THE VICAR OF DIBLEY 3

The Handsome Stranger

V1.9 8/6/2025

ACT ONE

Scene one - Village Hall int. David and Jim sat at the table;

DAVID: It's been a most extraordinary decade. Do you remember the time Songs of Praise came to the village?

JIM: No, no, no, no, no, no.

DAVID: And those lovely animal services?

JIM: No, no, no, no, no.

DAVID: And the time the church window smashed, and Geraldine just replaced it with clear glass?

JIM: No.

DAVID: You don't remember much these days, do you, Jim?

JIM: I remember things from when I was young. I remember working in the fields for Mr. Porter… and running through the fields with Johnny Porter. Snogging in the fields with Millicent Porter… and Mildred Porter… and Martha Porter. And even on one occasion, Michael Porter. But no recent times. No, I don't see them so clear.

DAVID: You're a good man, Jim. It's always been a bizarre pleasure.

[Enter FRANK and MRS CROPLEY]

DAVID: Ah, Frank, Letitia! Jim and I are just talking about the old times before the vicar arrived.

FRANK: Ah, times have changed. Parish council meetings used to be very short.

DAVID: Were they?

FRANK: Yes. We just did whatever you said.

DAVID: Ah, yes. Happy days.

FRANK: You bossy bastard! I remember when you proposed Hugo to join. Everyone had said, no, you can't have him. He's an absolute congenital idiot.

[Enter HUGO]

HUGO: Best moment of my life. I felt so proud.

DAVID: Ah, Hugo. We're all in a slightly ruminative mood. Life before the vicar.

HUGO: Wow. It was rubbish, wasn't it? We were dead but we didn't know it.

JIM: Like Keith Richards.

[Enter OWEN]

HUGO: Ah, Owen.

DAVID: Life before the Vicar. Better or worse?

OWEN: Oh, much worse. I didn't fancy Reverend Pottle at all.

DAVID: Well. No, he was a 90-year-old man.

OWEN: Exactly.

[Enter GERALDINE]

GERALDINE: sorry I'm late, gosh, it's a mad old world, isn't it? I was talking to Alice the other day. This is hilarious. She said you've got a bona fide Easter Bunny in Dibley.

HUGO: That's right.

DAVID: Yes, that's right. Item one.

GERALDINE: Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry. Well, I just stumbled into the X Files. You're not telling me you all believe in the Easter Bunny, are you?

OWEN: That's right. The Dibley Bunny.

GERALDINE: Oh, well, they've obviously started to put LSD in crunchy bars. I didn't realize.

DAVID: For heaven's sake. We all know it's one of us. It's just a rather sweet tradition that's been handed down over the years. But no one knows who it is who actually dresses up in the costume.

JIM: What?

HUGO: Oh, no.

[General consoling of HUGO]

DAVID: Before we get to item one, Mrs Cropley has something to say?

MRS CROPLEY: Can I talk to you about a bus for the women's institute? We are going to see those lovely dancers in London.

DAVID: No

FRANK: The Royal Ballet?

MRS CROPLEY: No... The Chippendales.

FRANK: Can I come?

MRS CROPLEY: Oh yes! And …I just want to say on behalf of everyone here, Happy Birthday Frank!

[She presents him with a cake and everyone claps]

FRANK: Oh lovely! Chocolate!

MRS CROPLEY: No … Marmite! [MRS CROPLEY cuts cake and starts to get up]

DAVID: Oh God, the Dibley poisoner does her rounds.

MRS CROPLEY: Cake Vicar?

VICAR: Eh yeah, thank you… [trying to be nice]

MRS CROPLEY: You know after Easter I am finally going to write my cookery book, 101 things to make using root Vegetables, my radish and Jerusalem artichoke Jam will be quite the highlight.

VICAR: Right, sounds yummy [She hides the cake in her cardigan pocket as MRS CROPLEY tries to offer the food to the others], So did you do anything special on your birthday Frank?

FRANK: I manured the Dahlias

VICAR: Oh, use your own manure. Obviously, I don't mean your own manure, although I am sure it is excellent. Probably not so good for the flowers, though. Can you just forget I ever mentioned that?

FRANK: Well, I was thinking of going into Whitworth, there's a very exciting exhibition on there, train timetables from the 1920's.

VICAR: Sounds Thrilling.

OWEN: It sounds like utter shit!

JIM: No no no no no no no Yes!

DAVID: Anyway, item number one.

GERALDINE: Actually, before item one. Chairman, can I just inject an item 0.5?

DAVID: No,

GERALDINE: Thank you very much. I just wanted to say that this year is slightly special for me. It's my tenth year in the village as vicar!

MRS CROPLEY: Oh, how very moving.

GERALDINE: Oh, in what way moving?

OWEN: Well, here you are, a woman who could have done anything, gone anywhere, and yet you chose to waste the best 10 years of your life stuck here with these morons.

GERALDINE: Yes, thanks for that.

JIM: But you have given us some great memories to cherish.

GERALDINE: Oh, yes.

MRS CROPLEY: You remember that time Alice gave birth during the Nativity play?

GERALDINE: How could I forget? You tried cutting an umbilical cord during the curtain call.

JIM: And do you remember the time you and I made passionate love on the billiard table in the pub?

GERALDINE: No, Jim, that was a dream.

JIM: Well, what about the time you did a pole dance in my living room alongside Mother Teresa, who was wearing nothing but a skimpy bikini bottom? You can't say that was a dream.

GERALDINE: No, Jim, that was a nightmare.

DAVID: Well, one thing is clear. Of course we must celebrate the vicar's anniversary. So, and I say this with every expectation of disaster, let's have some ideas for the next meeting.

MRS CROPLEY: Ooooh I will do the catering, I've been working on a new cake recipe, Chocolate fingers, with walnuts and a layer of tripe!

FRANK: Maybe I shouldn't attend your celebrations, I just know that any party I am at I bore everyone rigid.

GERALDINE: Well, that's nonsense Frank, who's told you that.

FRANK: Mr Horton. My father. My mother. Both my sisters. My psychiatrist. You.

GERALDINE: Well you don't to believe anything I say Frank. What about the Halloween party. I don't recall you boring anyone there.

FRANK: I didn't

GERALDINE: You see.

FRANK: I wasn't there. I've made up my mind – you'll just have to do without me.

GERALDINE: Well that's a big disappointment Frank, because – she said regretting it already – I was rather hoping you would make the keynote speech.

FRANK: Really?

GERALDINE: Absolutely. I can say with total honesty Frank that no one gives a speech like you.

FRANK: I really don't know what to say! I haven't been this honoured…

GERALDINE: [Raises hand right into his face] Don't say any more. You don't want to ruin the flow when you get home.

DAVID: Delightful, And now, at last, item one.

OWEN: Actually, I've got to go. I'm sorry.

DAVID: Well, hang on, you can't just.

JIM: Good God, it's midnight.

DAVID: No, it isn't. It's 8:00.

FRANK: Your watch must be slow, sir.

DAVID: Why? What time do you make it?

FRANK: 8:00. My watch must be slow as well.

HUGO: And mine. Home after midnight. Alice will be furious. Goodbye, Father.

[All exit apart from DAVID and GERALDINE]

GERALDINE: You don't think I've wasted my life, do you?

DAVID: Of course not. I hope not.

Scene two, Int Vicarage, lights up on ALICE and GERALDINE

[Phone rings]

ALICE: Hello, Geraldine's phone. Well, not actually her phone because the phone can't speak, but Geraldine's phone, meaning Geraldine's usually the person on the phone, even though actually this time it's Alice. So I might have said Alice's phone, but I didn't because it's not mine.

GERALDINE: Who is it?

ALICE: I don't know. They just hung up. People are weird, aren't they?

[Phone rings]

GERALDINE: I'll get it. I'll get it.

[ALICE grabs phone first]

ALICE: Hello, Dibley Vicarage... Well, not actually the vicarage itself, because it can't speak. It's just a building, but... Oh... Hello! Oh, right. Right, I'll tell her. It's Frank. He's at Mrs. Cropley's. She's been taken ill. She's asking for you. What shall I tell him?

GERALDINE: Tell him I'm coming, you silly girl.

ALICE: She's coming... you silly girl. *[hangs up phone]* Oh, dear, oh, dear. I hope she's all right. I love Mrs. Cropley. She's been just like a mother to me. Always wiping things off my face and telling me I look daft.

GERALDINE: Listen, she'll be fine. This is Happy Valley. People don't get sick here. Oh, and by the way, I think that facial cleanliness is overrated. Spinach can be an attractive accessory. Not a lot of people get away with great lumps of it between the teeth. But you do.

[GERALDINE and ALICE exit]

Scene three: Mrs Cropley's cottage

[Lights up on MRS CROPLEY in bed. The villagers are standing nearby, GERALDINE and ALICE enter.]

GERALDINE: How is she doing?

JIM: No. No, no, no... not good.

GERALDINE: Oh. What happened?

FRANK: Well, it was a lovely morning, so I dropped round to see her. I'd chosen a sort of bright tie.

GERALDINE: I'm afraid I'm gonna have to press you for the shorter version

FRANK: Right, Right...I dropped around in this tie.

GERALDINE: Yes.

FRANK: And I knocked on the door. Not a loud knock, just a gentle tap, tap, tap.

GERALDINE: Even shorter than that, Frank, I'm afraid.

FRANK: Right...I came around.

GERALDINE: Yeah.

FRANK: And now she's dying... and she says she wants to see you.

GERALDINE: She's dying?

DAVID: Well, it's not good. We've all been in and had a word with her, but the doctor says she's very weak.

OWEN: It's her heart, poor old girl.

GERALDINE: Oh, Lord. Right, I suppose I better... er, right. I've never actually done anything like this before. Look, it's not an April fool's, is it? And I'm gonna go in there and she's gonna be sitting up in the bed with a custard pie. *[the group shake their heads]* Damn.

FRANK: It's the vicar. She's come to see you.

GERALDINE: Letitia, how are you?

MRS CROPLEY: Not so good, my dear. Breathing always seemed such an easy thing, but suddenly it's a bit of a bugger to be honest. That Frank, he's a nice man, isn't he?

GERALDINE: Oh, he's a lovely man, yes.

MRS CROPLEY: Nice thighs.

GERALDINE: Is that so?

MRS CROPLEY: I haven't led a blameless life, Vicar.

GERALDINE: Oh, Letitia, who has?

MRS CROPLEY: Anthea Turner.

GERALDINE: Yes, Anthea Turner. And of course, the lovely Jane Asher.

MRS CROPLEY: Prince William.

GERALDINE: Yeah. So apart from Prince William, Anthea Turner and Jane Asher, who has led a blameless life, Letitia?

MRS CROPLEY: Hugh Grant.

GERALDINE: Well, hardly...You think so?

MRS CROPLEY: Yes, Fine. In my book.

GERALDINE: Well, interesting book. I'm sure that God forgives your sins, Letitia.

MRS CROPLEY: I hope so vicar.

[MRS CROPLEY moves and moans in pain]

GERALDINE: Oh, do you want me to get the doctor

MRS CROPLEY: No. Before you go, two things. You will be honest with me, won't you? I know I can trust you.

GERALDINE: You can trust me. Yes.

MRS CROPLEY: My cooking.

GERALDINE: Ahh

MRS CROPLEY: Was I a great experimenter. A pioneer whose rich command of unorthodox mixtures will be the stuff of legend in the new millennium. Or was my food just ghastly? You could tell a dying woman the truth, Vicar.

GERALDINE: Very well, you are one of the greats. Mrs. Beaton. Delia Smith, Letitia Cropley. That's the Trinity.

MRS CROPLEY: I thought so... Now, finally, let me bequeath to you my other life's great achievement. Say you'll do it. Promise me.

GERALDINE: Yes, of course I will. What is it?

MRS CROPLEY: It's something I've done for the past 30 years and my father did it before me. *[MRS CROPLEY whispers into the vicar's ear]* You are my chosen one.

GERALDINE: Oh, no.

MRS CROPLEY: You're a lovely girl, Vicar. Chunky, but lovely.

[MRS CROPLEY dies, GERALDINE goes to the others and shakes her head, ALICE cries and hugs the vicar]

[Photos of MRS CROPLEY are projected onto the wall, giving time for the change into Bunny costumes, these can be serious or humorous, such as her looking proud with her cake and others vomiting behind, getting kisses under mistletoe with FRANK, JIM or OWEN.]

Scene Four

[Easter Bunny Scene; The vicar gets dressed up as a bunny, goes into the audience and passes eggs to audience members, before bumping into DAVID, also in a bunny costume.]

GERALDINE: David!

DAVID: Vicar!

GERALDINE: Shhhh..

DAVID: What are you doing?

GERALDINE: I'm the Easter Bunny.

DAVID: You can't be, I'm the Easter Bunny. I promised Letitia Cropley I'd do it.

GERALDINE: Well, so did I.

DAVID: Mad Bat must have forgotten she'd already asked me. How demeaning. After all the time I've spent on these bloody ears.

GERALDINE: I must say, you look surprisingly cute in that.

DAVID: Shut up.

GERALDINE: Sexy little tail, you've got there.

DAVID: I suggest we keep very quiet about this. You do one end of the village and I'll do the other. This will remain our secret.

GERALDINE: Fair enough. Are you sure you don't want to come back to my burrow for a little bit of funny bunny business?

DAVID: Quite sure.

GERALDINE: Oh, hell.

[They bump into OWEN, FRANK, JIM, HUGO and extras also as Bunnies]

OWEN: Anymore of us and we'll be able to stage a production of bloody Watership down.

GERALDINE: Dear old Mrs. C. I bet she's up there right now having a good giggle at us.

DAVID: She better be. If I find she's down here, I'll kill her.

GERALDINE: Hugo. Lovely ears.

HUGO: Thanks. I didn't know you could see them under this costume.

OWEN: Your ears aren't much cop, Vicar. What did you use?

GERALDINE: Couple of coat hangers.

FRANK: Not pipe cleaners.

DAVID: I found you can't beat chicken wire and papier mache.

OWEN: I just took mine off a real rabbit.

Scene Five - Int Vicarage

[ALICE is setting up drinks, to give time for the quick change out of bunny costumes.]

HUGO: Splendid service, Vicar. Very moving.

GERALDINE: Thanks.

HUGO: I particularly liked your quote from Johnny Morris.

GERALDINE: I think you'll find that was Joni Mitchell. Hugo.

HUGO: That's right. "Don't it always seem to go, but you don't know what you've got till it's gone?"

ALICE: Yeah, she was a wonderful woman.

FRANK: Ah, you didn't know her if you didn't know her when she was young.

GERALDINE: And what was she like?

JIM: No, no, no, no. Rampant,

GERALDINE: really?

JIM: Oh, yes. She was a lovely looking girl. Red hair right down to her waist. Eyes so bright they sparkled in the dark. And a French kiss that would suck the tongue out of your mouth like an industrial vacuum cleaner.

GERALDINE: Is that right?

OWEN: Yes, I heard that too. My father used to talk about her. Luscious Letitia!

JIM: Cropley The cracker.

FRANK: Titillating Tish

OWEN: Always lets you dock your boat in a jetty. Letty.

DAVID: No. Come on, boys. Come on, boys. Show a little respect. It's been a very sad week.

GERALDINE: I think the spirit of Letitia will live on in this village.

OWEN: To Letty and all who sailed in her.

GERALDINE: Owen!!

DAVID: Right, we better be off, and leave you to your day, thanks again vicar and a wonderful service.

[Exit DAVID, HUGO, JIM, OWEN and FRANK]

ALICE: I am terribly excited to hear about you celebrating your 10th birthday.

GERALDINE: It's my 10th anniversary as vicar here.

ALICE: Oh, right. You know, I thought Hugo had got it wrong. I kept saying, you know, if she's only 10 years old, how come she's got breasts the size of St. Paul's Cathedral, You know, standing directly next to St. Paul's Cathedral.

GERALDINE: Yes, it's funny how things have changed in these 10 years, isn't it? There were hardly any female vicars then. Oh, I will never forget the look on David's face when he first saw me.

ALICE: I know.*[ALICE pulls a face]*

GERALDINE: No, it wasn't quite like that.

ALICE: No, it wasn't, was it? No, it was more sort of. *[pulls bigger face]* No, no, it was sort of *[pulls even bigger face]*

GERALDINE: No, can you stop it, Alice?

ALICE: All right.

GERALDINE: Okay... It's funny how the battlegrounds have moved. You know, the churches are full of chicks, which is great. And now we're fighting for the rights of vicars to be openly gay.

ALICE: I know. Proudly holding our banner high. Pack the parishes with poofs!

GERALDINE: It's not quite the wording I would have chosen.

ALICE: I, for one, am very much in favour of people coming out the cupboard.

GERALDINE: The closet.

ALICE: Right. Yeah. I mean, what a terrifying idea. You know, you go to collect your coat, first cold day of winter, and standing inside the closet are Graham Norton, Dale Winton and Sir Ian McKellen. So much better they come out the closet where you can see them.

GERALDINE: It's madness, though, isn't it? In my 20s, I don't think I met a Church of England vicar who wasn't gay. I thought you had to be gay to get in. And then they go and try to officially appoint just one openly gay bishop, and it splits the church. I'm thinking of declaring myself gay as a protest.*[laughs]*

ALICE: Yeah.*[laughs]*

GERALDINE: I mean, if you were gay.

ALICE: Great minds think alike.

GERALDINE: Yeah, not on this occasion. But just imagine, like, all the men are dead, right, because they found out that football's poisonous. So you've got a chance to choose a girl. So, who would you plump for?

ALICE: Lots to choose from...

GERALDINE: Yeah, well, half the world's population.

ALICE: And Eddie Izzard.

GERALDINE: Yeah, on some nights, yeah.

ALICE: Let me see. Oh, gosh. Oh, wait a minute. Who's that girl that presents that sports quiz? She's blonde, you know, a little bob haircut.

GERALDINE: Sue Barker?

ALICE: Yeah. Oh, definitely not her.

GERALDINE: *[Picks up magazine with Rachel Hunter on it]* This is quite an interesting option, don't you think? Rachel Hunter, page 7 and 8. And I think there'd be a lot to learn around her curves and crevices, don't you?

ALICE: My God, look at those. And that.

GERALDINE: Yeah.

ALICE: Still, I think first, taking everything into account, I'd probably have to go for the Queen.

GERALDINE: You'd like to sleep with the Queen?

ALICE: Well, no, not particularly, but I mean, be so great to slip into conversation, wouldn't it? I mean, you go down the post office, you buy a stamp, you look at it and you say, I've had her, you know, and you could say, took her a little bit of time to warm up, but was she worth the wait? What about you?

GERALDINE: I think I'll pass on the Queen. I think I'll plump for Rachel, actually. Yeah. And I can have another little Rachel. Rachel Stevens in my pocket as a reserve.

ALICE: Two for the price of one.

GERALDINE: Well, why not? Les be greedy. Les be naughty. It'll be fanny tastic.

ALICE: Minge-nificent.

GERALDINE: Yeah. I'm sorry, it's just getting too late now, Alice. Come on, let's go to bed.

ALICE: I beg your pardon?

GERALDINE: No, no, no, no, no. Separate beds,

ALICE: Phew, I thought for a moment.

GERALDINE: Good Lord, no. No offence.

ALICE: No, no, no, no, none taken.

GERALDINE: All right, good night, then.

ALICE: Night Night.

[ALICE goes to leave and places her hands on GERALDINE's breasts by accident, there are awkward looks the two uncomfortably shake hands and say goodnight.]

Scene six - Village Hall: David, Jim, Hugo, Owen, Frank and Geraldine in attendance.

DAVID: Item four, celebrating the vicar's anniversary. And I fear we have indeed got some ideas in.

GERALDINE: Yes, Jim, I believe you've written to the Pope asking him to make me a saint.

JIM: That's right.

GERALDINE: The only problem is the Catholic issue.

JIM: Is the Pope Catholic?

GERALDINE: Yes, that's the problem. And I'm not.

JIM: You're not?

GERALDINE: No, Jim. None of us are.

HUGO: We're Church of England, Jim.

JIM: Since when?

GERALDINE: Since 1534.

JIM: Well you learn something new every day?

GERALDINE: And Owen, your idea is a cocktail party on Christmas Eve.

***OWEN*:** It certainly is.

GERALDINE: Right. With a stripper.

***OWEN*:** Yes, preferably Kirsty Young, the presenter of Channel 5 News.

FRANK: Yes.

***OWEN*:** Kinky Kirsty kicks ass.

GERALDINE: Yes. Well, I'm afraid I'm gonna have to put my foot down there, guys. No stripper.

***OWEN*:** That's a shame Vicar.

GERALDINE: I like the Idea of the party. So, let's give that a big fat YES!

***OWEN*:** Well, it's something to be getting on with.

HUGO: Father, you could crack open some of that secret supply of fabulously expensive champagne you've been holding back for a special occasion.

DAVID: Yes, I was keeping it for Alice's funeral, but she's looking depressingly healthy.

GERALDINE: Thank you, hero Hortons.

HUGO: And I did have another celebratory idearette.

GERALDINE: Oh, bravo.

HUGO: You know how we always sing the traditional Christmas carols? O come all ye faithful, God rest ye merry gentlemen and have a wombling Merry Christmas.

GERALDINE: Yes. Although that's not strictly a carol.

FRANK: The angel Gabriel went down.

GERALDINE: I think that's came down, Frank. Sorry. So what's your idea, Hugo?

HUGO: Well, I thought we could have a competition in the village to write a new carol for your 10th anniversary.

GERALDINE: Oh, genius. The Godovision song contest. Let's do it.

HUGO: Actually, I've already made a start on mine. I could give you a taster now.

GERALDINE: Oh, fire away she said with a glazed smile.

HUGO: It's inspired by the work of artists such as Eminem, Fat Man Scoop and the Great Nelly.

GERALDINE: Is it?

HUGO: *[beatboxes and sings]* It's gonna come to pass. Yo hear, he's gonna save your ass. Yo hear. His name is Jeezass, yo hear So hallelujah, hallelujah. If you's bad, he's gonna screw ya...What do you think? Would you like me to continue working on it?

GERALDINE: No.

HUGO: Right. Because why mess with perfection?

GERALDINE: Yeah, that's not really what I meant. And as for the anniversary party. Guys, really, just keep it simple, okay? A drink and a few nuts. Perhaps we could have some nuts to eat as well.

OWEN: And the stripper's definitely out? I mean, it needn't be Kirsty. It could be Moira Stewart. She's a little more refined.

GERALDINE: Oh Get a grip. *[OWEN holds his ....]* And not on that.

Scene seven - interior of the vicarage, the party is in full swing.

HUGO: To kick off this evening we have a few words from Frank.

[The villagers take seats, looking bored. OWEN takes out a book. JIM gets ready to go to sleep.]

FRANK: [Clears his throat] I was born here in Dibley, on the 12th of August 1929. And in the light of the present occasion I thought I would review every single vicar who served here since I was born.

JIM: Oh no!

FRANK: I did. And of all of them, you vicar are quite the best ever. Thank you.

[FRANK goes and sits down. The others look in astonishment at how quickly he stopped speaking. They all clap.]

DAVID: Bravo Frank!

OWEN: Best speech you've ever made!

FRANK: Thank you.

HUGO: Right, I think you'll find the evening will really start to rock now! Jim Lights, please. We asked everyone for their favourite picture memory of you. And my own favourite was when you arrived in the village. Owen, projector, please. *[OWEN turns on projector to reveal the first slide]* We were all so happy to have you. Well, except Father. *[slide of DAVID holding a banner 'No women Vicars']*

DAVID: Well, I was just a bit uncertain. I wasn't unhappy. Well, I was a bit unhappy.

GERALDINE: you tried to get me sacked, repeatedly.

DAVID: Yes, well.

HUGO: Right, moving on. And this is Alice's favourite slide. *[shows a picture of a child's slide]*

ALICE: Yeah, I got a bit confused.

HUGO: These are Jim's most memorable pics. *[Pictures of Jonathan Ross, Ricard Madley, Boris Johnson and Donald Trump]*

JIM: No, no, no, no. I thought you said most memorable Pricks.

DAVID: Next is the one picture that truly sums up our life together.

[BANG and Blackout]

GERALDINE: Oh. Oh, gosh.

HUGO: Power cut. Back in a minute.

JIM: Do you remember the great power cut of 2001, when we had no electricity for eight whole months?

GERALDINE: No, that was just you, Jim. You hadn't paid your bill.

JIM: Really?

HUGO: It's a candle situation, I'm afraid.

FRANK: Thank you.

GERALDINE: Personally, I think this is excellent, because we can just talk.

OWEN: Good idea. If I could just kick off. What do you look for in the perfect man Vicar?

GERALDINE: Deodorant.

OWEN: Clever.

GERALDINE: But seriously, Owen, what about you? When it comes to a woman to marry, do you actually know what you're looking for?

OWEN: Yes. Two legs. Although maybe that is a bit fussy. I'd be happy with one. Or none. Or four.

GERALDINE: Moving along. Jim, what are you looking for in a woman? To marry?

JIM: No, no, no, no. No husband. Especially if there's no husband. Unless he's away a lot. Then it is workable.

GERALDINE: Hugo?

HUGO: Well, I always thought I was looking for someone who looked like Posh Spice, but it turned out I wanted something completely different. No, it's really Cheryl Tweedy from Girls Aloud. I'm wanting. But I'm quite happy with Alice for the moment.

GERALDINE: What do you look for in a man, Frank?

FRANK: Someone with an interest of Oxfordshire Village Council Committee procedure, who is 25 and from South America.

GERALDINE: Tricky combination.

FRANK: Certainly is.

GERALDINE: And David, your dream woman?

DAVID: You.

GERALDINE: Aw.

DAVID: And Margaret Thatcher, possibly together?

GERALDINE: Stop it, David. But seriously, I do honestly believe, after the year that I've had, that there's someone out there for everyone.

ALICE: Are you saying that love actually is all around?

GERALDINE: I wouldn't say that. But I would say that you do find love in some of the strangest places.

OWEN: In my cowshed, for a start. No, I mean, seriously, what a lot of people in the city don't understand is how much love people in the country feel for their animals, how linked we are with our dogs and horses and cows. There's real affection for them.

GERALDINE: Well, that's a very good point, Owen.

OWEN: And if they do come across with a bit of bed action once in a while, that's just an added bonus. *[horrified looks]* I'm just kidding.

GERALDINE: You're a bunch of mad, inbred bastards. But we've had a few laughs, haven't we?

JIM: No, no, no, no, no. Yes.

HUGO: It's been extraordinary to think that no matter what, you've been there for us. Stupid, snobbish, smelly, dull. Mad as we are.

JIM: Which am I?

HUGO: You're mad, Jim.

FRANK: Which am I?

Everyone: Dull.

Scene eight - interior of the vicarage

GERALDINE: So, three nuns get killed in a car crash.

ALICE: Oh dear.

GERALDINE: Yeah, and they go up to heaven.

ALICE: Of course,

GERALDINE: And Peters at the gates and he says I'm afraid you are gonna have to answer a question before you come in.

ALICE: Oh.

GERALDINE: So, he says to the first one, don't worry the questions are very easy, what was the name of the first woman, and she says its Eve, and he says yep you're in. So, he says to the second one where did Eve live?

ALICE: [raises her hand] I know that one.

GERALDINE: yeah, yeah, yeah, and she says Garden of Eden.

ALICE: [Simultaneously] Garden of Eden.

GERALDINE: And he says yep you're in!

ALICE: Phew

GERALDINE: And he says to the third one which is the mother superior, I'm afraid the question is gonna have to be a little more tricky for you

ALICE: Well fair enough because…

GERALDINE: Yeah obviously, and he says to her what did eve say when she first saw Adam? And the mother superior says oh that's a hard one, he says yep you're in! [Laughs].

ALICE: [Looking confused] No… She hadn't answered the question

GERALDINE: Pardon?

ALICE: She hadn't answered the question.

GERALDINE: How do you mean?

ALICE: Well, she said it was hard but didn't know…

GERALDINE: Yeah, it just doesn't work as a joke

ALICE: Yes, it’s just that end bit needs a rejig.

GERALDINE: Yeah well, it’s a stupid question, I’m gonna send it back.

[Black out, End of Act one]

ACT TWO,

Scene 1 - Int of Village Hall, David, Hugo, Jim, Owen and Geraldine sat around table:

JIM: And I was down to the last two boxes. £250,000 in one box, 10p in the other. And the banker offered me £100,000 and no, no, no, no, no Noel Edmonds asked me the question, deal or no deal? Well, I wanted a deal, so I said no, no, no, no, no deal. And for some reason that I cannot fathom, they thought I meant no, no, no, no deal.

***OWEN*:** And what was in your box?

JIM: 10P.

HUGO: Right.

DAVID: Any other other business?

GERALDINE: Uh, yes, actually, there is something. I was very cross to hear that sleepy cottage has been sold to yet another layabout Londoner. I mean, honestly guys, if this goes on, Dibley'll be a ghost town and then...

HUGO: Who you gonna call?

HUGO, JIM, FRANK, OWEN: Ghostbusters!!

GERALDINE: Yes, well, I'd love to know which selfish mean I don't care about the village community at all, money grabbing bastard sold them sleepy cottage in the first place.

HUGO: Father did. For half a million quid, wasn't it, Father?

DAVID: Yes, that's right.

***OWEN*:** Oh, that really makes my blood boil.

GERALDINE: Yeah, you go get him, big boy.

***OWEN*:** I only got 80,000 quid for my converted barn. Now why didn't I get more?

DAVID: Possibly because you converted it into an abattoir.

GERALDINE: You know what really gets on my tits?

***OWEN*:** Now I'm awake.

GERALDINE: Stop it, Owen. This place is now so full of absent townies that nothing goes on here anymore.

OWEN: You forget cockfighting every Thursday night. Bring your own bucket.

JIM: And the hurling championship.

OWEN: See who can vomit the furthest. Every Tuesday. Bring your own bucket.

GERALDINE: Yes, those things are lovely. But I do think the time has come for us to have some new activities. So I've decided that I'm going to start an art class and a book club. So would anyone be interested?

[Indistinct mumbles of approval from everyone]

GERALDINE: Oh wow, top fun ahead. Anybody got any other thoughts?

HUGO: Well, if there's going to be so much activity going on, I think we need a village newsletter.

GERALDINE: Excellent, Hugo. Classic way of getting all the villagers talking to each other.

DAVID: Yes, all saying, have you read this? Absolute rubbish.

GERALDINE: Shush, David. It means that everyone can have their own jobs. Like Owen?

OWEN: Photography please. I've had my work accepted by several publications including Man and Horse magazine.

GERALDINE: Oh, well, I'd love to see a copy of that.

OWEN: Unfortunately, the police seized them.

GERALDINE: All right, moving on. Jim Agony aunt?

JIM: Can I wear a frock?

GERALDINE: Yes, if you like. Hugo?

HUGO: Can I do Hard News?

GERALDINE: I doubt it, but the jobs yours. Anyway. Frank?

FRANK: Can I do a lighthearted Occasional series about the semantic origins of local landmarks and the a priori psephological implications of 18th century land sales?

GERALDINE: No. David, what about you?

DAVID: I'll do the obituary column.

GERALDINE: Right. Well, excellent. We've got a plan. Hooray. Okay, over to you, David.

DAVID: Yes, well, there is one little thing. I brought along a bottle of champagne because although she may not realize it, the vicar last weekend did her 100th wedding while she's been here.

GERALDINE: Oh, I take 100. Goodness me. So that's 100. Happy in love, brides and grooms. And I'm always the vicar. I'm never the bride. I'm always in the cassock. Never in the lovely big white frock.

DAVID: Oh, come on, someone say something to cheer her up.

OWEN: I'll marry you, dolly knockers.

GERALDINE: Oh, God, shut up.

Scene two - Int vicarage, Alice and Geraldine chatting,

ALICE: I've been reading that fantastic new book from the Bible?

GERALDINE: What fantastic new book from the Bible?

ALICE: The Da Vinci Code, you know, it's so much better than Genesis and that boring old stuff.

GERALDINE: Hate to tell you, Alice, the Da Vinci Code is not a new book in the Bible. It's just a story.

ALICE: Oh, that is so disappointing.

GERALDINE: I know.

ALICE: To think the Catholic Church has fooled you as well, Mrs. Gullible Gusset. That's what they want you to believe. And I've been thinking.

GERALDINE: Oh, always a worry.

ALICE: Well, you know how Jesus married Mary Magdalene and how their descendants are still alive today, but their true identities are hidden in these Da Vinci codes.

GERALDINE: Oh, I have a horrible feeling I know where you're going with this.

ALICE: You know how Mary Magdalene is the chalice that received Jesus' seed?

GERALDINE: Yep. You're going there.

ALICE: Well, the code is so obvious. What name rhymes with chalice?

GERALDINE: Let me just get this straight. You believe that you, Alice, are the direct descendant of Jesus Christ?

ALICE: It's hard to come to any other conclusion with the evidence available. I mean, think about it, how come I have so many children.

GERALDINE: Because you don't know how condoms work.

ALICE: Because my holy quest is to populate the earth with God's children. And here's the clincher. When I first asked my mother who my real father was, why did she say God knows?

GERALDINE: Look, Alice...

ALICE: Do not worry, my child. The knowledge that I am Christ's offspring on earth will not change me.

GERALDINE: Well, that's a shame. Meanwhile, back in the real world, I'm off to sleepy Cottage to visit that new bloke. Do you want to come with me?

ALICE: Oh, lovely.

GERALDINE: What?

ALICE: To welcome him into our happy Community?

GERALDINE: No, to tell him I'm fed up with rich Londoners taking over our village and that he can either get stuck in or sod off.

ALICE: Yeah, you go, girl. And I'll tell him who my great, great, great, great great grandfather is.

GERALDINE: Oh, Jesus Christ.

ALICE: Precisely.

GERALDINE: Come on, then. Let's give this metropolitan wanker a piece of our mind. Actually, on second thoughts, I'll just keep him a piece of my mind if you like. You haven't got much to spare have you.

ALICE: Such a tease.

GERALDINE: No, seriously, you haven't.

Scene Three – Int. Harry's house:

[GERALDINE knocks on the door]

GERALDINE: Oh, typical. So damn snotty, Mr. Towny Tosser can't even be bothered to answer the door to us common country folk.

ALICE: We absolutely hate him, don't we?

GERALDINE: We loathe him.

ALICE: We loathe him

GERALDINE: And everything he stands for.

[HARRY opens door]

HARRY: Oh, hello.

[ALICE and GERALDINE are both excited and simultaneously reply]

GERALDINE: Hello. *[giggling]*

ALICE: Hello. [also giggling]

HARRY: Do come in.

GERALDINE: Yes, lovely.

HARRY: Sorry, it's a bit of a mess. Just moved out of this stupid big flat in London. It's gonna be a bit of a squeeze squeezing it all in, so. Well, if you see anything you like the look of, just steal it. I'll never know.

ALICE: Really?

GERALDINE: No, not really.

HARRY: Oh, I'm Harry, by the way. Sorry? All over the shop today.

GERALDINE: Oh, right. And I'm Geraldine. I just live down the lane.

HARRY: Excellent.

ALICE: Yeah. And I'm Alice.

HARRY: Splendid. What a surprise to actually receive a visit from a neighbour. Lived on the same street in London for 15 whole years. The bell never rang once.

ALICE: Oh, we had a bell like that. We wired it wrong.

GERALDINE: So, Harry, lots of books, yeah?

HARRY: Yeah, lots of books. Absolutely love them. My weakness.

ALICE: Me too.

GERALDINE: Ignore her.

HARRY: Excellent. Your favourite book.

GERALDINE: No, really, Ignore her.

ALICE: It's tricky. It's a toss up between Jill's Gymkhana.

GERALDINE: Here we go.

ALICE: And the story of the Mole who knew it was none of his business.

GERALDINE: Jackpot.

HARRY: Can't say that I know that one.

ALICE: Oh, it's great. It's like a sort of modern mystery thriller. You see someone and we don't know who, does a Poo on the head of the Little Mole.

GERALDINE: It's about a poo. So, Harry, what are your favourite books?

HARRY: Oh, I don't know. Pretty traditional stuff, really. Love John Le Carre. Deeply admire Birdsong. Jill's Gymkhana, of course.

ALICE: Snap.

HARRY: What about you, Geraldine?

GERALDINE: Well, I love Jill’s Gymkhana.

ALICE: Snap.

GERALDINE: And, uh actually, I quite like the Bible.

HARRY: Oh. Bit far-fetched for my taste.

GERALDINE: Fair enough. I love Jane Austen. Yeah, I think Sense and Sensibility's my favourite. Well, any of the ones where the girl gets swept off her feet by a handsome stranger after a couple of juicy fist fights and a terrible misunderstanding.

HARRY: Right. Has that ever happened to you around here? Any handsome strangers ever sweep you off your feet?

GERALDINE: No. No, not yet.

HARRY: Well, there you go.

GERALDINE: Right.

HARRY: Sorry. Sorry. Do sit down. You entered with a great sense of purpose. What can I do for you?

GERALDINE: Oh, sorry, I almost completely forgot. We just came really to say, you know, welcome to the village and all comers all welcome here in the bosom of my bosoms. That's our village motto. I think that was it, wasn't it, Alice? Yeah.

ALICE: Oh, apart from the bit about being fed up to the back teeth with you townie bastards coming to our village and destroying our local community with your smug selfishness.

GERALDINE: Yeah, apart from that bit, you towny bastard.

Scene four, village hall, set up for an art class;

GERALDINE: Right, very exciting. Calling to order the very first meeting of the Dibley Art Club. Very good attendance. David, lovely to see you.

DAVID: Nothing on tv.

GERALDINE: The first meeting is going to be a life class.

HUGO: Bravo.

***OWEN*:** What is a life class?

HUGO: Well, I don't actually know, but I just like saying bravo always perks things up a bit.

GERALDINE: I think Hugo, it's the study of the human body.

HUGO: Oh, right.

GERALDINE: In light of which, this is Felicity, our delightful model. If you'd like to go up there and you're going to draw her and then we'll all talk about it at the end, okay? Now, guys, I've been an absolute twit and I've forgotten the biscuits I bought to reward you for all your hard work. So I'm just going to nip home. Be back in a few minutes to check on progress. So, Felicity, the dreaded moment has arrived. So over to you.

FELICITY: Okay, see you later.

GERALDINE: See you later.

[FELICITY disrobes and the men just stare. Meanwhile GERALDINE exits and bumps into HARRY out for a walk, possibly in front of the stage]

[HARRY walks up behind GERALDINE]

HARRY: Hello.

GERALDINE: Oh, hello.

HARRY: I was just trying to get to grips with village. Mind if I string along?

GERALDINE: No, you string along. You pring along. You my ding a ling, along. Sorry, I'm talking absolute twoddle.

HARRY: So,I heard through the grapevine that we have a woman vicar.

GERALDINE: Yes. Yes, we do. Yeah.

HARRY: How is that? Is she popular?

GERALDINE: Oh, massively. Around these parts she's known as Wonder Woman. And that's by people who don't like her.

HARRY: Yeah?

GERALDINE: Yeah.

HARRY: I'm actually rather pro women vicars myself. There's something quite sexy about that white collar thing.

GERALDINE: Really?

HARRY: It's a bit like nurses. Something about the uniform a man just can't resist.

GERALDINE: Really?

HARRY: Stark, crisp exterior, with a promise of softness beneath.

GERALDINE: Okay. Not quite sure about the moral position there. Don't really think we need the parishioners thinking about knobbing the vicar.

HARRY: Yeah, fair point. And she's probably a very nice plain lady with white hair and smells a bit of lavender.

GERALDINE: Well, actually, she…

HARRY: Actually, I'm gonna go this way.

GERALDINE: Oh, right.

HARRY: Promised myself I'd head up the hill today.

GERALDINE: Right.

HARRY: See you around. *[HARRY heads to leave]*

GERALDINE: Okay, bye.

HARRY: *[He rushes back]* Sorry. Sorry to be cheeky.

GERALDINE: Yes.

HARRY: You're the only sane person that I've met in this village, and I just wondered if you'd fancied a bite of supper tonight.

GERALDINE: Oh, blimey, yeah. Yes, yes, I'd love to. Although before that…

[HARRY's phone rings]

…I think there is something rather important I should tell you. There's a phone. Phone ringing...

HARRY: Sorry. *[Answers phone]*

GERALDINE: No, no, it's alright, he's answered it... that's fine.

HARRY: Hello? Yeah, speaking.

GERALDINE: I'll just stand here. Wait.

HARRY: Sorry. This is gonna be a bit of a long one.

GERALDINE: Oh,

HARRY: You know that really important thing you're gonna tell me?

GERALDINE: Yeah.

HARRY: Why don't you tell me tonight? About eight? Pub at Eastleigh, is it?

GERALDINE: Yeah, okay.

HARRY: Forgive me.

GERALDINE: Oh, listen, I'm good at forgiveness. That's my job.

HARRY: Yeah, okay. Right. *[HARRY leaves]*

GERALDINE: Oh, it's a date. I've got a date.

[GERALDINE returns to the art class only to find the men unmoved with their mouths wide open staring at the naked model FELICITY.]

GERALDINE: Sorry I'm late. Tiny distraction. How did it all go?

FELICITY: Very well, thanks.

GERALDINE: Oh, good. *[Goes to check on the men's artwork]* So, how are you doing? Boys?

OWEN: Brilliant.

GERALDINE: Right, well, time to reveal the paintings. The first Dibley masterpieces. Watch out, David Hockney, here comes David Horton.

DAVID: Oh, well, I'm not quite sure that I've...*[Tries to hide that he done nothing]*

GERALDINE: Do you mean to tell me that none of you have done any painting at all?

OWEN: Who'd be stupid enough to waste their time painting when there's a naked girl sitting in front of them?

GERALDINE: Oh, well, not a good start. Still, better luck next week. Sorry, Felicity. It was £10 for the hour wasn’t it?

OWEN: *[Jumps out his seat with cash in his hand]* Here's another 20. Stick around.

[The other men leave their seats and offer money to felicity]

GERALDINE: All right, let's see. Only nine hours to get ready. Come on.

[GERALDINE rushes off to get changed]

Scene five, Int of a Pub, Harry and Geraldine sat at a table.

HARRY: You're looking lovely.

GERALDINE: Thanks. I came straight from work.

HARRY: So, what is it that you do?

GERALDINE: Oh, well, I was about to say.

HARRY: Oh, sorry. Terrible question. Must get to know you first before I find out what you do. I mean, imagine, for instance, if someone said they're an accountant. You're immediately going to think less of them. And there are probably some very gripping accountants.

GERALDINE: Absolutely. Yes. I once met an accountant who was, oooh, 50 times more interesting than any other accountant I'd ever met.

HARRY: What was he like?

GERALDINE: He was very dull Indeed. *[They Laugh]* So, Harry, how much time do you think you'll be spending in the village?

HARRY: Well, I'm gonna be a bit of a weekender in reverse.

GERALDINE: Right. So you'll not hear our vicar's sermons anyway?

HARRY: I'm afraid not, no.

GERALDINE: Oh, well, that's a pity...

HARRY: Actually, I went out on a date about 100 years ago with someone who was training to be a vicar.

GERALDINE: Really? Funny you should say that because...

HARRY: I couldn't get past the dog collar. Just kept thinking, no, God's watching and he's bigger than me. Really put me off.

GERALDINE: Right.

HARRY: Anyway, let me guess. I reckon you're a teacher.

GERALDINE: Well, I… I suppose I am, yeah.

HARRY: What kind of students?

GERALDINE: Special needs.

[Enter HUGO]

HUGO: Hello.

GERALDINE: Hello. Hugo, this is Harry. Hugo, Harry, Hugo, Harry.

HARRY: Thank you. Nice tie.

HUGO: Oh, thanks. So, what do you think of our vicar, then?

[GERALDINE lets out an uncomfortable laugh]

HARRY: Well, I must confess, I haven't actually had a chance to get to know her yet.

HUGO: Ah, yes, brilliant. She is indeed a mystery to us all.

GERALDINE: Ah, what a shame you've got to go away straight away. Oh, goodbye. Oh, what a shame.

[GERALDINE shews HUGO away, HUGO exits]

HARRY: Oh, this vicar is clearly quite something. Everyone in the village seems to be obsessed with her.

GERALDINE: Well, no, I wouldn't say that. I know her very well and actually; she's got more massive faults.

HARRY: Oh, well, haven't we all?

GERALDINE: I don't know I discovered any of yours yet.

HARRY: And I yours?

[DAVID enters]

DAVID: Ah, Vicar, excellent to see you. *[Shaking HARRY's hand]* David Horton, head of the village council. I see you're getting to know the vicar already. Just off for a wee. If you'll excuse me Vicar.

GERALDINE: On the subject of the massive faults, obviously I'm a big fat liar.

[HARRY smiles]

Scene six, exterior of the vicarage.

HARRY: Good night, Vicar.

GERALDINE: Good night, potential member of the congregation.

HARRY: That was a lovely evening.

GERALDINE: I'd ask you in, but obviously I am a vicar and this is our first date, so I'm afraid any lip contact is out of the question.

HARRY: Quite right too. Good night, Geraldine.

GERALDINE: Good night, Harry.

[HARRY leave, GERALDINE runs inside and talks to a picture of Jesus hanging on the wall]

Lord. I don't do this very often, but just in case any of this on the knees stuff actually works, please can you let him get a little crush on me?

[knock at the door]

Oh...

[It is HARRY at the door]

HARRY: I just wanted to say again, that was a wonderful evening.

GERALDINE: Yeah, it was.

HARRY: And I was just after some clarification, re dates and kissing.

GERALDINE: Ah, right. Well, I would say first date, definitely no.

HARRY: Right.

GERALDINE: Second date, probably no. Third date, definitely yes. With tongues.

HARRY: Excellent. Thanks for clearing that up. Bye, then.

GERALDINE: Bye.

[HARRY kisses GERALDINEs hand and leaves again, GERALDINE runs to talk to picture of Jesus]

You. You are good. You are really really good.

[Another knock at the door and HARRY returns for a third and final time]

HARRY: No excuses this time. Just wanted one last look. There. Well, see you tomorrow, I hope.

GERALDINE: Yeah, well, that would be gorgeous.

HARRY: Great. Bye.

GERALDINE: Bye. Oh, by the way, I never did ask you, what is it you do?

[HARRY exits and from afar shouts back]

HARRY: I'm an accountant.

GERALDINE: Ahhh.

Scene seven, Int of the Vicarage, ready for book club.

GERALDINE: Well, welcome to Dibley Book Club on this glorious evening when the world is adorable and everyone in it is utterly beautiful. Even Owen.

***OWEN*:** Are you on drugs?

GERALDINE: No, I am not on drugs. Life is my drug of choice.

HUGO: Mine too. *[Fist bumps the air in excitement]*

GERALDINE: Great! Well, our first book is On Beauty by Zadie Smith. And who'd like to kick off the discussions?

JIM: Perhaps Owen.

GERALDINE: Oh, right. Owen.

***OWEN*:** Well, my first impression was that the author is a very pretty young lady.

GERALDINE: Well, that's certainly true.

***OWEN*:** She's a lovely, lovely girl.

GERALDINE: Right. And you got that impression from this photograph in the jacket cover?

***OWEN*:** Yes.

GERALDINE: Right. And what did you think about the book itself?

***OWEN*:** I haven't really got around to that bit.

GERALDINE: So you haven't actually read the book?

***OWEN*:** No.

GERALDINE: Okay. Well, can anyone else kick off the discussion?

[ALICE raises her hand in excitement]

Excellent. Exactly what I've been dreading. But excellent. Alice?

ALICE: Well, Geraldine, I feel the title says It all.

GERALDINE: On beauty.

ALICE: Yes.

GERALDINE: In what way?

ALICE: Well, it describes what the book's about...Black Beauty.

GERALDINE: The horse?

ALICE: Yeah!

GERALDINE: Have you read the book, Alice?

ALICE: Well, I haven't actually finished it yet, but as I've seen the film of Black Beauty twice, I thought that would probably do.

GERALDINE: How much of the book have you read?

ALICE: Well... The title.

GERALDINE: Just the two words.

ALICE: Yes, but very impressed by both of them.

GERALDINE: Right, I'm smelling a little problem here. How many of you have actually read the book? I mean, got past the first page?

[looks around at the room and no one replies instead they look sheepish]

None. Right. So, we're having a meeting about this remarkable book On Beauty by Zadie Smith, who was the Booker Prize nominee. A brilliant take on E.M. Forster's seminal Howards End. And none of you have bothered to read even a page of it.

HUGO: Why don't you just quickly tell us what it's about and then we can discuss that?

[The group chatter and agree]

GERALDINE: Oh? Well, all right. The book this week is On Beauty by the very lovely Zadie Smith. She was the Man Booker Prize nominee in 2005. It's a rather brilliant modern take on E.M. Forster's seminal Howards End. And um...it's that rare thing, a novel that is as effective.

DAVID: You haven't read it either, have you, Vicar?

GERALDINE: No, I haven't. But. Neither of you?

DAVID: Well no.

GERALDINE: I baked the cake. I don't have to read the damn book as well, do I?

FRANK: I'm only here for the Cake.

JIM: Yeah, me too.

GERALDINE: Right. Right, look, just so that this isn't an entirely wasted evening, let's put these books down and let's think of a book that we have all read that we can discuss.

[Lights down to show passing of time, indistinct chatter among the group, lights up this time GERALDINE is holding a copy of Winnie the Pooh, which is unseen by audience at this point].

GERALDINE: But accepting the fact that he's obviously suffering a deep depression, is there any way that any of the normal social escape routes, like friendship, celebration, possessions, could help to pull him out of it? Frank?

FRANK: Well, a mixture of the three could be his salvation.

GERALDINE: But are they? Are they? Let's return to the purity of the original text to find out. When the party was over and all his friends had left, Eeyore still felt fairly gloomy.

[GERALDINE shows that she is holding a copy of Winnie the Pooh]

You see? There's no change.

[Lights out]

Scene Eight – Ext. Dibley Countryside,

[GERALDINE has DAVID, HUGO, FRANK, JIM and OWEN sat with large white paper *on easels,* ready to paint the beautiful countryside. Birdsong can be heard.]

GERALDINE: At last, the beauty of Dibley can be captured on canvas forever. I'll be back in 45 minutes, and I'll expect to see work to rival the greatest artist that ever lived...Hugo?

HUGO: Rolf Harris.

GERALDINE: Indeed. *[notices OWEN sharpening his knife]* What are you doing with that knife, Owen?

***OWEN*:** Well, I thought if I chopped one of my ears off like Vincent Van Gogh, it might improve the quality of my work.

GERALDINE: Right. Should we try one first of all, with both ears on?

***OWEN*:** Fair enough. How about if I chop one of Jim's ears off, then?

GERALDINE: No!

***OWEN*:** What about Frank's?

GERALDINE: Yeah, okay.

[GERALDINE notices HARRY walking and GERALDINE rushes into the auditorium to bump into him.]

HARRY: Hi.

GERALDINE: Imagine bumping into you again.

HARRY: Oh, well, it's a small village. Yeah, I was just going on a little stroll to nowhere in particular.

GERALDINE: Well, what a coincidence, because nowhere in particular is exactly where I was heading.

HARRY: Right.

GERALDINE: Yeah.

HARRY: Good to get some exercise.

GERALDINE: Yeah, I haven't had any exercise for ages *[pants]*

HARRY: So does this, I wonder, constitute the second date?

GERALDINE: Ah, tricky one. More like a half a date, really.

HARRY: Right. And what, I wonder, would be the correct level of intimacy for such a moment?

[GERALDINE takes his hand and they walk off]

Ah, good choice.

[Lights down to show passage of time]

[Lights back up to reveal the men working on their paintings, GERALDINE enters.]

GERALDINE: So I bring you up to the most beautiful place in the country, and the question is: was it worth it?

[The men turn their easels round one by one. First DAVID, then HUGO, then FRANK, then JIM. Each is a picture of a naked woman, in a different style, each slightly ruder than the previous one]

And the answer is, no, it wasn't.

[OWEN turns his around. It is just a massive pair of boobs in close-up]

Oh!

[Blackout]

Scene nine - Int vicarage,

[Lights up. GERALDINE crying. There is a knock at the door, It's HARRY. GERALDINE invites him in.]

HARRY: You all right?

GERALDINE: Yeah, I just. I've just been crying, that's all.

HARRY: Oh dear, shall I come back later.

GERALDINE: No, no, no. Come on in. Sorry, I've just been rewatching Sense and Sensibility.

HARRY: Ahhhh

GERALDINE: It's that moment where Emma Thompson finds out that Hugh Grant is not engaged to another woman, but that he's single and available and that he loves her after all.

HARRY: Oh, yes. And she makes that extraordinary noise.

GERALDINE: Yeah, she goes 'Bleugh' like that.

HARRY: Like she's giving birth.

GERALDINE: Yeah. To some enormous, great big giant baby! "Bleugh Bleugh" like that... I don't know. Somehow it still manages to make me cry. Although I think it fails on the realism front, to be honest. I mean, I suspect if some bloke you're totally in love with comes around, asks you to marry him, you could probably resist going "Bleugh Bleugh".

HARRY: Yes, you really should.

GERALDINE: Yes. I bet when Brad Pitt asked Angelina Jolie to marry him, she didn't go, oh, Brad "Bleugh Bleugh!". *[They laugh]*

HARRY: Absolutely not.*[Still Laughing]* Actually, there's a bit of business that I want to get out of the way before the evening starts.

GERALDINE: Oh, right.

HARRY: I've been doing some calculations because I'm an accountant.

GERALDINE: Yeah?

HARRY: And? Well, it seems that you're on the brink of going into some quite serious debt.

GERALDINE: Debt?

HARRY: Yeah. You see, I've worked out that my visit here tonight could actually constitute a third date. And therefore you would in

fact owe me the sum of one kiss. With tongues. And I would hate for you to get into arrears.

GERALDINE: Well, obviously, I would like to double check those figures. So the first date was the dinner, wasn't it? The second date was sort of hand holding.

HARRY: It's all itemized.

GERALDINE: Right. And it is sinful to be in debt, isn't it?

HARRY: Sinful indeed.

GERALDINE: And when would you like this account to be settled?

HARRY: Now?

GERALDINE: What, this minute?

HARRY: This second.

GERALDINE: Right... *[they go to kiss and the lights go down]*.

Scene Ten, ext

[Lights up on HARRY taking a phone call, GERALDINE is about to approach him when she overhears his conversation, and her happiness turns to sadness.]

HARRY: Hello, darling. You're back. I have missed you so much. No, no, no. Just come straight over. I got so much to tell you. No, of course not. Look, just get here by three and I will take you out for the most gorgeous long walk. All right, chicken? Yeah, I can't wait. Love you.

[GERALDINE returns to the vicarage where ALICE is.]

ALICE: Oh, love what fools it makes of us all.

GERALDINE: Yes, indeed.

ALICE: Week after week I've been snogging that new puppy. And then whoopsie daisies. I've got a great big mouth ulcer.

GERALDINE: What a lovely romantic story.

ALICE: How's it going with Mr. Dreamboat? Has he driven his purple Porsche into your parking space?

GERALDINE: No, Alice, he hasn't. Shut up and get out. Actually, what time is it?

ALICE: Well, it's nearly 3:00.

GERALDINE: Oh, God, I've got to go. There's something I've got to do.

ALICE: Well, can I come?

GERALDINE: No. Oh, please, no.

ALICE: Please let me come. Where are you going?

GERALDINE: I'm going to Narnia.

ALICE: Narnia?

GERALDINE: Yeah. Would you like to lead the way, Alice?

ALICE: Yes, please.

GERALDINE: OK. There we go. *[GERALDINE pushes ALICE into a cupboard]*

ALICE: Mr Tumnus?

[GERALDINE leaves the vicarage to go outside, which will be in front of the stage. She hides when she sees a beautiful young women ROSIE walking to meet HARRY slightly concealed from the audience view as if witnessed by GERALDINE]

HARRY: What time did you call this?

ROSIE: Oh, come here. Just love you.

HARRY: Right, I'm taking you for a walk. So romantic around here. Really gets the juices flowing.

ROSIE: It's gorgeous, isn't it?

[HARRY and Rosie proceed to walk around the auditorium as if strolling through the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside. GERALDINE proceeds to follow them in stealth mode, pushing her way through the audience, pretending to steal a drink, hiding on their lap, picking up a newspaper with eye holes cut out, going to the bar and getting a drink, and other physical comedy to show her stalking them. HARRY and Rosie walk into his house, out the auditorium leaving GERALDINE looking all sad and alone as she returns to the Vicarage only to find ALICE still stuck in the Closet].

ALICE: Mr Tumnus?... Mr Tumnus? *[GERALDINE lets ALICE out and pushes her to the front door]* Bye...

GERALDINE: *[Takes out a bible that is concealing a hidden Chocolate Bar]* When all else fails you... *[She eats the Chocolate]*

[Lights fade out]

Scene Eleven: Exterior outside vicarage

[Lights up. HARRY walking, GERALDINE sees him, tries to go the other way but it's too late]

HARRY: Hello.

GERALDINE: Oh, hello.

HARRY: Haven't seen you for a few days.

GERALDINE: No, I've been writing sermons about morals and fidelity, that kind of thing. And I thought since the arrival of your extraordinarily attractive, gorgeous guest, you. You might appreciate a bit of privacy.

[ROSIE enters]

ROSIE: Hey.

HARRY: Oh, there she is now.

GERALDINE: *[under her breath]* Oh, God.

HARRY: Rosie, this is Geraldine.

ROSIE: Hello, Harry has talked so much about you. He says you're the best thing about the village and he really loves the village.

GERALDINE: Oh, well, isn't that nice? I meant to say to you, Harry, that, you know, I do cut price weddings for people who are nice to me… and funerals.

HARRY: Told you she was funny.

GERALDINE: Yeah, yeah, that's me. Funny, funny, funny. You. You don't have to be attractive when you're as hilarious as I am. All the livelong day.

ROSIE: I'm sorry, darling, but we really should go and get the start of the film.

HARRY: Absolutely.

ROSIE: Well, Geraldine, it's been really nice to meet you at last.

GERALDINE: And heavenly to meet you, Rosie, eventually.

ROSIE: I bet he never mentioned me once, did he?

GERALDINE: No, he didn't, actually.

ROSIE: Men.

GERALDINE: Men indeed. Honestly. Honestly. Sometimes you could just punch them, couldn't you? *[punches HARRY in the arm]* Or stick their nuts in a vice. Sorry I'm just being funny again. I'm a riot *[walks away fake laughing, turning back to have one last look as the couple walk away. Lights down]*

Scene twelve: Int The Vicarage.

GERALDINE: Well, yes, fairly well done, all of you on our first attempt at a newsletter. We've got the proofs now, so let's start at page one. Hugo Horton, hard news reporter. What a headline. Dibley Villagers dying from rabies.

HUGO: Thank you. Yes, I thought it's a major issue. Because if villagers are dying from rabies, we need to know because it's deadly and it's highly contagious.

GERALDINE: And are they?

HUGO: No, they're not.

GERALDINE: As indeed you say in your article. Well, not so much an article, more of an adverb, really. Isn't it just the word "no".

HUGO: But it is eye catching.

GERALDINE: Speaking of which, Owen, photographer. Fairly unusual in a village newsletter to have a page three girl.

***OWEN*:** Yeah, it's Brenda the barmaid. Do you like the way I backlit it? You'd never guess she was 65.

GERALDINE: Oh, I think we would. Indeed, we seem to have a page four girl.

***OWEN*:** That's her mother.

GERALDINE: And also a page five girl.

***OWEN*:** Well, you can't have too much of a good thing.

GERALDINE: Yes, you can. Who is this?

***OWEN*:** That's her aunt's mother.

GERALDINE: Well, correct me if I'm wrong, but judging from the glassy expression, she's not actually alive, is she?

***OWEN*:** She's only just died though.

GERALDINE: Right, so this is a photo of a dead, topless nonagenarian. That's possibly the most disturbing picture I have ever seen.

***OWEN*:** Hmmmmm Thank you.

GERALDINE: So, moving swiftly on, Frank, what are you doing?

FRANK: Well Vicar, I thought I would condense the last 40 years parish council minutes into a volume of 25 books.

GERALDINE: Those books there? [She points to a collection of 25 books stacked on top of one another tied with string]

FRANK: yes, some fascinating stories like the day milkman was 47 minutes late, or the night the pub totally ran out of crisps, and the year I heard a cuckoo in March… and it turned out to be … a pigeon.

GERALDINE: And you expect those to go into the newsletter?

FRANK: I would like to yes, do you think it's too much?…I could condense them down even further if you like?

GERALDINE: Even further to what Frank? it will look like a bloody telephone directory. And even Big Daddy wouldn't be able to rip it in half!

DAVID: It's supposed a newsletter Frank, not war and peace.

OWEN: You Bloody idiot.

GERALDINE: Sorry Frank, it's obviously a no!

GERALDINE: What about you David. No obituaries this edition?

DAVID: No, though I have written them all. In fact, I've written Frank several times. I find it calms me.

GERALDINE: Yes, right. Which brings us to Jim Trott's problem page. Now my big problem with the problem page is the byline. Jim, you've written, readers tell us your deepest, darkest problems and give us all a good laugh.

JIM: That's what we read them for, isn't it? A good laugh?

GERALDINE: Yes, but you don't say it, do you? And why have you written "sexual problems only".

JIM: Well, they are the funniest ones.

GERALDINE: Well, be that as it may, I am worried about the anonymity issue as well. I mean, look at this.

"Dear Auntie Jim, I'm getting a bit depressed. My beloved has a brain the size of a sheep. How can I survive a lifetime without a single intelligent conversation?" And Jim, you reply. "Dear Hugo Horton, you're absolutely right. Alice is a total thickie. Leave her at once."

HUGO: I didn't write to Auntie Jim.

GERALDINE: Didn't you? Well, who did? *[OWEN sheepishly raises his hand]* Owen? Owen. I had no idea. A girlfriend at last. And has she got a brain the size of a sheep?

OWEN: Well, yes… because she is a sheep.

GERALDINE: Right. Well, we can't publish that one for legal reasons, so we're in a bit of trouble. Agony Aunt wise. Aren't we?

JIM: Don't worry. Last night I got another letter. We should be able to squeeze it in at the last moment.

GERALDINE: Oh, well, that's a relief. Read it out.

JIM: It's about unrequited love.

GERALDINE: Actually, don't read it out. Moving on swiftly.

JIM: It's from a woman.

GERALDINE: Yes, a woman who was completely drunk when she wrote it and probably doesn't want you to read it out, I'm imagining. I'm just guessing.

JIM: "Dear Auntie Jim, I am in love with a lovely man."

GERALDINE: Back to the rabies story.

JIM: "But it turns out he's with someone else."

OWEN: Bastard.

JIM: "Should I fight back, or should I finally accept that I am middle aged, no longer desirable, will never know the joy of true love and forever be alone?" And my reply is that she should go round and try to reason with the bloke, but in case he's not receptive, she should take along a shotgun.

GERALDINE: So that's your advice, is it, Jim? That she should have one last crack at him and if that doesn't work, just blow his head off?

JIM: Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Exactly. That is the country way.

DAVID: Yes... I'm not sure that's right you know, Jim, I'd have said something more like, from the tone of your letter, you're clearly a sensitive and intelligent woman. My advice is do nothing. If the man is worthy of your love, he'll come back to you. And if he doesn't come back, don't worry, he's not right for you and you'd be better alone than with the wrong man.

GERALDINE: Yes, good. Thank you.

FRANK: Right, we better get going and rewrite the articles.

[DAVID, FRANK, JIM, HUGO and OWEN leave as ALICE enters]

ALICE: Only me!

GERALDINE: Oh lord!

ALICE: I've been thinking. Should have been you.

GERALDINE: Oh, well.

ALICE: I mean, why do we need another male Pope? I am seriously thinking of coming out in public and saying that I, Jesus' only living descendant, am not happy with the German bloke.

GERALDINE: Good idea.

ALICE: I also think it should have been you that chap Harry went out with. I mean, as far as I can see, that girl he's parading round the village is a terrible old tart.

GERALDINE: No, well, I wouldn't say that. She was very nice to me. Gloating witch. No, no, I shouldn't say that. Look, I'm sure they'll be very happy and I'll just be left on the shelf.

ALICE: Which isn't as bad as you might think, actually.

GERALDINE: Isn't it?

ALICE: No, When I was two, my mum worked for the Co-op and she left me on a shelf instead of a packet of Pampers... I quite liked it.

GERALDINE: Yeah. Although the shelf I'm on is slightly different to that sort of shelf, isn't it?

ALICE: Yeah. Yeah. Yours is a symbolic shelf that signifies you're abandoned and alone. Like the ugly duckling who's already grown older and uglier with no chance of transforming into a swan.

GERALDINE: Yeah, thanks for that.

ALICE: No, but as I see it, you're not on the shelf at all because you're already married. Aren't you? To the village. That Harry bloke, when he gets married, he's gonna have one wife. Whereas you, well, you know, in a way, you're married to Owen and to Jim and to Frank and to Hugo and to David. And you're married to me, too. And you were married to Mrs. Cropley. So, I mean, he's got one wife. And you have got five husbands and two wives, one of whom is the living embodiment of God on earth and the other one who's stark raving dead. See, it's not that bad, is it?

GERALDINE: No, it's not that bad. Thanks, babe. Listen, doll, I'm not really in the mood for chatting tonight. I think it's time for bed, really.

ALICE: You sleep well.

GERALDINE: Yeah. *[They hug]*

ALICE: And I love you. *[goes to exit]* And I'll send your love to dad. Well, God. *[ALICE exits]*

[As GERALDINE sits down, the door knocks]

***GERALDINE**: Which one of my many husbands and wives is this gonna be?*

[She answers the door to HARRY]

HARRY: Hello, Geraldine.

GERALDINE: Hello, Harry. How are you?

HARRY: Fine. Well, I'm as fine as I can be in the circumstances.

GERALDINE: All right. And what circumstances are those?

HARRY: Well, it's a big day for me, you know. It's one of those big days. You know what I mean?

GERALDINE: I suppose so, yeah. What can I do to help you on this big day?

HARRY: Well, Vicar, I might as well just come straight out with it. I've thought about it a lot and talked about it a lot, and I wondered whether or not you would consider marrying me.

GERALDINE: *[Sighs, clueless]* Well, yes, of course, I'd be delighted to.

HARRY: That's wonderful news.

GERALDINE: *[Dismissive]* Have you thought about any dates?

HARRY: Um...No. I thought we might be able to discuss that a little.

GERALDINE: Well, I might put a little punt in for Christmas. It's always a very romantic time of year.

HARRY: Fine. Excellent. If Christmas sounds good to you.

GERALDINE: Yeah. Yeah. Well, let's check the book. *[sits at desk and takes out Church diary]* This is the church diary. Let's have a look. Yeah, there's a gap on the 22nd, if that suits.

HARRY: Excellent *[HARRY is confused by the nonchalance]*.

GERALDINE: Good. Well, look, while we're here, we might as well get some of the other admin done. Mightn't we? Yeah, let's fill this up. Right, so your full name is Harry...

HARRY: Jasper Kennedy.

GERALDINE: Oh, right. Well, I hope that doesn't get a giggle.

HARRY: Fingers crossed.

GERALDINE: Yep. What's the full name of the lucky lady in question?

HARRY: Well, I don't know her middle name.

GERALDINE: Oh, well, we can fill that in later, can't we? And just pray that that isn't embarrassing as well, otherwise it's gonna be like a sitcom out there. Right, so just her first name… *[HARRY looks on confused]* Well, come on, Harry. You shouldn't be marrying someone if you don't even know their name!

HARRY: Well, obviously it's Geraldine.

GERALDINE: Geraldine.

HARRY: Granger.

GERALDINE: Granger...Pardon?

HARRY: Geraldine Granger. I'm asking you to marry me, Geraldine Granger.

GERALDINE: But what about that? What about the other woman you've been living with, Rosie, the pretty one. What about her?

HARRY: My sister.

GERALDINE: *[screams]* What?

HARRY: She's my closest friend.

GERALDINE: What?

HARRY: I consult her about everything.

GERALDINE: What?

HARRY: And we've been trudging the fields together, trying to decide if it's too rash or too soon or too stupid. But finally I've decided that I must just follow my heart.

GERALDINE: Bleurgh!!! *[covers mouth]* BLEURGH!! Will you excuse me?

[GERALDINE SCREAMS and runs around the auditorium...Knocks on the door of HARRY's cottage. Rosie answers and GERALDINEs kisses her face all over! Video footage shows GERALDINE running all over the place – basically the whole of Pembrokeshire – screaming madly. She then runs back to the stage to HARRY]

GERALDINE: Bleurgh, bleurgh, let me just be absolutely sure I've got this right. You are asking me to marry you?

HARRY: Yes.

GERALDINE: Bleurgh, bleurgh!!

HARRY: I loved you the second I laid eyes on you. And I absolutely know that we are meant to be together forever, and we will always be happy.

GERALDINE: SCREAMS...SCREAMS *[GERALDINE and HARRY embrace and then kiss]*

[ALICE, comes through the door, followed by DAVID, OWEN, FRANK, JIM, and HUGO]

ALICE: I told you something was going on.

DAVID: Congratulations Vicar! We're delighted for you both.

JIM: No, no, no, no, yes!

HUGO: Good show vicar!

FRANK: Splendid news! I remember when the…

[OWEN barges in]

OWEN: *[Grudgingly]* Yes, well done dolly-knockers! And remember, if he ever changes his mind, I can always step in and take his place!

[BLACKOUT – MUSIC AND CURTAIN CALL]

Scene Thirteen: [EPILOGUE]

Int The Vicarage.

[LIGHTS COME UP FOR THE FINAL JOKE]

GERALDINE: Here's a good one.

ALICE: Okay.

GERALDINE: A boy is born with no body, no arms, no legs. In fact, it's just a head.

ALICE: Oh, shame.

GERALDINE: Yeah. But his dad loves him. And on his 18th birthday, he takes him down to the pub for his first pint. And he takes a sip and suddenly – whoosh! - out plops his torso.

ALICE: No!

GERALDINE: Yeah. And everyone in the bar says "come on, take another sip". So he does. And suddenly – whoosh! - out, plop his two arms.

ALICE: People say alcohol is so bad for you. They are so wrong.

GERALDINE: Yeah! So, he takes his third sip and suddenly – whoosh! - out plop his two legs. And he's so excited that he runs out into the street… straight into the path of an oncoming truck. And BANG. He's killed instantly. And the barman says to his dad, that boy should have quit while he was ahead! *[Laughs loudly]* Do you get it?

ALICE: That… is the saddest story ever. Just when he gets a body, he dies.

GERALDINE: Right.

ALICE: If only he hadn't gone to the pub. That head could have lived for years.

GERALDINE: It's just a joke, Alice.

ALICE: It's no joke to his father. He's just lost his son.

GERALDINE: There is no son.

ALICE: No, not anymore. He's squashed under a truck.

HARRY: Alice, it's a joke because the characters are fictitious and the story is an invention. And the somewhat tasteless comedy derives from a play on words involving the noun 'a head' and an adverb 'ahead'.

ALICE: *[Pauses for a beat… then twigs and laughs wildly]* Oh I get it…. Quits while he is ahead! *[continues laughing crazily]*.

HARRY: Can we go Now?

GERALDINE: I've just gotta kill her first *[Chases ALICE off the stage]*

The END