

It'll Be All *WRONG* On The Night

A play by Cenarth Fox

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Synopsis

It'll be All Wrong on the Night is about staging a play when things don't go as planned. It's a nightmare for every actor, director, bio box resident and stage manager. An actor falls sick during the play and, at interval, is replaced by the sound and lighting operator. He in turn is replaced by a friend of one of the actors who just happens to be in the audience. The result is that the new actor performs with his nose in the script and the sound effects and lights don't work or do when they shouldn't. Gradually the effects become worse and the performance by the end had descended into farce. The scenery gets stuck, lights miscue and the set catches fire. (Well it looks like it does). Apart from that, everything runs to plan.

It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 2

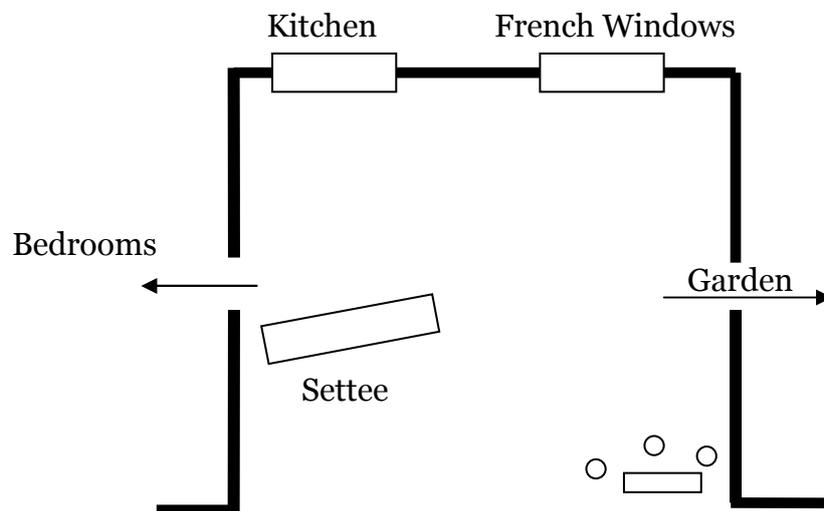
Time and Place

The time is the present. The place is a house in an affluent suburb in a major city.

Stage Setting

It's the interior of the lounge/sitting-room of an expensive home. Upstage are French doors which are used as an entrance for people rather than the front door, plus a swing door to the kitchen. LC is exit to conservatory and garden. RC is exit to bedrooms. A settee faces front behind which hiding takes place. There is a casual furniture setting DL. Pot plants and expensive furnishings decorate the room.

Your set could look like this.



Characters

JAN – young middle-aged, Tim's wife and stepmother to Amanda and Kirsten

TIM – older middle-aged, Jan's husband and father of Amanda and Kirsten

KIRSTEN – 20s, daughter of Tim, Amanda's older sister

AMANDA – late teens/early 20s, daughter of Tim, Kirsten's sister

BRAD (Bradley) – 20s, Amanda's boyfriend

STAGEHAND – stagehand called in to play part of Bart in second act (could be Brad)

ROSA – 50+, Tim and (more recently) Jan's long-serving Spanish housekeeper

Note. The actor playing Brad could also play the stagehand playing Brad. You would need things like glasses, a wig, beard, padding, etc. Alternatively have a different actor who only appears in Act 2.

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THE PLAY

(Curtain rises on late Sunday summer afternoon. JAN enters from garden closely followed by TIM. Both are dressed in casual clothes. They are arguing)

Jan No. I've told you I won't do it. *(She fusses over indoor plants)*
Tim *(Following JAN)* But she's got to be told. Please Jan. The guy is bad news. He's using her.
Jan She's your daughter. You tell her.
Tim She won't listen to me.
Jan Well she won't listen to her wicked stepmother. She thinks I'm the dragon from hell.
Tim It's not a father's thing. It has to come from a woman. And someone like you who's
Jan Who's what? Someone with an impressive CV when it comes to men?
Tim I didn't say that.
Jan You didn't have to.
Tim She likes you.
Jan Ha!
Tim Okay, she's a little distant. But I know she respects the way you're so organised. She loves the way you've got your life together.
Jan *(Faces him)* Tim, both your daughters see me as the evil bitch who broke up their parents' marriage.
Tim That's not true.
Jan The only reason they're still living at home is to make sure I don't take you to the cleaners, and pinch their big fat inheritance.
Tim That's ridiculous!
Jan Even if I gave great advice, they'd reject it because it came from me. I am not their mother.
(ROSA enters from kitchen with vacuum cleaner. She prepares machine, starts it and vacs upstage)
Tim Jan, please, it's serious. Mandy's still a kid. She's nuts about this guy and I know he's gonna hurt her.
Jan Then here's your chance to play Dad. Tell him to get lost.
Tim Oh very clever. He's a fitness fanatic and, if I interfere, Mandy'll leave home just to spite me.
Jan But it's okay if I interfere?
Tim I don't want you to *interfere*, just tell her the facts of life.
Jan Tim, your daughters know more about life than the two of us put together. I think they've both been round the block—twice.
Tim *(Offended)* And what's that supposed to mean?
Jan It means they're old enough to know what they want, and anything we say will be ignored.
Tim So you don't care? Is that what you're saying?
Jan *(Angry. Moves to cane setting and magazine)* Give it a rest.
Tim *(Follows)* Jan, you married into my family. The girls are part of it. And when families hit trouble, they expect help from their own.

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Jan *(ROSA starts vaccing in their direction. They raise their voices a little)*
You're not listening. The only way she'll learn is by experience.

Tim I don't believe this. You want my vulnerable daughter left alone with some creep who's only interested in one thing. That's a bloody disgrace.

Jan *(Angry)* No, Tim, a disgrace is you putting words in my mouth, treating your daughter like a child, and asking me to do the impossible. And don't shout at me.

Tim *(ROSA switches off machine just as TIM roars)* I'm not shouting! All I'm asking is for a

(Pregnant pause. Silence is deafening. Couple turn to ROSA who is not disturbed. She's used to shouting in this house)

Rosa You want me to come back when you finish your little chat?

Jan *(Exiting through conservatory)* No, Rosa. This little chat is over. *(She's gone. ROSA starts vac again and TIM calls)*

Tim Rosa. *(Louder)* Rosa! *(She hears and stops machine)*

Rosa Okay, sorry. I finish kitchen first.

Tim No, come here. I want to ask you something.

Rosa *(Doesn't understand)* I'm sorry, I no understand.

Tim Rosa, please, come over here.
(He beckons and she moves down to him)

Rosa You are not happy? You have lost something?

Tim No, this is something else. I'm worried about Amanda.

Rosa *(Worried)* What has happened? Has there been the accident?

Tim No, nothing like that. *(Pause)* Amanda's keen on a young man who is not a nice person. I think he's told her all sorts of romantic things when really he doesn't mean them.

Rosa Are you talking about Brad?

Tim *(Shocked)* You know him?

Rosa Of course, he comes here all the time.

Tim *(Worried, staggered)* What!?

Rosa He brings me flowers. He is such a nice young man.

Tim Flowers? He comes here all the time?

Rosa Si. When you at work, in another city, Brad comes and stays here.

Tim *(Stunned)* He stays here? Overnight?

Rosa Oh no, he is not like that. He is too much like a gentleman.

Tim Rosa, Brad is not a nice person. He is a creep, a con-merchant. *(She doesn't understand)* He's a Don Juan.

Rosa *(Laughing)* Oh no, Brad is a nice boy. You should meet him.

Tim I have. That's why I'm worried. He reminds me a lot of someone I knew thirty years ago. *(He means himself)* Rosa, I want you to be absolutely honest. Have you ever seen Brad being friendly with my daughter?

Rosa You want me to spy on your family?

Tim No of course not. But Rosa, please, I'm Amanda's father. If my daughter's in danger, I need to know. Tell me, have you ever seen Brad being Don Juan in this house?

Rosa *(Takes her time)* Hmmmm. Maybe.

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Tim Maybe? What the hell does that mean? You can't be a little bit Don Juan. Was he friendly with Amanda?
(French windows fly open and AMANDA enters with style. She's home from shopping, coffee with friends and has a few carry bags)

Amanda Hi Dad, Hi Rosa.

Tim *(TIM gives her an embarrassed wave)* Hi, kiddo. Been shopping?

Amanda *(Heading RC)* Just a few odds 'n ends.

Tim Great.
(She heads off RC to her room. The OTHERS watch her. She stops and turns to watch them)

Amanda *(Suspicious)* What's going on?
(She moves to them tossing/dropping carry bags on settee)

Tim Nothing's going on. I'm just having a chat with Rosa.

Amanda You never chat with Rosa.

Tim I do.

Amanda You say, "Good morning" and "more toast?" Now what's going on?

Rosa *(Changing topic)* You have been shopping. Lots of beautiful things.

Amanda This is about family isn't it? You've finally twigged and now you want Rosa to confirm it.

Tim Amanda, no. I was chatting about ...

Amanda You've always had your suspicions, Dad. And now you've asked Rosa for proof. Well go on, Rosa. He won't like it but it's time for the truth.
(Worried. This is getting out of hand) I am not sure what to say.

Rosa No, Rosa, Amanda's right. Time we got everything out in the open.

Tim Brad is the sweetest man I've ever met, and anything funny going on in this house has nothing to do with him.

Amanda Anything funny? I didn't say anything about Brad.

Tim Tell him, Rosa. Tell him about the pathetic attempts at seduction going on in this very room.

Rosa Seduction? What seduction? In this room?

Tim I am not sure. This is really not my business.

Tim *(Angry at AMANDA)* Explain yourself, young lady.

Amanda You tell him, Rosa; every sordid little detail.

Rosa *(Starts to exit)* I have special meal to prepare. Excuse please.

Tim Just a minute. Rosa! *(She stops)* Come back ... please. *(Pause. ROSA returns)* What is going on? *(At ROSA)* You said Brad's been playing Don Juan and that he's ...

Amanda Ha. That's a joke. *(Starts to leave collecting bags en route)* Rosa, you tell him about the sex-mad hostess with the mostest. *(Turns before exiting DR)* Tell him about his wife! *(She's gone)*

Tim *(Stunned)* My wife!?

Rosa This is definitely not my business.

Tim *(Poleaxed)* My wife was seduced by Brad!?! In this room!!

Rosa Amanda is, how you say, jealous. She thinks something has happened when really it is nothing. Missus Gray, she is always respectable.
(JAN, now wearing bathers enters from garden - just offstage, and calls)

Jan Rosa, have you seen my new towel?

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Rosa *(Calls back)* No, madam. Sorry. *(Collects vaccum cleaner. Exiting to kitchen)* I have something on the stove. Excuse please. *(Exits UR)*

Jan *(Looking for towel, moves into lounge)* Well it'll be stupid asking you.

Tim So that's why you wouldn't speak to Amanda.

Jan *(Looking)* I'm looking for my new towel.

Tim And is that the outfit you wear for Brad?

Jan Oh you're not still on about that. *(Turning)* I'm going for a swim. *(Turns and exits to garden)*

Tim *(Going after her)* Hang on. I want a word with you. Jan. *Jan! (Exits)*
(Pause. French windows open and KIRSTEN enters. She hasn't gone far when she realises she's alone so goes back to the door and speaks offstage)

Kirsten Come on, there's no-one here. *(Pause. BRAD appears. He's nervous)*
Look, do you want to save them or not?
(She takes his hand and leads him towards settee)

Brad *(Being led)* Kirsten, I'm fine. I'll just duck back home and get changed. I'll be twenty minutes. Max.

Kirsten *(Dragging him DR)* Shut up and give me y'jeans.

Brad I can't. Not here.

Kirsten It's grease, Brad. It needs cleaning now. Rosa'll have something in the laundry. Hand them over or do I have to remove them myself?
(Pause. Reluctantly BRAD unbuckles his jeans and starts removing them)

Brad This is not necessary you know.

Kirsten I disagree. It's absolutely essential.

Brad *(He has trouble with his shoes)* Look, can you help me, please?

Kirsten *(She does)* Of course. Which part should I hold?

Brad Oh ha bloody ha. Just take them will you?
(Hands jeans to an admiring and amused KIRSTEN)

Kirsten Thank you. Now you amuse yourself while I get Rosa to work her magic. *(She exits to kitchen)*

Brad *(He calls)* And don't be long, Kirsten. Please.

Kirsten *(From door)* What about your shorts? Can I do anything with them?

Brad Just go!
(She laughs and exits. BRAD is uncomfortable in his tee-shirt, socks and underpants. He wanders upstage and looks out the French window. JAN enters conservatory still in her bathers. We can't see her but can hear her)

Jan *(Offstage)* Just grow up, Tim. You've got Brad on the brain. *(BRAD panics and ducks downstage to crouch behind the settee)* I told you the truth. Nothing happened. Not in this room or any other room. He's always behaved impeccably. *(She enters lounge and heads towards kitchen looking for ROSA. Calls)* Rosa. *(Suddenly gets fright seeing BRAD'S head crouched low)* Brad!

Brad *(Remains crouched)* Oh. Hi, Jan. How are things?

Jan My God! You gave me a fright. What are doing down there?

Brad *(Flustered)* Nothing. Looking for my keys.

Jan *(Goes to help him)* Well I'm looking for a towel but your keys are more important.

Brad *(Louder to stop her getting closer)* No!

Jan *(She stops)* Brad! *(Worried)* What's wrong?

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Brad Nothing. I'm fine. Or will be ... soon.

Jan Listen, (*Looks back in case TIM is behind her*) Tim's got some crazy idea that you and I have been getting a little friendly.

Brad (*Pretending to look*) Really? Oh where are those damn keys?

Jan He thinks you're some kind of sex machine who's working his way through every female in this house.

Brad (*Laughs*) Me? A sex machine?

Jan Tim thinks that every time you drop in, you drop your daks.

Brad (*Still looking*) I'm sure they're here somewhere. (*Panics*) My what?

Jan Now let me help.

Brad No, absolutely not. (*She moves towards him so in desperation he points*) Oh there it is! (*Points to DL*)

Jan (*Turns to look*) What? What is?

Brad I think I can see your towel. Over there behind the pot plant. (*JAN looks back suspiciously at BRAD but decides to collect her towel. It's not there. As soon as her back is turned BRAD dashes to kitchen but doesn't quite make it as ROSA enters with missing towel, sees BRAD and screams. Not dramatically, more in surprise. BRAD grabs towel and holds it in front of him. JAN turns then moves back towards BRAD and a startled ROSA*)

Rosa Brad! You give me a fright.

Brad Hi, Rosa.

Jan That's my towel. (*BRAD has the towel as his security blanket*)

Brad Great towel, Jan. Beautiful material.

Jan Thanks. I was about to go for a swim so if you don't mind. (*Holds out hand expecting towel*)

Brad Oh I don't think you should go swimming. It's pretty cool out there.

Jan What are you talking about?

Brad Well, Rosa thinks this towel has ah ... some grease on it. That's right isn't it, Rosa?

Rosa (*Confused*) I have seen the grease but it is

Brad So could I borrow this towel, just for a few minutes.

Jan Brad, is something wrong?

Brad (*Sees TIM approaching via conservatory*) There might be. Very soon.

Tim (*Enters from LC*) What was that scream? (*Sees BRAD*) Ah, it's Don Juan.'

Brad Mr Grey. Hi. (*Goes to raise his hand but has to grab towel*)

Tim The phantom philanderer. And in casual dress.

Jan Brad was thinking of going for a swim.

Brad (*Takes a second or two to catch on*) Ah, yes. (*Indicates towel*) Jan very generously has lent me her towel.

Amanda (*Enters DR*) I thought I heard somebody scream! Brad!

Brad Mandy! Hi. I just dropped in to see you and ...

Jan To go for a swim.

Brad And to go for a swim.

Tim Well don't let us stop you. (*Indicates LC*) The pool's thataway.

Brad Right. Um. I was wondering if I could have a cool drink. Water. Anything. I'll just duck into the kitchen. Be back in a mo. (*BRAD starts to back into kitchen. KIRSTEN appears holding his jeans. BRAD is almost at the door*)

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Kirsten Well hello, Brad. (*BRAD freezes*) Care to swap?
Brad Kirsten!
Amanda (*Grabs towel*) Brad! (*OTHERS react to the undressed BRAD*)
Tim Well I'll say this much for him, he's got balls.
(*Brief moment of panic as BRAD thinks he's exposed himself*)
Brad (*Tries to explain*) Ah, these are my new bathers and I thought I'd try them out in your pool. If that's okay.
Tim No it's not okay.
Rosa They don't look like bathers.
Tim Exactly. You and your budgie smugglers can stay outa my pool.
Amanda (*At KIRSTEN*) What are doing with Brad's jeans?
Kirsten Well I tried them on and they're not my size so I'm giving them back.
(*BRAD takes jeans and struggles to replace them*)
Rosa You don't put jeans over bathers.
Tim Right, I'm gunna get to the bottom of this.
(*BRAD struggles and bends over on cue with posterior to patrons*)
Jan Nice bottom to get to.
Amanda (*To her sister. Insistent*) How come you had Brad's jeans?
Kirsten Well I said "Drop 'em" and he did. I have this effect on men.
Amanda (*Going to attack KIRSTEN*) You bitch! (*The sisters scrap and ROSA tries to break them up*) You keep your hands to yourself!
Kirsten Mandy!
Rosa (*Trying to stop them*) No! Please! You must stop!
Tim Hey! Stop that! Hey!
(*Ad lib attempted fight with appropriate threats and pleas to desist. BRAD finishes dressing while JAN and ROSA hold the sisters apart. TIM yells.*)
FX Mobile phone rings
(*Everyone talks at once. TIM'S mobile phone rings in his pocket and he answers moving DL as he speaks whilst the bun fight continues elsewhere*)
Brad (*Is bumped whilst trying to get dressed*) Hey! Watch it!
Amanda I'll get you for this!
Jan Girls! Break it up!
(*Now the fight or almost-fight goes on. AMANDA trying to get at KIRSTEN. ROSA and JAN trying to break it up and BRAD getting bumped as he gets dressed. Each time he gets off balance he is bumped. Choreograph this well with as-lib comments from all concerned. TIM is on the phone. As his conversation builds so the fight slackens off until you have the OTHERS forgetting their dispute and concentrating completely on TIM and his phone call. A gradual well-choreographed situation*)
TIM (*Into phone*) Yes? ... Yes that's me. Sorry, who are you? ... Well, were you there? Did you see what happened? ... I don't believe I'm hearing this. I did absolutely nothing. You were the one in the wrong. ... Don't you threaten me, pal. ... Listen, creep, I'll have the cops onto you so fast ... Oh that's very brave. That's really tough talk, you moron. ... Look, I've got your number, pal and I'll trace you. ... You what? (*OTHERS now transfixed with TIM*) If you touch a hair on their heads I'll kill you. Do you hear me!? I'll kill you, you bastard!!
(*Phone call ends. TIM is shaking. He looks at phone. OTHERS transfixed*)

It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 9

Jan Tim.
Kirsten Dad?
Amanda What's happened?
Tim (*Fuming*) Can you believe that? He threatened me. And my family.
Jan Who was that?
Tim If I get my hands on that creep, I'll ...
Rosa This is terrible.
Tim He's a nut case. You know that moron actually threatened me.
Kirsten We can see that, you're still shaking.
Amanda Dad! What moron?
Brad (*Jeans finally on*) Can I help?
Jan (*Taking TIM to settee*) Come and sit down. (*To ROSA*) Rosa, brandy, please. (*ROSA gets brandy from cabinet*)
Kirsten Dad, what the hell happened?
Jan Relax. Take a deep breath. (*He does*) Drink the brandy. (*ROSA hands him brandy*) Don't gulp it. Slowly
(*He drinks brandy and hands glass back to ROSA*)
Tim I was driving home yesterday and got into this argument. (*OTHERS despair. TIM overreacts to other drivers*) It wasn't my fault and besides, it was absolutely nothing.
Jan What happened?
Tim This guy was stopped in front of me at a red light. Everything's fine. He was chatting to a woman in the front seat but everything was fine.
Amanda Until you gave him a serve.
Tim The lights change. It's green. Time to go. But no, he ignores them. He's too busy making out with the blonde. In the meantime, I'm running late.
Kirsten How many times have we told you not to stir other drivers.
Tim I gave one small toot. One. A soft one. Nothing loud. Nothing long. Just, you know, "Excuse me mate, the light's green, could you please stop chatting and drive on".
Jan And he gave you the finger and you lost it.
Tim He went ballistic. He abused me. Hands, language, the works.
Kirsten And in return you gave him a spray. You'll never learn, Dad. Those guys are idiots. Leave them alone.
Tim So I'm supposed to miss an appointment because this goose can't drive? Why is it my fault? I was polite. I did him a favour.
Brad Was that the guy on the phone just now?
Tim He's traced me, somehow. Must have got my mobile from the office.
Amanda Dad, your mobile number is on every house for sale sign in five suburbs. You've even got it on that sticker on your car.
Jan So what did he say? Exactly.
Tim I dunno. I can't remember.
(*OTHERS groan. He can. He doesn't want to think about it*)
Rosa Mister Gray, let me get you another brandy.
Tim (*Rises and heads DC*) No thanks, Rosa. I'm fine. I'll ignore him.
Kirsten Dad, he threatened you.

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Amanda And you haven't told us what he said.
Tim It was the usual mindless garbage.
Brad He seems to have given you a real fright.
Tim Yeah, but I'm a big boy and can look after myself. (*Looks outside*) I need some fresh air. (*Exits LC*)
Jan (*Calling*) Tim!
Rosa This is not like Mister Gray. He is very upset I think.
Kirsten Did you see him? He was literally shaking.
Amanda We need to find out what that creep said.
Brad You need to find out who he is. (*OTHERS look at him. This is family, mate*) I mean, sorry but you can't deal with someone who's anonymous.
Kirsten (*Sarcastic*) Brilliant.
Brad Sorry. I'm only trying to help. (*He coughs a little*)
Jan I'll talk to him. I'll just go and change.
Brad No, I'll go. (*OTHERS turn to BRAD*) I've done it again.
Kirsten You sure have. Just because we let your drop your daks, doesn't mean you're part of the family.
Brad What I meant was, if it's okay with you, I'd like to help if I can.
Jan Thanks Brad. We appreciate your concern.
Brad Maybe it's a blokey thing.
Amanda Oh spare us. Now we're into male bonding.
Brad It's true. Sometimes blokes find it difficult to talk about certain things, especially to women. No offence to present company of course.
Kirsten You've got a cheek.
Jan He's got two cheeks. We just saw them.
(*This breaks the tension and the women laugh*)
Brad Please, can we drop the underpants bit.
(*More laughter and stirring at unintentional pun. BRAD mock despair*)
Jan Brad, despite being a mere male, you're probably right. Tim is Mister Independence. He'll rarely admit he needs help and certainly not to a female. So you're elected. Go and do your male bonding routine.
Kirsten Find out exactly what happened.
Brad (*Exiting after TIM*) Can do. Won't be long. (*He coughs as he exits*)
Amanda Talk about a backflip. When I came home just now, Dad was grilling Rosa about Brad the seducer.
Rosa Nobody was grilling.
Kirsten I hope you put him right, Rosa. It's Mandy who's been seducing Brad.
(*AMANDA whacks – gently – her sister*) Ow!
Amanda I want words with you.
Rosa Can I make some coffee? (*OTHERS all agree*)
Jan You can, Rosa. Strong and black.
(*They all head to kitchen*)
Kirsten Thanks for helping with the jeans, Rosa. We must try that again.
Amanda Over your dead body.
Jan Any of your chocolate slice left, Rosa?
(*They are gone. The last one or two lines could be delivered offstage. Room is empty. Pause. TIM speaks offstage*)

It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 11

Tim Come in, they've gone. *(TIM enters from conservatory followed by BRAD)*
Fancy a beer?

Brad Ah, thanks, not just now. *(TIM stops)*

Tim You sure?

Brad Later maybe.

Tim *(Heads to chair DL)* You're right. Must keep a clear head. Grab a pew.

Brad *(Joins him DL)* And you say this guy actually threatened to hurt Kirsten and Mandy.

Tim Shhh. Keep it down.

Brad But how did he know you had two daughters? And their names?

Tim Nutters are obsessed. They find your details then use them to scare you. That's how they get their kicks. And to be honest, he's got me shitting bricks.

Brad Look, Mr. Gray, if it's that serious

Tim Tim. Call me Tim.

Brad *(Slight pause. Boy, things have changed)* Ah, Tim, look I reckon you have to call the cops.

Tim Don't be stupid. What can they do? The guy's a loony. He's all talk. He's done his thing, now he'll forget it. If I ignore him, he'll go away.

Brad You hope.

Tim *(More serious)* Yeah, I hope. God, some of the things he said he'd do. He knows my name, where I live, my daughters' names, my wife's name.

Brad You've gotta go to the police.

Tim I'm gunna look stupid. I didn't get his name or his number. I've got a vague description of the car and it mightn't even be his. I can remember more about his bird.

Brad So he knows about you and your family, and where you live.

Tim He knows my damn mobile.

FX *Mobile rings.*
(The men look at one another. TIM takes out phone, looks at it)

Brad Is there some way we can record this? *(TIM shakes his head)* How about a trace? Is there another phone?

Tim Over there. *(BRAD crosses to RC and grabs phone)*

Brad What do I do?

Tim Dunno. Just wait till I get him talking then call emergency.

Brad Okay. Go.
(TIM takes breath, hits button which stops phone ringing then speaks into it)

Tim Hello? *(Pause then relief)* Patrick! How ya going? *(BRAD twigs it's okay and crosses back to TIM)* How'd the inspection go? ... Great, that's fantastic. ... Okay, fine. Thanks for letting me know. ... We'll talk it over Tuesday. See ya.
(TIM pockets his phone)

Brad Obviously not the moron.

Tim One of my sales reps. We're selling this fabulous property next week. If the buyers are genuine, we'll set a new record.

Brad Sounds like the real estate market is going well.

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- Tim** Unpredictable, but what's your line of business? Apart from seducing women?
- Brad** I can explain that. The car was sounding a bit rough so I stopped and had a look. Stupidly I got grease on my hands and even more stupidly on my jeans.
- Tim** *(Smiling)* It's a good move that. *(BRAD ignores this)*
- Brad** Kirsten arrived just after I got here, dragged me inside saying Rosa could fix the grease.
- Tim** I pulled that stunt about 30 years ago driving an MG. Worked a charm as I remember. Beautiful body. The car was okay too.
- Brad** You wouldn't be winding me up?
- Tim** *(Giving advice)* The secret's in having no-one at home. You got your strides off but in a house full of extras. And one of them was her old man. That, Brad, is a definite no-no.
- Brad** *(Very uncertain)* Ah, look Tim, I have to tell you I'm not real sure what's going on here.
- Tim** I'm giving advice. You don't have to take it but old Oscar once said something like "The trouble with youth is it's wasted on the young".
- Brad** Are you telling me how to seduce your daughter? *(A slight cough)*
- Tim** One thing to remember, Brad. If a bloke gets inquisitive about his wife or daughter's friends, especially a prospective son-in-law, it's because that bloke's got something to hide.
- Brad** I think I'm gunna need a translation on that.
- Tim** The friendly, trusting father is a man without a past.
- Brad** Right. I almost understood that. *(He's still confused)*
- Tim** So now we've got that cleared up, let's talk about you. Have I got this right? You're currently Amanda's boyfriend but as a fall back, you're keeping your hand in with both Kirsten and Jan.
- Brad** *(Back to being upset)* Aw now that's not fair. If it hadn't been for the car sounding crook none of this would've happened.
- Tim** What about Rosa?
- Brad** Rosa?
- Tim** She on the list as well?
- Brad** *(Upset, rises)* Bloody hell, I didn't come here to be insulted and accused of something I didn't do.
- Tim** Sit down, sit down. *(Pause. BRAD sits)* Take no notice. I'm only jealous.
- Brad** Jealous?
- Tim** Yeah. It comes from being middle-aged, twice married and the father of daughters.
- Brad** *(Uncertain)* Ah, I'm back on the 'not sure what to say' routine.
- Tim** Listen Brad, many years ago, I was young and hormonally active. I could've written a book on chatting up women. So don't start any of this "I got some grease on my jeans" crap. It just won't wash.
- Brad** Well it did actually. *(Indicating spotless attire)* See.
- Tim** Sense of humour, very important. *(Changes tack)* Look I know I've been carrying on a bit. Having a go at you one minute and now doing the old mate routine the next, but it's that damn phone call.

Brad I'd be upset too.

Tim Funny though. If that moron hadn't rung, I'd probably be giving you the third degree about chasing my wife and daughters. (*BRAD starts to protest*) Just kidding. I know you're only interested in Mandy,

Brad I am, for sure. She's great. And she thinks the world of you.

Tim Woah! Now it's grease the old man routine.

Brad No, I'm serious. She often talks about her fantastic father.

Tim (*Serious*) Who's so fantastic he attracts some nut case who wants to attack his wife and daughters.

Brad Look, how about I call in at the cop shop on my way home. At least they'll know what's happened and can maybe send a patrol car round.

Tim (*Extends hand and they shake*) Thanks. I appreciate it.

Brad At least you'll sleep better knowing the cops are out there.

Tim I should've known my daughter would go out with a decent bloke. (*They laugh*)

Brad Now who's doing the greasing? (*They laugh again and BRAD coughs*)

Tim You know there's no training for so many of life's experiences.

Brad Sorry, you've lost me again.

Tim Well, you're a young bloke trying to get to know the father of his girl. I'm the middle-aged father checking out the young bloke keen on my daughter.

Brad I think we're okay.

Tim Yeah but how do we behave? What are the rules? Where are the tips? Where can you learn how to handle these situations?

Brad You mean a night school class on how to win over prospective fathers-in-law.

Tim Exactly. How to impress the father of your bird. (*They both like this and are amused*) I mean you can study anything today. Play the flute, learn Chinese, write a novel ...

Brad Repair your car's engine.

Tim Without getting grease on your clothes. (*More laughter*) But where's the course on chatting to your daughter's boyfriend?

Brad I guess there isn't one.

Tim I could really stuff up your relationship with Mandy. I'm new to this caper. Kirsten or Mandy bring home their bloke. What do I do? What do I say? Nobody's told me about this. And is there a different way of behaving if you've got a son and he brings home his girlfriend?

Brad Or his boyfriend.

Tim Oh God, it's hard enough as it is, don't complicate things.

Brad So are you starting a business on human relationships?

Tim Ha! That'll be the day. But just imagine the catalogue. (*Pretends to announce/read title*) How to hit it off with your children's sexual partners. (*Pause. Slight embarrassment*) Ah *potential* sexual partners. (*They laugh*)

Brad Or, How to Behave with your partner's parents. (*They laugh*) (*UR door opens and AMANDA appears. She watches then beckons to KIRSTEN and JAN who silently enter and watch*)

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Tim How to behave when a hoon taunts you in his car.
Brad Was that taunts or toots? *(More Laughter)* And how to get a woman to remove your clothing. *(More laughter)*

Tim How to make a complete idiot of yourself in front of your family.
(More laughter)

Brad How to behave in a suave and sophisticated fashion with your elders.
Tim How to stay hip and cool with the younger generation.
Jan How to act macho and be one of the boys.
(Women laugh and move DL. Men turn and face the women)

Tim Ladies, come and join us. Brad and I were just discussing a few home truths.

Amanda Talk about hypocrites. You men are unbelievable.
Brad Aw come on. *(BRAD coughs)* That's not fair.
Kirsten Half an hour ago, Dad, you had Brad deflowering your darling daughter. Now he's the son you never had.
Tim I'll ignore that. Brad and I were having a free exchange of views.
Jan You were being blokey and macho. Now go and change your shirt. We're due next door for drinks.

Tim Oh no, do we have to?
Jan We promised we'd inspect the new painting.
Tim *(Exits towards DR)* Bliss. Catch you later, Brad. *(Exits)*
Brad Yeah, sure thing, Tim.
Women Tim!?

Amanda You're calling my father, Tim?
Brad He asked me too. *(Slight cough)*
Kirsten I suppose you were boasting about the grease on the trousers routine.
Jan Look I've gotta go. Our neighbour loves showing off her latest art acquisition.

Amanda She's a snob. She buys paintings just to flaunt her excessive wealth.
Brad You mean she's really loaded?
Kirsten As Grandpa used to say, she's as rich as creosote.
Brad Don't 'spose she's got a daughter? *(AMANDA goes to whack/prod him)*
Jan No such luck. Just a fabulous house full of valuable paintings.
Kirsten Plus the most sophisticated alarm system money can buy. So don't get any ideas.

Jan Tim and I won't be long. I hope you'll stay for tea, Brad. Especially now you and Tim are bosom buddies. *(Sisters laugh)*

Brad Mandy and I thought we'd eat out tonight.
Kirsten Eat out? You'd pass on one of Rosa's Sunday roasts?
Amanda Don't listen to her. Sunday night is Rosa's night off and we suffer one of Dad's infamous barbecues.

Brad Well I'm easy but ...
Kirsten We know that. We've seen the shorts.
Brad I am never listening to you again.
Kirsten Actually Rosa *is* cooking tonight. She told me all about it and I reckon you'd be mad to miss her roast.

Jan *(Exiting UR to kitchen)* Well you lot please yourself. Hope to see you soon, Brad.

Brad Yeah, sure thing, Jan. Bye.

Amanda *(Teasing)* Ooooh. Jan and Tim. Right little charmer aren't we?
(They embrace and kiss lightly)

Kirsten Yes, well, three being a crowd. *(To BRAD)* Let's know if you need a hand cleaning your clothes, Bradley. *(AMANDA goes to whack her sister as KIRSTEN exits DR)* And remember, I love to handwash smalls. *(Exits)*

Amanda Go.

Brad Listen, Babe, I'm sorry about that business with my jeans.

Amanda *(Puts her arms around him)* I bet you say that to all the girls. *(They kiss)*

Brad You know I'd really like to take them off for you.

Amanda *(She slaps his arm playfully)* Behave.

Brad Spoilsport.

Amanda *(Leading him to settee)* Come over here and tell me all about your little chat with Dad. *(They sit and embrace)*

Brad I'd rather talk about us.

Amanda All in good time. What did Dad say?

Brad *(Romantic)* I'd rather say things to you. I'm crazy about every little bit of your gorgeous body. Let me tell you everything. *(He stifles cough)*

Amanda Talk's cheap. Come here. *(They kiss but are interrupted)*

Kirsten *(Enters)* Anyone seen my ... oops, sorry. *(About turns and exits)*

Brad *(Coughs a little. Rises)* C'mon babe, let's get outa here.

Amanda *(Pulls him back, strokes his arms)* No, you give up too easily.

Brad *(Their foreheads touch)* I'll never give up with you. You are the sexiest woman alive. *(They kiss but again are interrupted)*

Jan *(Enters from UL)* Rosa is staying in and ... *(Spots the couple)* Oh. I'll just tell Rosa you're here.

Amanda I thought you were going out.

Jan I am. *(Exits DR)* I'm not here. Bye!

Tim *(Enters from DR)* The sooner we leave the Hey!
(JAN takes TIM in hand and leads/pushes him out DR)

Jan We're going this way.

Tim *(Being hustled)* All right, no need to push.
(Pause. BRAD and AMANDA look at one another. Both see the funny side)

Brad How about we try the middle of town? *(Slight cough)*

Amanda No, it's a test.

Brad A test?

Amanda Yes. Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder.

Brad You are definitely the sexiest woman in the world.

Amanda You said that before.

Brad And I'll go on saying it. You wait. When we're alone tonight, I'll tell you things that'll blow your mind.

Amanda Oh so I have a mind. For a while there I thought you were only interested in my body.

Brad Whatever gave you that idea?

Amanda Hmm. Who cares? *(They kiss but are interrupted again)*

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Rosa Oh I am very sorry.

Amanda Rosa!

Brad (*Frustrated*) Come in, Rosa. We've been waiting for you.

Rosa For me? I do not understand.

Amanda It's not your fault, Rosa. Brad and I have been ... having a chat, but everyone keeps dropping in.

Rosa Well I am dropping in to see how many are staying for tea.

Brad Count me in, Rosa. I've had no luck in the romance department, I might as well sample your fabulous grub.

Rosa (*Distressed*) Grub? I have no grub in my food.

Amanda (*Rising and leading BRAD LC*) Come on, let's have a look at the garden.

Rosa Have I said something wrong?

Amanda (*Calls back*) No Rosa. Everything's fine. It's just that Don Juan here needs a bit of room to strut his stuff.

Brad See you at tea. (*They exit giggling with BRAD coughing*)

Rosa Okay. (*Plumps cushions and is about to leave*)

Kirsten (*Pokes head past door DR. Whispers*) Have they gone?

Rosa Who?

Kirsten Everyone.

Rosa Your father and step-mother have gone to next door and your sister and Brad are outside in the garden.

Kirsten (*Enters, approaches ROSA*) Good. Let's get cracking.

Rosa (*Departing for kitchen*) Well come quickly if you want to finish.

Kirsten Not in there. We have to do it here.

Rosa (*Stops*) Here? How can we do it here?

Kirsten If we go in the kitchen, someone might drop in and discover us. This has to be a secret, remember? (*Removes small notepad and pen/cil*) Now I've got a few questions. When do I add the garlic?

Rosa I am worried, Kirsten. This is not an easy dish. You will need to watch it very carefully.

Kirsten And it has to be extra virgin olive oil, yes?

Rosa And do not cook the onions and carrots for too long. Just enough to prepare them for the main sauce later.

Kirsten I'm excited, Rosa. Can you imagine what they're going to say when they discover who the chef really is?

Rosa I can imagine what they will say if you make a terrible disaster.

Kirsten Disaster? I have the world's greatest chef to show me how to prepare the cuisine fantastique. It will be a triumph.

Rosa God willing.

Kirsten Now how do I know when to paste?

Rosa Paste? What is this paste? (*Looks at KIRSTEN'S notepad*) That is baste.

Kirsten Paste, baste. Who cares? I need to know when to do it. I think you said every twenty minutes.

Rosa That is for the main course and there is no timetable. Kirsten, cooking is like the art. You either know or don't know when it is time.

Kirsten So teach me.

Rosa In five minutes? Here, in the sitting-room without utensils and food. How can I do these things?

Kirsten Sit down, come on, sit. (*ROSA sits on settee*) Rosa, this is important. Please try and understand. To my family, I am scatter-brained.

Rosa Scatter-brained?

Kirsten Ah, dumb, useless, good for nothing. Stupida!

Rosa No, you are not good for nothing. At some things you are okay and at other things you are very good.

Kirsten At shopping yes, at removing the clothes of my sister's boyfriend, yes. But when it comes to practical things – cooking, sewing, repairing anything - I'm useless. I didn't fix Brad's jeans. *You* did.

Rosa You managed to help him take them off.

Kirsten Rosa! A back-handed compliment.

Rosa And you are a businesswoman. You are working in the stock market. And you are very successful.

Kirsten Not the same thing. This is different. My father and sister, even my mother when she was here, all used to laugh at me when I tried to do anything around the house. They still do and even my charming stepmother has joined the chorus. Well, now's the time to show those smirking wiseguys I'm not so dumb after all. I'm going to cook a meal that'll take their breath away.

Rosa Not the curry. You must not use the curry.

Kirsten No, 'take their breath away' means to impress them, to make them stop stirring me. Do you understand?

Rosa I think maybe you are stirring me.

Kirsten So tonight, when they sit down to what they think is a fabulous feast prepared by wonder cook Rosa, it will in fact have been created by little old me. Yours truly.

Rosa Tonight?

Kirsten Tonight.

Rosa You are very brave.

Kirsten Not brave, Rosa, determined. Now come on, tell me about oven settings. And do I put the dish in the middle of the oven, the bottom, or the top? Where?

Rosa I could show you if we went into the kitchen.

Kirsten No! Dad and Jan could turn up, and Brad and Mandy too.

Rosa I think I have offended Amanda and Brad. They were trying to kiss and I stopped them.

Kirsten Me too.

Rosa (*Shocked*) You were trying to kiss Brad? This is definitely not correct.

Kirsten No, no. I also interrupted them. They were snogging right where you're sitting, and Muggins here sort of cramped their style.

Rosa Snogging?

Kirsten Yes. Smooching, canoodling, hug and kiss time.

Rosa That is called snogging?

Kirsten Amongst other things. Now they're probably up to round three outside by the pool. Hey! (*Heads LC*) Let's try and catch 'em at it.

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Rosa No, you must not. That is spying and it is not correct.

Kirsten Rosa, where's your sense of adventure? Come on. (*Reluctantly ROSA heads LC and KIRSTEN peers into garden*) There they are. Keep back, they might see us. Ohhhh, isn't that romantic?

Rosa Kirsten, there are things which I do not like so much.

Kirsten I think any woman would like a handsome young hunk like Brad doing that to them. Come on Rosa, you were young once. Don't tell me you didn't enjoy a quick bunk up.

Rosa We did not have the bunks.

Kirsten Forget it.

Rosa My parents were very strict. In my family, it was a big disgrace to behave like that before you were married.

Kirsten Rosa, they're kissing. They're simply doing what is natural and normal. I can't believe you're such a prude.

Rosa There are some things you should keep in private. (*KIRSTEN exasperated*) And while I am on this subject, there is another matter I would like to talk about.

Kirsten Rosa, you don't have to play Mother now that my real mother has flown the coop.

Rosa I do not understand this flying coop.

Kirsten (*Taking ROSA back to settee*) I mean that because my mother is no longer here, don't feel you have to look after Mandy and me.

Rosa I am not trying to be your mother. I just want you to know that I do not like you or Amanda talking about the new Mrs. Grey like she is some terrible person.

Kirsten But she is. Rosa, I didn't choose her, she's not my mother, and as this is my house, I'll talk about her any way I want. (*Pause. ROSA shocked not so much by the answer but by the way it was spoken. KIRSTEN realises this and backs down*) I'm sorry. I didn't mean it like that. You're right. I am being bitchy. I'll try and be civil. Polite. (*ROSA smiles*)

Rosa Thank you. I am telling you this because I think it is right and because I have been working for your family since you were a little baby. You know I feel very close to you all.
(*Pause. The women embrace in a sincere feeling of warmth and affection*)

Kirsten And we love you very much. But now, back to the cooking. When do I add the vegetables?

Rosa Oh, I am not sure this is such a good idea.

Kirsten Rosa, you promised to help me make this meal and tonight's the night.

Rosa And I am forgetting something else.

Kirsten I'm sorry, I won't accept any excuses.

Rosa The oven has been breaking down.

Kirsten What!? Now you tell me. I've spent all this time preparing to silence my smarmy family once and forever and now you say the stove is stuffed.

Rosa It is working but there has been a funny noise.

Kirsten Noise? What sort of noise?

Rosa It is maybe something loose. I have telephoned the man to look but he cannot come until tomorrow.

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FX *Telephone rings. It is situated DL*

Rosa I will answer it. *(She moves to phone)*

Kirsten If that's for Dad, take a message. He should be back soon.

Rosa *(Into phone)* Hello. ... Yes but Mr. Grey is not at home. Can I take a message? ... I'm sorry, can you say that again. ... Please, you are shouting. I cannot understand.

Kirsten Rosa?

Rosa *(Holds up hand)* Now if you are going to speak like that, I will not be able to give your message to Mr. Grey. ... Then you are a very stupid man and you should mind your language. ... And the same to you, you ... Bastardo! *(Crescendo begins)* Desgenerado! Desgraciado! Bestia!!!
(ROSA slams down phone and is obviously upset. KIRSTEN is stunned not only by the conversation but also by ROSA'S out of character turn of phrase)

Kirsten Rosa. Who was that?

Rosa I do not know and I do not care. Some man was swearing and saying ridiculous things.

Kirsten Rosa, you're shaking. Was it that man who rang Dad before?

Rosa He was drunk. He was saying terrible things about me and my family.

Kirsten *Your family!?* But how does he know about your family? How does he even know about *you*?

Rosa I do not know and I do not want to know.

Kirsten Come and sit down.

Rosa No, I have things to do in the kitchen. *(She exits)*

Kirsten Rosa! *(Goes after her)* Rosa wait. We have to talk. *(ROSA ignores this and exits. KIRSTEN calls)* Well please don't forget tonight. I have to do this.

Jan *(Entering LC)* What do you have to do?
(JAN followed by TIM enter. KIRSTEN covers her tracks)

Kirsten Dad, we've just had another phone call.

Tim What! *(JAN and TIM worried)*

Kirsten Rosa took it.

Jan Not that idiot who rang before?

Kirsten I think so. Rosa's upset. She said the guy threatened her family.

Tim Rosa's family!?

Kirsten Rosa swore at him and hung up.

Jan Rosa swore?

Kirsten She gave him heaps. You wouldn't need to speak Spanish to work out she was really slugging him off.

Tim I'd better talk to her. *(Exits to kitchen)*

Jan This is getting out of hand.

Kirsten You've gotta get the police involved. We can't let this go on.

Jan Your father says he can handle it.

Kirsten Well if he won't, I will.

Jan Kirsten, don't! *(KIRSTEN stops and looks at her step-mother)* Please. *(Pause. JAN has asked politely and KIRSTEN acquiesces)* Look, can we talk? *(Another pause. KIRSTEN moves back to JAN. They sit)* This is hardly the best time but I don't want to go on like we are at present.

Kirsten *(Cool)* What you're talking about?

Jan It's not easy for me. I know you and Amanda hate me.

Kirsten We don't hate you.

Jan I'll re-phrase that. Since I married your father, you and Amanda have not exactly hit it off with your new step-mother. Is that fair?

Kirsten More or less.

Jan All I'm asking is that you hear my side of the story.

Kirsten We're not interested. My father's an adult, he makes his own decisions. He chose to divorce my mother and marry you. End of story.

Jan Yes but if we're going to live together, maybe it's best if we clear the air.

Kirsten Meaning?

Jan Let me try again. I think there's a possibility that you and Amanda believe I broke up your parents' happy marriage. I think you see me as the bimbo who went after your father's money. How am I doing so far?

Kirsten I'm just giving you the rope.

Jan Well here's my side of the story. I met your father more than three years ago. He approached me at a conference I was running. At the time he and your mother were supposedly happily married.

Kirsten They *were* happily married.

Jan If you say so.

Kirsten I *know* so.

Jan Your father asked for my business card and then rang me a week later and asked for a date. I said no. Then he sent me flowers and again asked me out. I'd checked his background and heard he was married. When he rang me the next time, I told him I knew he was married and he said his marriage was a sham and he was getting divorced.

Kirsten You expect me to believe all or just some of this?

Jan Believe what you like. You could ask your father but maybe that'd cause more trouble than its worth.

Kirsten I've already told you. My father's an adult. He makes his own decisions.

Jan I don't deserve the gold digger tag, and in case your father hasn't told you, I've actually got more money than he has. Much more. And if anyone was out to marry for money, there's a pretty strong case against your dear old pa.

Kirsten Have you finished?

Jan I think so. Any questions?

Kirsten Not now and not likely to be. As they say, we'll agree to disagree.

Jan About what?

Kirsten (*Shrugs shoulders*) Who knows? Life in general.

Jan Fair enough. I've said my piece. But can we agree on one thing?

Kirsten What thing?

Jan This crank calls thing has to be handled by someone other than your father.

Kirsten Agreed. But he won't listen.

Jan Let's try weight of numbers. We gang up and force him to let the police know what's going on. And the sooner the better.

Kirsten Okay. Who's first?

Jan I'll go. You follow in a couple of minutes.

(JAN exits to kitchen. KIRSTEN ponders latest news about her father's behaviour. BRAD and AMANDA enter through conservatory. They are tingling from their touching)

- Brad** Hey, why aren't you washing some poor guy's jeans?
- Amanda** *(Knows her sister is upset)* Kirst? What's happened?
- Kirsten** There's been another weirdo phone call.
- Amanda** But we weren't supposed to answer.
- Kirsten** I didn't. Rosa answered and got really upset. She was almost in tears.
- Brad** This has gone too far. We've gotta call the cops.
- Kirsten** He even made Rosa swear.
- Amanda** Rosa swore?
- Brad** Does Tim know?
- Kirsten** He and Jan are in with Rosa now. Look, Dad needs to be told. He can't handle this on his own.
- Brad** *(Coughs)* I'll tell him *(Exits to kitchen, coughing)* Leave it to me.
- Amanda** *(Calling)* Don't push him, Brad. Let him feel he's still in control.
- Kirsten** Sit, sit, sit.
- Amanda** *(Sits)* Oh, I'm all
- Kirsten** A-quiver.
- Amanda** Something. I've just had a close encounter with my gorgeous guy and now I'm worried sick about these lunatic phone calls.
- Kirsten** Well add another dimension because it gets worse. You know those opinions we expressed about the evil bimbo Jan.
- Amanda** What's happened?
- Kirsten** I've just had a most interesting conversation with our stepmother.
- Amanda** And? *(Suddenly disgusted)* She's not pregnant?
- Kirsten** *(Suddenly thrown)* My God! Of course, that's it! She couldn't come straight out with it so she started on some new tack.
- Amanda** What new tack?
- Kirsten** She tried the "I wanna be your friend" routine so as to prepare me for the news about the baby.
- Amanda** Oh brilliant. That's all I need? Mind the zoo mobile and crappy nappy.
- Kirsten** No, she didn't say that. We're jumping to conclusions – again.
- Amanda** Again? What'd she say?
- Kirsten** Heaps. Scary, scary stuff.
- Amanda** Tell me.
- Kirsten** What would you say if I told you Dad was a bit of a playboy?
- Amanda** She told you that?
- Kirsten** She reckons he made all the running with Jan, that he chased her even when he was still married to Mum.
- Amanda** She's lying.
- Kirsten** Jan said she kept refusing Dad's invitations and even confronted him about his marriage, and that Dad said his marriage was over and he was getting a divorce.
- Amanda** But Dad said he didn't even meet Jan until after he and Mum split.
- Kirsten** Someone's lying. And it gets worse.

Amanda Hang on. She's saying this to hide the fact she's after Dad's money.
Kirsten No. Jan has her own money.
Amanda *(Shocked)* What?
Kirsten Big bucks. Apparently she's a wealthy woman, and if anyone married for money, it was Dad.
Amanda Bloody hell!
Kirsten Now why would she make that up? She knows we can check. If she's lying, we'd expose her once and for all. I think she's telling the truth.
Amanda I dunno which is worse. Jan being a rich bitch or Dad being a liar.
(Pause. At times now the women chat less to one another and more to themselves. They are thinking aloud)
Kirsten I was shocked. I didn't know what to say.
Amanda What did you say?
Kirsten Oh we got onto crank calls and agreed to pressure Dad to call the cops.
Amanda *(Thinking aloud)* You know, when you're a kid, your parents are sort of God like. Then as you get older you see them for what they are. Human. Parents have faults just like anyone.
Kirsten Maybe Dad told us what he did to protect us.
Amanda Protect us?
Kirsten Well he could hardly say, "Look girls, me and your Mum hate each other's guts and I'm currently on the prowl for a bit on the side".
Amanda Is that what you believe? Is that what you think he was doing?
Kirsten According to Jan he was. She reckons he was a randy womaniser.
Amanda Our father?
Kirsten *(Shrugs)* He wouldn't be the first.
Amanda Maybe it was just with Jan and maybe he loved her.
Kirsten And maybe pigs can fly and maybe we misjudged Jan.
Amanda You say she's wealthy? How wealthy? Is it cash, real estate, what?
Kirsten She didn't say. But Dad's not exactly broke and from what she said, she could buy and sell him several times over.
Amanda *(Shaking her head)* Wow! What are we gunna do?
Kirsten I don't think confronting Dad is ever a good move and besides ...
Amanda Not Dad, Jan. How are we going to get into her good books without having to grovel. I hate grovelling. It's against my religion. But if she's loaded, stuff the principles.
Kirsten You're unreal.
Amanda What? You don't want her money?
Kirsten Okay, we do nothing now. If we do, Jan'll think we're weak and only interested in her money.
Amanda We *are* weak and only interested in her money.
Kirsten Let's try the sisterhood routine. You know, us women have got to stick together. We're sorry we misjudged you and whilst we can never be your daughters, we'd like to be your friend.
Amanda Oh chuck! *(Sudden change of attitude)* Do you think she'll go for it?
Kirsten Dunno. *(Noise from upstage)*
Tim *(Offstage)* All right, all right. I'll call the cops.
Kirsten But say nothing for now.

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(TIM enters followed by JAN and BRAD)

Tim *(To his daughters)* I suppose you heard. We've had another call.

Kirsten I was here, Dad, when Rosa took it.

Jan Your father's agreed to call the police.

Tim I'll go there. Over the phone they'll think I'm some crank.

Brad I'll go with you, Tim.

Jan It'd be quicker to just pick up the phone and ...

Tim I said I'll go in person.

Jan All right, I'm only trying to help.

Amanda Go easy, Dad. Jan's only trying to help.

Kirsten Yes, Dad. Jan obviously cares about you and wants the best for you.
(Pause. What are these two step-daughters saying? They seem sincere. JAN and TIM look at the sisters)

Brad *(Breaks the silence)* We can take my car.

Tim Yeah, okay, don't rush me. *(Wanders LC)* Brad and I'll go to the police. Jan, you pop next door and warn Googie.

Jan Googie? Why do we want to involve her?

Amanda Yes Dad. Jan's right. The fewer people who know about this the better.

Tim Because if that creep drops in, his best approach is through Googie's enormous garden, and if Googie has her whizz-bang alarm system switched on, we'll get plenty of notice.

Brad Good thinking. *(He coughs)*

Jan So you want me to tell Googie to switch on her alarms because we're expecting a homicidal maniac? She'll have a fit.

Kirsten C'mon Dad, be fair. Listen to Jan. Her idea is much better.

Tim What idea? And what's going on here?

Kirsten *(Making it up as she speaks)* Ah, telling Googie that we're thinking about investing in the same alarm system and could she make sure it's on so we can hear it if it ever goes off.

Tim That's even more ridiculous than telling the truth.

Jan Actually it's not a bad idea.

Amanda It's a great idea. Trust the women to come up with a sensible solution.

Tim There's something not right here. I smell female conspiracy.

Kirsten You're paranoid, Dad. Just relax. As your old mate, Stan would say, "You look after the boat rentals and we'll run the army".

Brad Oh *(Coughs)* I like that. *(Coughs)*

Amanda Well come on you two. Enough of the chat.

Tim Okay, Brad and I call on the gendarmes, Jan, you make sure Googie's got her alarms on in the garden and ...

Kirsten We'll stay here and hold the fort.

Tim Don't open the door, and don't answer the phone.

Kirsten *(Don't fuss)* Dad! Don't fuss.

Tim I'm serious.

Amanda Father knows best.

Kirsten Oh and Dad. *(Gives him slip of paper)* Can you grab these things for me while you're out?

Tim What!? Shopping!

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Kirsten It's for tea tonight.

Tim No, it's Sunday. I'm cooking a barbecue.

Kirsten There's been a change. Rosa's staying in. She asked me to ask you to get these things.

Tim But I always cook on a Sunday night.

Amanda (*Buttering up her father*) Dad, Brad's staying for tea. It'll be his first meal here and you'd like him to taste the wonderful Rosa's cooking, now wouldn't you?

Tim Brad's a bloke. He'd love a barbie and a beer, wouldn't you Brad?

Brad Ah, whatever.

Tim (*Suspicious*) Why do I get the feeling something's not right here?

Jan Darling, why don't you have a night off? Rosa will produce something special. Besides, it's going to rain.

Kirsten Yes big storm tonight, father. We can't have soggy snags.

Tim Oh well we can't have poor old Timmy getting wet. Just do as you're told, Timmy. (*Exiting UC*) Come on, Brad. We'll take my car.

Brad Sure. (*To WOMEN*) Bye. (*Waves to women, exits after TIM, slight cough*)

Jan Okay, I'll pop next door and see Googie. Nice idea of yours, Kirsten.

Amanda Kirsten? It was your idea, Jan.

Jan Well it doesn't matter. If it keeps your father happy, we'll give it a go. (*JAN starts to exit via conservatory but stops when AMANDA calls*)

Amanda Jan. I was wondering if I could ask you something?

Jan Sure. About Googie?

Amanda No. It's ah, something personal. (*JAN returns but KIRSTEN makes signals behind JAN'S back trying to tell AMANDA not to push things*)

Jan Fire away.

Amanda I'm thinking of leaving home. (*Pause. No response from JAN*) And I am thinking of starting up a business.

Jan Great. Good for you. (*KIRSTEN horrified*) Is it something involving Brad?

Amanda Ah yes, but he doesn't know about it yet. (*Pause. This sounds weird*) I mean we've discussed it – obviously – but I haven't told him my decision so please don't let on, if you get my meaning.

Jan Of course. Mum's the word.

Kirsten Mandy, I don't think Jan wants to hear about your personal business ventures.

Jan No, I do, I'm interested. And I'd love to help if I can.

Amanda Thanks. I appreciate it. But I have a problem. I need some start-up capital and I was going to ask Dad.

Jan Go for it. I can't speak for your father but I'm sure he'd help if he can.

Amanda It's just a little bit delicate. You see I don't want to ask him and somehow, embarrass him.

Jan You won't embarrass him, he's your father.

Amanda Yes but I'm not sure if he's got cash to spare right now and I'd hate to put him on the spot. You see what I mean?

Jan (*She's not sure*) I think so.

Amanda I mean if I were sure he had the money or could get it easily from somewhere, I'd feel much happier about asking him. I don't want him to use some phony excuse rather than admit he hasn't got the cash.

Jan I don't think you've got a problem, Mandy. In fact I *know* you haven't. Put your proposal to Tim and I'm sure he'll be thrilled to help you. He obviously likes Brad and I'm sure you'll make it work.
(Starts to exit LC)

Amanda *(Brighter)* Thanks Jan, thanks a lot.

Jan *(Turns back)* You go ahead and ask. We girls have gotta stick together.
(Smiles, winks. Exits)

Kirsten *(Calls)* Thanks Jan. We appreciate it.

Amanda *(Pleased)* You're right. She *is* loaded.

Kirsten You idiot. What are you trying to do?

Amanda Very nicely, if I say so myself.

Kirsten She's not stupid, Mandy. She knows what you're doing.

Amanda So? All's fair in love and war.

FX *Phone rings. WOMEN alarmed. ROSA enters looking distressed*

Rosa That is the telephone. I want to answer it.

Kirsten No, Rosa. Dad said we leave it.

Rosa But I have to speak to that horrible person.

Amanda You can't Rosa. Dad's gone to the police. He told us to leave it.

Rosa I don't care. I am going to speak. *(She goes to phone)*

Kirsten Rosa! *(Too late, ROSA has picked up phone)*

Rosa Now listen to me and you listen good you miserable scumbag person. You are a criminal. Do you hear me? A criminal! A gilipollas cojudo! And you are a coward! If I meet you I will spit on your filthy face. You are a criminal!

Kirsten Rosa, hang up. *(Pause. ROSA looks mystified)*

Amanda Rosa?
(ROSA hands phone to KIRSTEN who steps forward and takes it. Pause)

Kirsten *(Covers mouthpiece)* What'll I do?

Amanda Just hang up.

Rosa No. You must answer.
(KIRSTEN uncertain then slowly raises phone and hesitatingly answers it)

Kirsten Hello. *(Pause. Huge change)* Dad?

Amanda Dad!?

Rosa *(Distressed)* Oh my God, what have I said? *(The sisters are very amused)*

Kirsten It's okay. Rosa thought you were that idiot. No, we're fine. ... What? ... Chardonnay. Can't you read? ... No, we haven't got any and we need it for the meal tonight. I mean, Rosa needs it. ... Because Rosa's cooking a special dish. ... Look, just get the things on the list. And hurry up. ... No, we'll sort Rosa. ... Okay. See ya. *(Hangs up)*

Amanda *(Amused)* Oh Rosa, you should have seen your face.

Rosa Estoy tan avergonzado. Perdóname, por favor.
(Translation: I'm so ashamed. Please forgive me.)

Kirsten Rosa, Dad was laughing so much I couldn't get him to understand how we need those things for tonight.

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Amanda I wish I'd recorded it. *(ROSA horrified)*

Kirsten I told him about the wine and he's got the other stuff.

Amanda Hey, why are you so interested in Rosa's cooking?

Jan *(Enters through conservatory)* Googie's fine. She said she always puts on the security including the alarms in the garden. They're on now. *(Sees others)* What's happened?

Kirsten You'll never guess.

Amanda Rosa's just called Dad a scumbag, a coward and a filthy criminal.

Kirsten And a cojudo.

Amanda A gilipollas cojudo!

Rosa Oh, please. *(She exits to kitchen in distress)*

Kirsten Rosa! *(Goes after her but puts up hand to stop others)*

Amanda The phone rang and Kirst and I refused to answer it like Dad said. Then Rosa bursts in, grabs the phone and gives the caller this almighty blast about being a creep and everything.

Jan And it was your father?

Amanda Poor old Dad didn't get a word in.

Jan What did he say?

Amanda What could he say? Rosa didn't stop for breath. Now, of course, she's all upset and probably crying in the kitchen.

Jan That bloody phone call. And all because your father tooted his horn.

Amanda Yes but we're okay as Dad and Brad are with the cops.

Jan Dad and Brad - there's a pair for you.

Kirsten *(Pokes head round door)* Rosa's fine. I'll stay with her but it'd be best if no-one else comes in.

Amanda Why?

Kirsten She's highly embarrassed. Just leave us alone. Okay?

Jan Fair enough.

Kirsten And could you do the same with Dad and Brad. No trespassers in the kitchen. *(Gets her own unintentional joke)* Dad and Brad. *(Deeper voice)* Dad and Brad. *(Pleased with herself)* I like it. *(Exits)*

Amanda And I like Brad.

Jan Don't look now but it shows.

Amanda Yeah, he is nice.

Jan He's lovely. You deserve each other. *(Pause. Nice conversation between these two is rare)* And your father obviously likes him. Even if he did think Brad was the local playboy.

Amanda *(Weak laugh)* Takes one to know one.
(Pause. Oops. Not a safe topic at present if at all)

Jan Yes. I wonder what gave him that idea?
(TIM and BRAD appear UC. They have been caught in a sudden shower and are wettish. We can see them through the french windows. They go to open the doors which are stuck. They try to open them without making a fuss. Pause because TIM and BRAD have missed their entrance)

Jan *(Invents a line)* Oh, ... I think the boys should be back soon.

Amanda *(Looks upstage and invents a line)* Yes, here they are now.
(WOMEN look upstage as MEN finally get door open and enter. TIM carries bag of groceries. Both brush rain from their clothes/hair)

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Tim *(Inventing a line)* Damn door. Must get that fixed.
Jan That was quick. How did you get on?
Tim Fine. The cops told us to call them as soon as we get another call.
Brad *(Croaky voice, clears throat)* If we get another call.
Amanda If the cops heard Rosa on the phone, you'd be in the slammer, pronto.
Tim I thought the woman was mad. *(Looks around)* Where is she?
Jan In the kitchen with Kirsten. But don't go in there. Rosa's pretty upset and Kirsten wants to be alone with her for a while.
Tim Well Rosa needs this stuff. Kirsten was very insistent.
Amanda Yeah there's something funny going on with that. Why is Kirsten interested in the food?
Tim Only one way to find out. *(Heads towards kitchen)*
Jan Tim! Go easy.
(He enters kitchen. Moments later there is a scream and TIM comes flying out sans parcel. He's been pushed. KIRSTEN follows and yells from door)
Kirsten I told you not to come in here. All of you. Rosa wants to be alone.
(OTHERS stunned)
Tim Bloody hell, Kirsten. What are you doing?
Rosa *(Appears)* I am terribly sorry, Mister Grey. I did not know it was you on the telephone.
Tim You and Kirsten make a good team. One *insults*, the other *assaults*.
Jan It's okay, Rosa. We've contacted the police, we're safe now.
Rosa Oh I hope that is so.
Jan This horrible business is over. Terminado.
FX *Siren from alarm next door is heard. EVERYONE freezes, looks worried. BRAD scampers LC, looks offstage. KIRSTEN and ROSA enter from kitchen)*
Tim What the hell is that?
(BRAD turns and speaks to the company)
Brad *(Husky voice)* There's someone in the *(Coughs)* garden. *(General fear)*
Jan Oh my God! It's him!
(OTHERS look stunned, afraid as curtain falls quickly/Blackout)

End of Act One

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(Just before the second act begins, an announcement is made. Wait until the audience is seated and the house lights have dimmed. The announcement could be pre-recorded or delivered live)

Act Two

Announcer Ladies and gentlemen - you may have noticed one of our actors has been having problems with his voice. Well we regret to announce that*(Insert name of actor playing Brad)* has lost his voice completely and cannot continue. But rather than cancel the play, one of our wonderful backstage crew members has agreed to step in and play the part of Brad for the second act. It means he'll be using the script but we're sure you'll understand. And a friend of one our actors, who just happened to be in the audience, has agreed to look after the lighting and sound cues. So, we're all set and ready to roll. After all, the show must go on. So please enjoy Act 2 of *It'll Be All Wrong on the Night*.

(Pause. Curtain rises. Alarm is sounding. It's the same scene as at the end of the first act. Actors in same positions. BRAD – now played by the sound/lighting operator and holding a script – moves back from investigating alarm. The actor playing BRAD is far less confident, has trouble getting out the right words on cue. He almost reads each word at a time. Forget interpretation. It might help if he's nothing like the actor previously playing BRAD. The new actor could be the antithesis of a leading man - he's now short, fat and unattractive, with apologies to the actor now cast as BRAD. Perhaps milk bottle glasses which keep slipping and being pushed up would be the icing on the fake, or, he could be the same actor in disguise)

Brad There's someone in the garden. *(General fear)*
Jan Oh my God! It's him!
Kirsten Is it that moron?
Jan Tim, call the police.
Brad *(Checking script, he's lost already)* There's someone in the garden. *(OTHERS grimace. "We should have closed the show". BRAD turns page searching for right place)*
Rosa This crazy man will kill us. We will all be going to die!
(Much distress)
Tim Don't panic. Stay calm. It could be a false alarm.
Brad I think there were at least two of them. *(More distress)*
(Pause as we await the sound effects)
Tim *(ad lib, louder)* I said, "Don't panic!"
Amanda *(ad lib)* I thought I heard the phone ring.
FX Doorbell chimes
Tim *(Ignores incorrect FX and goes to phone and answers it)* Yes? Who is it?
Oh Google.

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- FX** *Phone rings*
(TIM looks at phone, then at bio box then replaces receiver. Phone FX stops. TIM picks up receiver and continues conversation as if nothing has happened)
- Tim** Yes we can hear the alarm. ... Yes, it is very loud. ... *We've got some trespassers? What? Your nephews? Well thanks very much but could you please turn it off. I said 'Please turn it off' (Alarm stops)*
Thank you. *(Alarm starts again. TIM furious. Alarm stops again)* Yes, Googie, I appreciate you running an experiment to see if the alarm works. Yes, we'll definitely buy one. Tomorrow. What? Now? ... Oh all right. In five minutes. Yes, thanks, Googie. See you soon.
(He hangs up)
- Jan** What's going on?
- Tim** Googie sent her two nephews out to trip the alarm. *(OTHERS react)*
- Amanda** She's mad, certifiable.
- Tim** Now she wants us to go over and see how to turn it off.
- Jan** But *she* can turn it off. It's her alarm.
- Brad** *(Slight pause with head in script)* I thought you said it was very expensive.
- Amanda** It is. It's the best you can get.
- Tim** Googie's going out tonight and wants us to learn how to re-set the thing if it goes off again.
- Kirsten** So does that mean you won't be eating in tonight? Because if so I think it's damn rude to ask Rosa to cook something special and then just walk out.
- Brad** I'm staying.
- Jan** We're all staying, Kirsten.
- Tim** We'll be five minutes. The cops know what's going on, we've got Googie's alarm in the garden so let's forget about that road rage idiot and enjoy Rosa's cooking. *(Exiting through conservatory)* Come on, Jan.
- Jan** Five minutes, Rosa. I promise. *(Exits after TIM)*
- Kirsten** I'm starving. *(Ushers ROSA)* Come on, Rosa. I'll give you a hand to dish it up.
- Rosa** *(Being half-pushed into kitchen)* All right, I am going. Okay, okay.
(Pause. BRAD and AMANDA are alone. She moves to settee and beckons to him)
- Amanda** Hey, handsome. Get y'buns over here.
- Brad** *(Sits on settee and holds script)* Is your family always like this?
- Amanda** Forget about my family. You just concentrate on me.
(She moves to kiss him. Momentary pause as he checks script, realises they should kiss so they do, awkwardly. He breaks free and looks at script)
- Brad** Hmm. You have a very kissable month, ... mouth.
- Amanda** Well my mouth'll do for starters. What else can you find?
- Brad** *(Navigating her caresses and the script)* Don't rush me. Half the fun is feeling your ... *(Turns page)* way around. But how can I get serious when you've got the cock running? *Clock running?*
- Amanda** I thought you were a fast operator.

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Brad *(Slowish)* Oh I am fast all right. I could have you ravished and wrapped in two minutes.

Amanda Two minutes? You slow-coach. What happened to the sprinting stud?

Brad Oh ha ha.

Amanda Well come on. Prove it. I reckon you're all talk.

Brad Amanda. Your father's next door and your sister's in the next room.

Amanda *(Moves to curtains upstage and closes them. Lights dim)* So? Time's running out, Big Boy.

Brad What are you doing?

Amanda A bit of scene-setting. Now come on. You've got ninety-five seconds. *(Lights dim except for light from conservatory. BRAD struggles to see script. Does he produce a small torch?)*

Brad Hey! I was only kidding. Amanda. Stop mucking ... *mucking* around.

Amanda *(Back to BRAD. She removes her slacks)* Get your gear off, gorgeous. The clock's running.

Brad Amanda! Oh God. Oh yes! Oh you're fantastic. *(He struggles to remove his clothes holding the script)*

Amanda Seventy seconds, sexy. You'd better keep the foreplay to a minimum.

Brad These bloody jeans. My zipper's stuck.

Amanda Ohhh, Brad. I'm all yours.

Brad Give us a hand, babe.

Amanda Adrenaline and hormones. I'm on a high.

Brad Got it. Damn these shoes. *(Jeans removed)* They're off. Oh baby. Come here.

FX *Front door chimes.*

Brad Shit! There's someone at the door.

Amanda F'get it. Rosa'll answer it. Kiss me.

Brad But ... oh f'get Rosa, you're beautiful.

Amanda Not there.

Brad Sorry. Not where?

Amanda There. Yes. There. There! Ohhh!

Brad Is it always like this for you, baby? I mean this is sensational for me. I think I'm feeling ... *(turns page of his script)* falling in love.

FX *Thunder clap followed by sound of rain which continues*

Brad *(Excited)* Bloody hell! What was that?

Amanda That was the earth moving, darling. Is it moving for you?

Brad Something's moving. Can you just shift your hand? *(Pause)* No, the other one. Oh yes, thanks. Oh that's fantastic.

Amanda *(Giggles)* I hope you're not timing this.

Brad *(Giggles)* I hope you're not miming this.

Amanda *(Laughs)* I'm not. I'm not. *I'm not!*

Brad *(Laughs)* Tell me, ma'am. Do you come here often?

Amanda *(Giggles incorporated)* What? You mean here on the settee?

Brad *(Laughter is infectious)* Now I bet you say that to all the boys. *(Shriek from AMANDA. The laughter has built in intensity. AMANDA is building to hysteria whilst BRAD is guffawing in a stilted way as BRAD is being played by a nervous and unrehearsed actor)*

Amanda Wait'll Kirsten hears about this.

FX *Front door chimes.*

Brad Oh no! There is someone at the door.

Jan *(From conservatory. Calling into garden)* Hurry up, Tim. Just leave it.

Brad Shiiiiit!
(Courting couple disengage. AMANDA grabs her clothes and BRAD'S jeans)

Amanda It's Jan and Dad. Let's get outa here!

Brad I'm getting! I'm getting! Where's my ... ow! *(Stubs his toe in the dark)*

Amanda God! This is a turn-on!

Brad *(Sarcastic)* Oh sure, wonderful. *(Panics)* Where are my jeans?

Amanda Come on, lover. We can finish this upstairs. *(She exits RC)*

Brad Sure but I can't find my jeans? *(Still searching for jeans, doesn't notice she's gone)* Amanda. Amanda!

Jan *(Enters wearing some moisture from the rain)* What's going on? Kirsten? Amanda?
(JAN goes to light switch. BRAD ducks behind settee. Lights come on)

Brad Oh no. Not again.

Jan Who's there? *(No response so heads towards kitchen)* Rosa. *(Suddenly gets fright seeing BRAD crouched low)* Brad!

Brad Oh. Hi, Jan. How are things?

Jan I don't believe it. Were you fixing your car indoors?

Brad You're not going to believe this.

Jan You're right. So, should I slip into something more comfortable?

Brad You're wet.

Jan Yes it's called rain. You haven't got my towel down there I suppose?

Brad I wish I had.

Rosa *(Enters)* Did somebody answer the door bell? *(Sees BRAD)* Brad!

Brad Oh, hi, Rosa. Ah, Rosa, did you know it's raining? Outside I mean.

Jan Brad, you appear to be missing a certain item of clothing.

Rosa *(Shocked)* Brad! Where are your jeans?

Jan You *have* done it again.

Brad Ah, you've heard of the "No smoking day" and the "No diets" day.

Rosa Whoever was at the door will have gone away.

Brad Well today is "No jeans" day.

Tim *(Enters wetter than JAN and shakes water from clothes, hair)* Bloody hell, it's bucketing down out there.

FX *(Sound of rain suddenly becomes quite loud. OTHERS look a little embarrassed. Rain sound then softens but continues)*

Jan Not on the carpet, Tim.

Tim *(Sees OTHERS)* What's happened?

Rosa It's Brad. He's over here on the floor.

Tim *(Suddenly panics)* Oh no! Not that moron. Did he break in? Brad, are you hurt?

Brad No, Tim. I'm not hurt. Not yet anyway.

Tim Well what are you doing down there? *(Twigs)* Oh no. I don't believe it. Not the grease on the trousers again!

Kirsten *(Enters at UR)* Rosa, can you come back Oh, Dad, you're all wet and ... *(Sees BRAD crouching)* Brad's got grease on his jeans again.

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Tim What the hell is going on?

Amanda *(Enters holding BRAD'S jeans)* Oh, full house. *(To BRAD)* Here they are, Brad, all nice and dry. *(Shows jeans to OTHERS)*

Jan Nice and dry?

Amanda Yes, it's raining. Brad's jeans were wet. *(Pause. No-one believes any of it)* You do know it's raining?
(New audio engineer thinks another cue has been missed)

FX *Sound of rain suddenly increases then decreases. Actors can only grimace and bear it.*

Kirsten Funny how the rain just happened to land on his jeans but missed the rest of him.

Brad Yes, I dodged the drops.

Amanda Sorry to be so long, darling. Here you are.
(BRAD takes jeans and rises holding them in front of him. This is not easy as he's also holding his script. Finally he puts script on settee and puts his jeans back on again)

Kirsten *(Naughty actor. Ad libs)* I think you've changed your shorts, Brad.

Brad *(Grabs script. Thrown completely)* What? Ah ... *(Hopping with one leg in jeans)*

Kirsten *(Continues ad lib. Very unprofessional)* When you undressed for me before, you had white shorts. Now they're blue.

Jan *(Decides to get script back onto rails. Ad lib)* That's enough, Kirsten. Leave the poor boy alone.
(TIM resumes what they have rehearsed)

Tim *(Shaking head)* You've gotta be kidding, Brad. What is it with you?

Jan Tim, you're wet. You'll get a cold.

FX *Thunder clap.*

Kirsten Rosa, shouldn't you be back in the kitchen?

Amanda So how was Googie's alarm? Are you both now alarm-literate?

Jan Yes. Your father and I can now set and re-set the most expensive security system money can buy.

Tim If anyone creeps into our garden tonight, they'll set off Googie's alarm in stereo and the whole world'll know about it.

Kirsten Rosa. You've left that pot on the stove.

Rosa *(Worried exiting to kitchen)* Oh, my goodness!

Kirsten Well don't just stand there. Rosa's made a special effort to cook something special tonight. Go and get ready. Dad, you need a towel.

Tim *(Moving DR)* Yeah and Brad needs a cold shower.

Kirsten I'll just see if Rosa needs a hand. *(Exiting to kitchen)* You lot go and get ready.

Amanda That is amazing.

Jan What, Brad undressing for two different women in the one afternoon?

Brad Aw fair go. I promise to keep my clothes on for the rest of the night.

Amanda *(Mock anger)* That's not what you said before.

Tim Brad, later on I'll get you to give me some tips.
(Gives thumbs up and exits to bedrooms)
(OTHERS laugh. Not BRAD)

Amanda You know, Kirsten's amazing. She never helps Rosa.

Kirsten (Re-enters) I heard that. Look, Rosa wants us to dine alfresco.
Jan Outside? In this weather?
Kirsten I mean casual, in here, not in the dining-room. So get a move on.
(Re-exits back to kitchen)
Jan Well, I'll freshen up. (Stops at door DR) Would you like me to knock before I come back?
Brad No thanks, Jan. We'll be fine.
Jan Well try and keep your pants on until *after* we finish eating.
(JAN exits. BRAD winces)
Amanda (All smiles and happiness, collapses on settee) Wow! That was unreal!
Brad Unreal? More like *surreal*! Your whole family caught us in the middle of a very intimate experience.
Jan (Deadly serious) Yes and wasn't it fantastic? We must do it again.
Brad Amanda! Get serious. We were trying a bit of how's y'father in *front* of your father. Your entire family had front row seats.
Amanda (She's purring) Hmm. I like performing.
Brad (He's confused) You what?!
Amanda Come on, you loved it. Admit it. You *loved* it.
Brad It was exciting all right, but I'm too young to have a heart attack.
Amanda (Pats settee) Come here, you. (BRAD checks his script then sits next to her)
Brad You know, you are a very dangerous lady.
Amanda Tell me you liked it. Come on, tell me. What was the best bit?
Brad (Smiles. Sighs) Well I've gotta admit one thing. It sure was different.
Amanda Don't look now but I think your enthusiasm's showing.
Brad (Looks at script then at AMANDA then adjusts his jeans) Oh hell.
Amanda Did you see the look on Jan and Kirsten's faces? They were spewing.
Brad I saw the look on your father's face. I've definitely blown it with him.
Amanda (Cuddling) Just so long as you haven't blown it with me.
Brad God, you are in ... (He has trouble with the word)
Amanda (Whispers) Insatiable
Brad (Now he knows) Insatiable.
Amanda (Back to script) Mmmm and ain't life grand?
Brad Mind you, it did have its funny side. I thought you were going to wet yourself when we started laughing.
Amanda (Amused) I did.
Brad What?
Amanda That's the effect you have on me, sexy.
Brad Phew. I'm getting all tingly and (Turns page) Well it smells great, whatever it is.
(Pause. Both actors know this is wrong. She nods slightly at script. BRAD has turned over two pages. He flicks one back)
Brad Ah, I'm getting all tingly and turned on again.
Amanda Fancy a quick trip to the conservatory?
Brad No!
Amanda (Hurt) No?
Brad I mean, fair go, baby. Once was pushing our luck, twice, well ...
(KIRSTEN enters and gongs a small dinner gong)

Amanda Saved by the bell.
Kirsten Dinner is served. *(To couple on settee)* Sorry to break up the party.
Amanda There's something funny going on here.
Kirsten Yes. It's Brad. He's still got his jeans on. You're losing your touch, sister. *(She exits back to kitchen)*
Amanda *(Stroking BRAD)* Now would you say I'm losing my touch?
Brad No, and I'm never gonna live this down.
Amanda *(Gives up the seduction. Offended)* Oh trust a man to put his ego first.
Brad No, Amanda. I didn't mean that.
Amanda *(Rising, goes behind settee. Thinking aloud)* Kirsten's planning some scheme. She's cooking up some scam.
Brad I don't like Spam. *(AMANDA whacks him)* Ow!
Amanda *(From behind BRAD, in his ear)* Well come on. The sooner we eat the sooner we can get back to the main event.
Jan *(Enters DR refreshed)* Not interrupting anything am I? *(AMANDA pulls back and gives false smile)* Brad, there's something wrong.
Brad Sorry?
Jan You're fully dressed.
Amanda We were just discussing Kirsten's funny behaviour. What's going on?
Jan No idea.
Kirsten *(Enters with serviettes, cutlery and bowl of nuts)* Right, folks. First course is about to be served.
Brad Great. I'm starving.
Kirsten *(Heading DL)* Over here. It's a la casual but I'm sure the food will be fantastic. *(OTHERS follow. They nibble on the nibbles)*
Jan Amanda was just commenting on your new-found culinary interests.
Kirsten *(Putting serviettes on side table)* Me? Cooking? Don't be mad. I'm just helping Rosa relax after that dreadful man was rude to her.
Amanda And after she was rude to Dad.
Kirsten You should have seen her face when she called Dad a schmuck.
Brad I wish I could swear in another language.
(They sit DL. BRAD stands waiting to be asked)
Jan Come on, Brad. You can sit next to me. I'm the only one you haven't undressed for – yet. *(OTHERS amused. Not BRAD)*
Brad *(Sitting)* Can we give the Brad and his jeans routine a rest, please?
Others Ohhh. *(Generally tease him).*
Tim *(Enters, dried off but with slicked hair)* Right. We're not having one of father's famous barbies, so what *are* we having?
Kirsten I'll just go and check with Rosa. *(Exits)* Just talk among yourselves.
Tim *(Joining the group DL)* Brad. Jeans on I see.
Amanda Dad. Can we skip the jokes about Brad and his jeans?
Tim It's not a joke. I'm jealous. Now, where's the wine list?
Jan It's all coming courtesy of Rosa and Kirsten.
Tim Kirsten! What's she doing in the kitchen?
Amanda Nothing, we hope. She failed boiling water.
Jan And listen. Go easy with Rosa. She's very upset about the phone calls.
Tim Well hopefully that moron's disappeared.

Jan Especially since she finished up abusing you.
Tim Didn't upset me. Most of it was in Spanish. For all I know, she could have been calling me a sweet and wonderful bloke.

Amanda You said you knew a little Spanish.
Tim *(Finger to lips)* Shhhh.
Jan In fact the less said the better. Just talk about her cooking.
Tim What's wrong with her cooking?
Jan Nothing. But if you rave about the meal she'll feel better and it'll take her mind off that phone call.
Tim Got it. Don't talk about the creep on the phone, but *do* go overboard about the food.

Amanda Here they come.
Kirsten *(Opens and holds door)* Dah-dah!
(ROSA enters pushing a mobile food trolley or carrying tray. She heads DL with KIRSTEN almost excited tagging along)

Rosa I am sorry to be so long but today I have a few problems.
Tim Yes, Rosa we know ...
Jan *(Interrupting TIM)* Rosa, we're starving. What's on your delicious menu?
Kirsten You'll love it. It's gourmet eating at its finest.
Amanda Have you tried it? Trust you, garbage guts.
Kirsten Ah, maybe just a quick bite.
Jan So that's why you've been helping Rosa in the kitchen.
Kirsten I haven't been helping. I've just been there having a chat. Haven't I Rosa?

Rosa You have been having some chat, that is true.
Brad Well it smells great, whatever it is. *(This time he gets the line right)*
Rosa Kirsten if you could pass me the plates, maybe I could serve the food.
Kirsten Oh sure. *(Takes plastic plates and hands them to ROSA)* Here we are.
Rosa One at a time, please.
(Laughter. KIRSTEN upset. AMANDA teases her sister)

Amanda Good one, Kirst. We can see you know a lot about matters domestic.
Kirsten *(Nasty)* Shut up.
Tim Hey, hey, hey, enough of that.
Kirsten Well I'm sick of you all having a go at my efforts around the house. You're always picking on me always having a laugh.

Amanda We only say it 'cos it's true.
Tim All right, that's enough. *(Pause. Awkward silence)*
Brad I'm a bit of an idiot *(Turns page)* when it comes to doing things around the house.

Jan Except dropping your daks. *(This breaks the tension)*
(ROSA serves food onto plate and hands it to JAN)

Rosa Maybe it is time to eat.
Jan Thank you, Rosa. You're right again and this looks magnificent.
Tim What is it?
Rosa *(Serving another)* Maybe you should try first and then have a guess.
Amanda *(Taking plate)* Thanks Rosa. It certainly looks ... unusual.

Kirsten Maybe Rosa's tried something new. Maybe she's showing her versatility.

Tim Well I'm sure it'll be fabulous. *(Takes plate)* Thanks, Rosa. Your cooking is legendary.

Jan *(Aside)* Not too much. *(TIM shrugs and eats)*

Brad I've heard so much about your cooking, Rosa. I'm honoured to taste it.

Amanda Well come on, take it. *(BRAD takes plate, smiles and nods juggling script)*
We can't wait all night.

Jan Don't forget yourself, Rosa. *(ROSA serves herself)*

Kirsten Okay, away you go. Get stuck in.

Amanda Where's yours? Don't tell me you're back on that starvation kick?

Kirsten No, I'm not real hungry. *(Others react. This is not like KIRSTEN)* Okay, okay. Just a small serve, please Rosa.
(ROSA serves KIRSTEN)

Tim Where's the wine?

Kirsten Oh sorry. It's in the kitchen. I'll be right back.

Tim No leave it. I'll get some from the cellar.

Kirsten *(Miffed)* Why? I can get some from the kitchen. Don't you trust me?

Tim Of course I trust you. It's just that I've got bottles downstairs which need drinking. Let's eat first. C'mon. Two four, six, eight and all that.
(ROSA may sit but KIRSTEN may remain standing. Everyone is eating. They use a fork and eat a pasta type dish. Much of the following dialogue is spoken with mouths full or partly full. BRAD has script on lap. KIRSTEN is looking at others waiting for a response. Awkward pause)

Brad Hmm. Yum.

Tim Yes. What is this?

Jan I think this is something new, Rosa. I can't remember this before.

Rosa No, you are correct. I have definitely not cooked this before.

Amanda It's got a lot of, um, ... I think it's garlic

Kirsten Yeah but just enough.

Amanda It's different though, I'll say that.

Kirsten Yes all right. It's new and different with garlic but what do you think?

Tim *(At KIRSTEN)* Why? Are you a food critic now?

Kirsten Well if Rosa's tried something new, I think we should tell her what we think of it. You'd like to hear wouldn't you, Rosa?

Rosa I suppose.

Jan Well we all know that everything Rosa cooks is superb.

Tim Yes, Rosa, we never get tired of raving about your cooking.

Brad I've never tasted anything like this before. *(KIRSTEN despairs)*

Amanda Rosa, don't take this personally but after today's events and ...

Jan Mandy. Not now. We agreed not to talk about the phone calls.

Rosa No, please, it is okay. I am over my troubles this afternoon.

Jan Are you sure?

Rosa I am sure. It is all behind me. *(OTHERS pleased)*

Tim *(Teasing)* Really? I mean do you really want to live and work in the house of a criminal?

Kirsten Dad!

Jan Tim. It's not funny.

Rosa (*Upset*) Oh, Mister Grey, I cannot tell you. I am so embarrassed.

Tim (*Continues ribbing ROSA*) Of a monster? Of a gilipollas cojudo! (*ROSA is horrified*) Sorry, my dear Rosa but you forget I have a Spanish speaking salesman. (*TIM laughs and teases ROSA*)

Rosa (*Shaking head in embarrassment*) Ohhh.
(*OTHERS – not KIRSTEN – amused and relieved*)

Jan You must teach me, Rosa. I need some new expressions to shout at him.

Rosa Oh you must never speak those words, never. They are very bad words which I am ashamed to speak. Please.

Tim It's okay. It's over. We've had a fright but now it's done. Rosa. Listen to me. Forget what has happened. Okay?

Rosa (*Nods*) Okay.

Kirsten (*Angry*) Look could we please get back to the subject in hand. (*Awkward pause. Silence. All look at KIRSTEN*) We were discussing the merits of tonight's meal. And so much for the agreement not to talk about those filthy phone calls in front of Rosa.
(*KIRSTEN'S venom shocks everyone. Awkward silence*)

Tim Yes, okay, Kirsten.

Brad Well I just think it's great that Rosa can laugh about it.

Kirsten Oh shut up, Brad. Just stick to the undressing.

Jan (*Shocked*) Kirsten!

Amanda (*Attacks her sister*) That's right. Let it all out. Little Miss Jealousy.

Kirsten Jealous! Of you! You're a joke!

Tim Okay, that's enough. I'm sick of you two mouthing off. You're supposed to be bloody adults. Why don't you try acting like one. (*Pause. Things settle*) Starting with an apology.

Kirsten (*Mumbles*) Sorry, Brad.

Amanda (*Equally mumbled*) Yeah. Sorry, Brad.

Tim Now, how about changing the subject?

Amanda (*Changes tack*) You know, Rosa, about this meal. There's something I really ought to say.

FX *Phone rings.*

Jan Oh my God. It's him.

Tim Jan, don't be ridiculous. That other business is over. It could be anyone.
(*Rising*) Just stay calm.
(*TIM crosses to phone. Everyone freezes. TIM picks up phone and speaks*)

Tim Hello. (*The FX continues. This is not meant to happen and TIM is thrown*) Hello. (*Phone keeps ringing. TIM loud*) Hello! (*Phone stops ringing*) Who? ... Say that again. ... No, you've got the wrong number. (*TIM hangs up and heads back to OTHERS*) Wrong number.

Jan Are you sure? Was it a man? Did you recognise the voice?

Tim Yes. No. I mean I didn't recognise the voice and yes, I am sure. It wasn't our maniac. He wanted Carlos Loopydoz or someone.

Rosa (*Stunned*) Lopendez!

Tim Something like that. Why?

Rosa That is my mother's cousin's maiden name!

(Everyone stunned perhaps more by ROSA'S anxiety)

Tim Rosa. Please. It was a wrong number.

Jan It was him!

Tim Jan! It could have been anyone!

Rosa *(Distressed)* This is terrible. That man is trying to hurt me.

Tim No, Rosa. It's not you. It's me. I'm the one who upset him. I'm the one he wants to hurt. But that wasn't him!

Kirsten I don't suppose anyone wants seconds? *(Ignored)*

Jan Ring the police, Tim. Tell them we've had another call.

Amanda But have we? It could have been a real wrong number. *(They look at her)* Dad heard the name, and it really was a wrong number.

Tim Exactly. Look, the bloke had a thick accent. And Rosa, I mean your mother's cousin, well

Jan Maybe we're so jumpy we jumped to the wrong conclusion.

Brad Things are never like this at my place. *(Ignored)*

Kirsten Look, don't let this spoil our meal. Amanda.

Amanda What?

Kirsten You were about to tell us something about tonight's cuisine.

Amanda I was? Oh yes, I was. But I don't want to upset you, Rosa.

Kirsten Why would you upset her?

Rosa It is okay. I was perhaps wrong before. The man on the phone was a wrong number. Come, Amanda, what will you say?

Jan Are you sure, Rosa? We can check this out for you.

Rosa No I am sure. I am a little bit jumpy.

Amanda Well we know you've had a really rough afternoon.

Kirsten We know that, Mandy. We've finished with the phone calls. Now let's talk about the food.

Amanda Okay. I'll say exactly what I think. Rosa, it's good you're sitting down.

FX *Explosion in kitchen. Everyone shocked*

Tim What was that?

Rosa The oven. It has exploded!

Others What!

(General panic. It is not a huge explosion but enough to cause concern)

Rosa *(Rising)* The oven was not switched off and it has been making a noise.

Tim There might be a fire. *(More concern)*

Rosa No, it will be okay. You stay here and finish your meal. I know what has happened. I will fix it. *(She exits UR)*

Brad Can I do anything?

Amanda No, Brad, leave it.

(They settle but are concerned)

Jan There's something wrong. Rosa would never leave the oven on like that.

Kirsten *(Feeling guilty)* She might.

Tim It's those bloody phone calls.

Jan Tim, we're *all* upset. And that's what the creep wants. Not to physically hurt us but to make us afraid. We have to forget him, forget the phone calls and get back to our normal, everyday lives.

Brad Are kitchen explosions normal around here?

(OTHERS look at BRAD then laugh. This has relaxed the mood)

Tim Nice one, Brad. Thanks.

Amanda Yes but it's not just the mess out there in the kitchen. There is something radically wrong with this food.

Kirsten *(Snaps)* What about the food?

Amanada Are you kidding?

Kirsten I think it's fine. This is Rosa's cooking at its best.
(OTHERS scoff. BRAD not so sure)

Jan Kirsten, Rosa is obviously upset. There has to be something wrong with your taste buds.

Kirsten No there's not. I like this ... whatever it is.

Tim Kirsten, this food is tasteless stodge. It's bland, it's overcooked, it's got beginner written all over it.

Brad I think it's okay.

Amanda You would. You live in a bachelor pad with a takeaway stomach.

Tim I can't believe Rosa prepared this meal.

Jan She obviously wasn't thinking. Kirsten, you were with her. Was she doing anything strange in the kitchen?

Kirsten Well, yes ... and no. I mean she wasn't doing her usual thing but then ...

Amanda What are you talking about?

Kirsten *(Annoyed. Gives in)* Oh, all right, it was never going to work anyway.

FX *Thunder clap. Increase sound of rain.*

Tim Well aren't we glad we cancelled the barbecue?

Jan You were saying, Kirsten?

Kirsten Yes. I was. I am.

FX *(Phone rings)*

Tim *(TIM freezes. Pause)* Oh no! Not again.

Jan *(Rising, grabs TIM)* I'll get the phone. You go and check on Rosa.

Tim But it might be that moron.

Jan And it might be my mother.

Tim *(Softish)* Same thing.

Jan *(Pushing him)* I heard that. Go and see what's happened in the kitchen.
(TIM heads to kitchen, JAN to phone)

FX *Lightning flash and lights suddenly cut. BLACKOUT. Dim lights are used for safety*
(Fear amongst group. Phone still ringing)

Brad The lights have blown.

Kirsten Good one, Brad.

Tim There's a torch over there. *(Meaning LC)*

Brad I'll get it. *(He stumbles and falls knocking furniture)* Ow!

Amanda Brad! Are you all right?

Brad I think I've hurt my leg.

Kirsten Quick, take off your jeans.

Amanda Shut up, Kirsten!

FX *Thunder clap*

Jan I'll get the phone, Tim, go and check on Rosa. Just go!

Kirsten I'll get the torch.

It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 40

FX (LIGHTS RESTORED)
Tim (At UR door) Thank God for that. (Opens door and smoke comes out) Rosa! My God, the kitchen's on fire! (Disappears inside)

FX Burglar alarm sounds and keeps sounding.
Amanda (Worried) That's the alarm in the garden.
Kirsten (Very worried) There's someone outside!
Tim (Racing back into room) That's the alarm.
Jan (By the phone) What about Rosa?
Tim She's okay. She'd left a pot on the stove and it caught fire.
Kirsten Not the dessert! (Races to kitchen) Rosa, not the dessert! (Exits)
Tim (To JAN) Don't answer it. (To BRAD) Brad, go and see if there's any vehicle in the driveway.

Brad Right. (Turns page. Looks for instructions. Moves UC)
Tim Get their rego. (Goes to JAN and the phone)
Brad Okay! Leave it to me! (He struggles with french windows)
Amanda You shouldn't answer the phone in a storm.
FX TIM picks up receiver. Phone stops ringing. Thunder clap
Tim (Speaks into phone) Could you hold the line please? (Covers mouthpiece. BRAD has trouble opening door. It opens in, he's pushing it)

Jan Maybe Google's just testing her alarm again.
Kirsten (Pokes head around door) The bloody pudding's burnt to crisp. (Exits)
Tim Amanda. Look in the garden.
Amanda Okay. (Exits LC)
FX Thunder clap
(BRAD has given up trying to get out the door so suddenly heads LC)

Brad (ad lib) The door's jammed. I'll go this way. (Heading LC)
Tim (Into mouthpiece) I'll be with you in just a minute. (Covers mouthpiece)
(BRAD heading LC collides with AMANDA returning. She ad libs "Brad". He ad libs "Sorry" and they continue their journeys)

Amanda (Trembling) There's someone outside. He's coming round the front. (Everyone turns and looks upstage. BRAD enters UL and moves across to UR. He waves as he passes)

Jan Answer the phone, Tim. It could be important.
Tim (Into phone) Hello? Hello? (To OTHERS) They've hung up. (TIM hangs up)

Amanda You'll have to call the police. Dad! Something's wrong.
Jan Do it, Tim.
Tim (Puts phone to ear) It's dead. The phone's dead.
FX Phone rings (It should have been thunder)
Tim (Ad lib) I think it's working again. (Phone to ear) Hello? ... They've gone.
FX Thunder clap.
Amanda Here's Brad.
(They turn to BRAD UC. Again he has trouble with the door this time trying to get in)

Kirsten (Enters in panic) We need a fire extinguisher.
Tim There's one in the laundry. (KIRSTEN exits RC)
Brad (Finally gets French doors to open. Pokes head through) There are two blokes in the front garden and one of them's got a gun! (Panic)

Tim A gun!
FX Car horn (should have been a gunshot)
Tim (Ad lib) It sounds like they're in a car.
FX Train whistle (still can't program the gunshot)
Jan (Ad lib) Or maybe they came by train.
FX Alarm sound stops
Amanda The alarm's stopped.
FX Alarm starts again
Amanda That means we're safe.
Tim No, it cuts out after a certain time.
FX Alarm stops
Brad (Still speaking through the set from upstage) I think they also had rocks or stones or something. (Causes distress. TIM moves LC cautiously)
Kirsten (Enters) I can't find the fire extinguisher! What'll we use? (Exits)
Brad I can fix it! I can fix anything.
(BRAD finally opens door and exits to kitchen)
Tim (From LC) You're right. Everybody down. Take cover if they throw things.
(Immediately TIM, AMANDA and JAN crouch in anticipation. Pause. Nothing)
Jan (Ad lib) Maybe you were mistaken.
FX Sound of breaking glass.
(They scream and crouch even more)
Tim (First to look up. Ad lib) I think the window stopped the rock.
(Pause. Suddenly tennis balls lob in LC. It should have been a brick)
Amanda (Ad lib) It's forty love and balls to you.
Brad (Enters) Is the red extinguisher okay for electrical fires?
FX Phone rings.
Tim Leave it. Let it ring.
Jan Tim, it might be the police trying to contact us.
Brad I'll get it. (Goes to phone)
FX Thunder clap.
Kirsten (Enters) Brad! Quickly!
(KIRSTEN goes to exit back into kitchen but the door jams. She pushes. Then beats on the door and calls) Rosa! Rosa!
Brad (Phone stops ringing. Answers phone) Hello? ... Ah, he's busy right now. Can I take a message?
Tim Who is it? (BRAD holds up hand as stop sign as he listens)
Kirsten (Beating more loudly. Ad lib) Rosa? Rosa? (More pushing and beating)
FX Car horn followed by train whistle
Brad (Hand over phone) They say you've been selected to win over two thousand dollars worth of food and wine from various restaurants.
Kirsten (Desperate beating on door) Rosa!!!
Jan Hang up, Brad then call the police.
Tim No, take their number. Tell them I'll call back.
(Kitchen door opens and smoke comes out. KIRSTEN coughs and waves the air then exits RC)
Amanda Dad, the kitchen's on fire. Dad!

It'll Be All Wrong On The Night 42

FX Voice on loud hailer. "Attention, you in the house. This is the police."
Others The police!
Brad (Into phone) Can we call you back?
Kirsten (Enters with red plastic buckets with FIRE on them) This is all I could find!
FX Strauss waltz is played by mistake, is killed when loud hailer FX begins again
Amanda Brad, help Kirsten!
(BRAD replaces phone and takes one bucket)
FX Voice on loud hailer. "Attention, you in the house. This is the police."
Jan The police think we're the burglars. We need to get outside. Come on.
(JAN heads upstage to french windows)
Tim No, Jan. It might be a trap! (JAN stops at doors)
Rosa (Enters looking dishevelled. Speaks with normal voice – no accent) Call the real fire brigade! The bloody smoke machine's blown up!
FX Smoke from UR comes in more liberal doses
Jan (Furious with jammed doors. Now as herself) Bloody doors! Who built this set!
(JAN pulls at french windows and one door swings open)
FX The song The Laughing Policeman starts playing and continues
(TIM rushes up stage and points to kitchen)
Tim In there, throw it in there.
Brad I've got it!
(BRAD starts towards kitchen, trips and heaves bucket of water. A shower of confetti goes over TIM. The drama has become a farce and the actors have lost control. Smoke billows from UR. Chaos reigns. It's no use pretending. It'll be all wrong on the night. All the actors crash through the fourth wall. KIRSTEN heaves the second bucket of confetti over BRAD. Blame him. AMANDA throws cushions and the others return fire. The Laughing Policeman increases in volume. ROSA uses feather duster trying to tidy the room. She's gone mad. Lights dim or curtain falls as the festivities are in full swing. Add a medley of sound effects as follows)
FX (overlapping) Voice on loud hailer. "Attention, you in the house. This is the police." Burglar alarm, Phone ringing, Glass breaking, Thunder clap, Car horn, Train whistle

Curtain

(Just how the curtain calls are taken depends on the state of your set and the appearance of your actors. The actors could bow then resume throwing cushions, confetti and possibly chase one another offstage)

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