

WELL GROOMED

(A hotel bedroom. But it's not a very good hotel. More cheap and cheerful, without the cheerful.)

There is a bed. A chair. A small wardrobe.

A few clothes and shoes and magazines lie around. It is a bit of a tip! Perhaps a kettle and a couple of mugs. Definitely a couple of empty and half-empty wine and beer bottles, and used glasses. Two doors, one to corridor, one to bathroom.

There is very distant party music from below when the main door opens.

Tom is asleep on the bed. He is in a bit of a state, the worse for wear, and is perhaps only wearing boxer shorts or similar.

After a few moments, an alarm clock rings, and Tom stirs. He takes a few seconds to gain his bearings and gather his thoughts. He sits up, delicately)

Tom. Oh no, not again!

(He sits on the edge of the bed)

Why do I do it? Every time!

(He rises. He looks round at the mess.)

What a mess.

(He picks up a pair of trousers. He holds them up. They are too small for him.)

Unless I've lost a bit of weight and a lot of height, and have suddenly developed a taste for ladies clothes, I'm fairly certain these aren't mine.

(And he holds up a pair of ladies' shoes)

Nor these.

(He looks around him)

I'm not sure this is even my room.

(He is now confused and a little anxious.)

What exactly did I do?....Oh yes, something about a wedding, I think...

(He stumbles around, searching the debris for anything remotely resembling his pants!

There is noise outside the room - giggling, and a door key being tried in the lock.)

Oh, sugar!

(He runs to the bathroom, thinks of something. Runs to gather up a couple of items of clothing at random, and returns to the bathroom, then decides he'd better do a 'sweep' of the room to check there isn't any evidence of himself there before just disappearing.

As he closes the bathroom door, the main door opens.

Jack and Sal enter, in throes of passion. They can hardly contain themselves. They are kissing passionately. They stumble over shoes. They may even knock the chair over.

Jack is wearing a wedding suit. Sal a pink bridesmaid dress. He starts to fumble with her dress.)

Sal. What are you doing?

Jack. Taking your dress off. What are you doing?

Sal. Stopping you.

Jack. Why?

Sal. We haven't got time to undress.

Jack. You mean I've got to do it in my pants?

Sal. Yes.

Jack. Just let me take my watch off then.

Sal. Aw - you worried about catching it on me?

Jack. Worth a fortune this watch. *(as he takes off his watch)* Are you sure nobody saw us come up here?

Sal. Yes.

Jack. What if they followed us?

Sal. They didn't.

Jack. What if they did?

(Sal kisses him hard)

Oh, who cares?

(They go at it again for some time. Jack stops and sits down)

Hang on.

(He tries to take his shoes off.)

Sal. What are you doing now?

Jack. I'm trying to get my shoes off.

Sal. Why?

Jack. I don't like wearing shoes, you know, while I'm doing it.

Sal. Just pull them off.

Jack. They're fastened up.

Sal. Well, untie them.

Jack. They've got a knot in them.

Sal. Kick 'em off then.

Jack. I'm trying, aren't I? If I could just....

Sal. Do you want me to have a look?

Jack. No, I've nearly got them.

Sal. Let's see....

(As she bends down to help him, his shoe comes free and hits her in the face)

Jesus!

Jack. You ok?

Sal. You trying to knock me out?

Jack. Sorry.

Sal. Jesus.

Jack. Said I'm sorry.

Sal. If I get a bruise...

Jack. It's fine.

Sal. I'm not bleeding?

Jack. Can't see anything.

Sal. Oaf.

Jack. Sorry.

Sal. I didn't know you were going to be abusive.

Jack. I'll be more careful with the other one.

Sal. You leaving your sox on?

Jack. Oh yeh, they'll be fine. Just feel odd, you know, with shoes. Anyway, they're not my sex shoes. They've got reinforced toe caps.

Sal. Let me know when you're ready, won't you?

Jack. There's no need to be sulky.

Sal. I wasn't being sulky.

Jack. Come on then.

(Jack and Sal start to kiss.)

Jack. Hang on, let me take my St Christopher off.

Sal. Good grief.

Jack. It might choke me.

Sal. Something might if you don't get on with it.

Jack. Get on with it? I'm trying, aren't I?

Sal. Very!

(Suddenly, Sal is laughing)

Jack. It wasn't that funny.

Sal. It wasn't funny at all. I'm not laughing at that.

Jack. What then?

Sal. This. Me and you. Up here. Doing this. It's funny when you think about it.

Jack. I'd rather do it than think about it.

Sal. I know, but you don't know what this means to me...

Jack. Look, are we going to talk about it, or are we going to get on with it?

Sal. Oh, definitely get on with it. It's just you know...

Jack. What?

Sal. Funny.

Jack. Hilarious. If I'd known you wanted a good laugh, I would have brought my Christmas Cracker joke book. Come on, I've got an erection harder than Chinese algebra.

(She drags him down and smothers him with kisses. For some time. And getting quite noisy with it.)

Sal. You need to be quieter.

Jack. What?

Sal. Somebody might hear you slobbering.

Jack. I don't slobber.

Sal. Ssshhh!

Jack. *(in a whisper)* I don't slobber.

Sal. Do it quieter.

Jack. What?

Sal. Kiss me quieter.

Jack. You're the one making all the noise.

Sal. Just... Be quiet.

Jack. All right. I'll try.

Sal. And, while we've stopped...

Jack. Christ!

Sal. Watch the dress, will you? It's got to go back.

Jack. What?

Sal. It's hired.

Jack. Hired?

Sal. Yes. Just for the day. Everything was hired. Thought you knew that.

Jack. Everything?

Sal. The dresses, the flowers, the cars.... Even the buffet has to be returned if it isn't all eaten.

Jack. Cheapskate wedding this is. Cheapskate bloody wedding.

Sal. That's your in-laws for you.

Jack. Yeh.

Sal. Let's not think about them though. Let's think about us. Me and you. Doing it.

Jack. I've thought enough for one night...

Sal. Right, by my reckoning, we have about 14 minutes before anyone starts to miss us. I'll set the alarm to be sure.

Jack. The alarm?

Sal. For 14 minutes. That should be enough. Now, come and get it!

(Jack goes to the bed. They start kissing.)

They are engrossed.

The bathroom door opens, and Tom peeks in. He carries the trousers. He is astonished at the sight on the bed, reacts, and goes back into the bathroom, shutting the door quietly.

The action on the bed continues.

The lights fade.

After a suitable time lapse, the lights come up.

Jack and Sal are lying there.)

Sal. I've dreamed about this for years.

Jack. Eh?

Sal. Me with former child actor Jack Sutton. Jack The Knife.

Jack. My dad's idea.

Sal. The face of baked beans.

Jack. Those were the days.

Sal. God's gift to the under 8's. I used to love you.

Jack. Not surprising.

Sal. I used to watch you everywhere – on anything - Sooty Show, Blue Peter, even That's My Dog...

Jack. Bloody overkill.

Sal. I couldn't get enough of you.

Jack. I was the face of Just 17 when I was 11. It was the granny winning good looks, I think. I was on bedspreads, wallpaper, novelty toys. After the beans adverts, I did Burger King for a bit. I was the boy with the real meal deal.

Sal. And talk about a big whopper. You could house a homeless family under it. And I get to see it. On your wedding night.

Jack. Is my suit a mess?

(He gets up and walks over to the mirror)

Sal. Yes.

Jack. Where's the pressy thing?

(he takes off his jacket and looks round for a trouser press)

Sal. The what?

Jack. Trouser press. For the jacket. To get the creases out.

Sal. Think there's an iron on the 3rd floor. If no-one's nicked it.

Jack. Your dress is pretty crumpled too. And your bow. And your hair. In fact, you look like one crumpled mess.

Sal. Great.

Jack. Sal - have I married the wrong person?

Sal. I couldn't possibly say, Jack. When you've finished shagging me senseless, why don't you ask your wife?

Jack. I mean, it's not normal, is it?

Sal. What, sleeping with one of the bridesmaids on your wedding night? No, I wouldn't say it's commonplace. But then, I'm not an expert.

Jack. I once thought I could have had any woman I wanted.

Sal. And you chose Karen. You married her today in a lovely emotional church service.

Jack. Emotional? The only thing in tiers was the cake. Did you see how many there were on my side?

Sal. A few.

Jack. 7. My dad, my 3 so-called mates, and 3 ex-fan club members who remember me for being famous in a couple of adverts when I was a nipper, rather than washed-up and jobless. Even my stag night was a disaster. I had it in Prague. Don't know where everyone else went.

Sal. The vicar did seem to be in a bit of a hurry. Do you take this man? Do you take this woman? Or would you rather take this bridesmaid?

Jack. He was like my dad – just wanted to get to the bar.

Sal. Your dad can hold his drink.

Jack. Yeh, trouble is, he never holds one for very long.

Sal. Isn't sex very good with you two?

Jack. What?

Sal. You and your wife? You and my best friend, Karen.

Jack. The sex is fine.

Sal. Yeh, must be. That's why you're here with me. Have I got a glow about me?

Jack. You look a little flushed yes.

Sal. Flushed and crumpled! They'll know we've had sex.

Jack. Who?

Sal. The other bridesmaids. And Karen. It's obvious. I'll say I had an encounter with a passionate bellboy.

Jack. Do they have bellboys in – what is this place, Holiday Inn?

Sal. Travel Express. I told you they were cheap. I'm surprised they have a honeymoon suite.

Jack. They don't, they converted the disabled room for us.

Sal. God help anyone disabled who wanted to stay the night.

Jack. Kash's Uncle Arthur. He's in a wheelchair. We had to put him on the top floor. Tell me they have lifts. Is 14 minutes up yet?

Sal. 6.

Jack. Is that all? Great, we can do it 3 more times. Although I have to say that dress is harder to get into than Gary Glitter at a Parents' Evening.

Sal. Don't think it was expecting any action.

Jack. I could have done with a bigger bed. I like to move about a bit. Show a few of my moves.

Sal. Moves? Who are you, Chubby Checker?

Jack. Think of me as the Fred Astaire of sex.

Sal. I've never known anyone use their feet quite as much. At least you took your shoes off. I'd have been black and blue.

(He is about to start again when...

There is a knock on the door)

Jack. Crikey! What do we do now? What do we do?

Sal. Just keep quiet. Ignore them.

(There is another knock)

Ann. *(off)* Sal – are you in there?

Sal. It's Ann.

Jack. Ann?

Sal. Chief bridesmaid.

Jack. I thought you were the chief bridesmaid.

Sal. No, she got through by default of her having a bigger gob.

Jack. I usually only settle for the best.

(She hits him playfully)

Ow!

Sal. She'll go away.

Ann. *(off)* I'm not going away.

Sal. Shit!

Ann. *(off)* I know you're in there, Sal.

Jack. Yeh, but I bet she doesn't know who with!

Ann. *(off)* And I know who with. Unless you let me in, I'm going to go downstairs right now and tell everyone.

Jack. Shit!

Sal. She wouldn't.

Ann. *(off)* And don't think I wouldn't, cos I would.

Jack. Has she got microphones in here or what?

(Sal has started heading for the door)

Where the hell are you going?

Sal. I'm going to let her in.

Jack. But she'll see us.

Sal. Pretend to be a lamp. She'll never notice you.

Jack. What?

Sal. Look, she knows we're here. She can hear us.

Ann. *(off)* I can hear you.

Sal. See.

Jack. She's a bloody genius. Which one is she? The dumpy one? There's always a dumpy bridesmaid, isn't there? Sticks out like The Elephant Man at a Beauty Contest.

Sal. No, that's Teresa. This is Ann. Tall, brown hair, glasses.

Jack. Mousey looking?

Sal. She's not unattractive with her hair down. Just very common.

Jack. Perhaps we can have a threesome.

Sal. Perhaps you can. I'm sure Room Service will be delighted to assist.

Jack. I meant with you.

Sal. I may be crumpled, but I'm not crazy. Actually, I've never had a threesome. Have you?

Jack. I used both hands once.

Sal. Nice. I've not had many twosomes either come to that. I was saving myself.

Jack. Who for?

Sal. Who do you think?

Jack. Look, Sal...

Ann. *(off)* Are you opening this door or what?

Sal. We can talk later. Start crying.

Jack. What?

Sal. Start crying. **(shouts)** Coming!

(Sal opens the door. Jack starts sobbing. Ann enters, also in a pink bridesmaid outfit and her hair up in a fancy arrangement. She wears glasses. She has things on her mind, and hardly notices Jack)

Ann. I hate this sodding dress. I hate everything about it. I hate the fabric, the style, and especially the colour. Look at it. I've made stew with more shape. You know, I've been bridesmaid chief so many times, I've started my own tribe. People are laughing at me, that's what they're doing. Just laughing. And I'd laugh back, except it's not funny, it's tragic. And I don't want to be a bridesmaid anymore. It's not fair. Oh, hi Jack. You OK?

Jack. **(sobbing wildly)** I'm fine.

Ann. Great.

Sal. So, how's the party going?

Ann. Party? Is that what it's supposed to be? I've had more fun at a circumcision. Karen's mum has been keeping everyone 'entertained' with her Kate Bush routine. Have you seen it? It's shite. She thinks she's had one wine spritzer too many. Trouble is, it's been all spritzer and no wine since they got here. Karen's dad paid the bar staff not to give her any alcohol. But she thinks she's drunk, and can't understand why everyone isn't suddenly amusing and interested in her.

Jack. Has anyone missed me?

Ann. No. I'm still getting over the service. It was a farce, wasn't it? I mean, I knew religion could be insincere, but I didn't realise it was so fast-paced. Did the vicar have another appointment?

Sal. He was certainly in a rush.

Ann. That's because we were late kicking off.

Jack. Kicking off? You make it sound like a football match.

Ann. Well, it is sort of. **(she doesn't expand)**

Sal. How? How is a wedding like a football match?

Ann. 2 sides, one outcome, and the vicar as referee. It's not a theory that stands up, Sal, it was a throwaway remark. *(to Jack)* Are you crying?

Jack. I'm upset.

Ann. Why? It's supposed to be the happiest day of your life.

(The alarm goes off. Both Sal and Jack rush to switch it off)

You got an appointment?

Jack. No.

Ann. So why did you set the alarm?

Jack. We didn't.

Sal. Someone else must have set it.

Ann. Can't see anyone else. Fourteen minutes past 11? Very precise time.

Sal. Perhaps it was set by mistake.

Ann. Perhaps.

Jack. (*crying again*) I never thought I'd get married, and now I am, I don't know why I have.

Ann. Oh, stop snivelling. It's a bit early to be having doubts. Or a bit late.

Jack. I've had them awhile.

Ann. Then you shouldn't have gone through with it. Is there anything left to drink?

Sal. Haven't looked.

Ann. Sal – your dress is all creased at the front. And the back. And the sides aren't great.

Sal. Oh. I had an encounter.

Ann. Oh yes? Anyone we know?

Sal/Jack. A bellboy.

Ann. A what?

Sal. Bellboy. You know, concierge.

Ann. What period of time are you living in?

Jack. It was some scruffy little oik she met in a linen cupboard.

Ann. Eww. Sordid. I've not had sex for weeks.

Sal. (**pouring drinks**) Liar. You had it last night. With the usher.

Ann. That doesn't count. Anyway, that wasn't sex. It was a fumble. And he wasn't very well equipped. (**she drinks**) Hardly touched the sides. I came looking for Steve.

Sal. Kash's cousin, Steve?

Ann. Yeh, he disappeared. One minute I was entrancing him with my witty anecdotes and impressions of minor celebrities, the next he'd scarpered quicker than Michael Barrymore at a swimming pool.

Jack. Look, I think I just need some time to myself.

Ann. I think you need your friends around you, is what you need.

Sal. He's got a friend, me.

