my life. *[MUSIC BEGINS]*
- Jack** Good on ya, Gloria. We love you.
- Joyce** And this is the start of a new life for everyone! *[Cheer. AGENT stays and sings with his mum]*

No. 16 Life Has Only Begun

- Fogies** *We're ancient and we're historic
We're vintage and we're longstanding
We're mellow and geriatric
We're wrinkly, crinkly, wobbly, knobbly, shaky, flaky, mouldy, oldie
We're out of the Ark!
When you're as old as Methuselah your life has only begun
This world has much to amuse 'ya, your dotage must include fun.
The passing of time is never a crime, our philosophy's homespun.
When you're as old as Methuselah your life has only begun.
[Short speeches over the music. Proclaim to the world!]*
- Jerome** There's many a good tune played on an old fiddle. *[Proverb]*
- Milly** The whiter the thatch, the warmer the fire. *[Proverb]*
- Jack** Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty. *[Shakespeare]*
- Muriel** I was born old and get younger every day. *[Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree]*
- Fred** The old are always fond of new things. *[G.K.Chesterton]*
- Daphne** The young man who has not wept is a savage and the old man who will not laugh is a fool. *[George Santayana]*

Bert As a white candle in a holy place, so is the beauty of an aged face. [*Joseph Campbell*]

Freda Age only matters when one is ageing. Now that I have arrived at a great age, I might just as well be twenty. [*Pablo Picasso*]
[*Chorus is repeated with hearty singing. Blackout or Curtain although keep it quick as the there should be little delay before the start of the Curtain Calls*]

No. 17 Curtain Calls

No. 18 Payout

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