

Scene 1

Action takes place in the living room of Dave's flat. The room is in a disgusting state – untidy – litter strewn everywhere. As Act I progresses, each scene is a bit tidier than the one before.

Entrance to Kitchen can be seen

ENTER Dave, Ken, Norm.

Dave in football shorts and shirt, Norm with Football rattle.

(Dave staggers to a chair, sweeps papers etc off and flops into it.)

Ken Well, that was a disaster. five-nil, and they could only field ten men. What happened to you lot?

Dave Don't go on at me, I'm too exhausted to take the flak. I've run myself into the ground. It wasn't my fault.

Ken But you're the captain – and chief goal scorer, supposedly. I didn't see any evidence of team spirit out there, and you can run from here to kingdom come but it's no good if you haven't got the ball with you.

Dave Oh thanks, that's very good coming from the manager and coach. It's your job to get us working as a team, and persuade those idiots at the back to pass the ball to their own centre-half, not to the other side. Does that Barry Oldroyd know which team he's playing for?

Ken He was pretty useless, I'll give you that, but to be fair, he was handicapped. His glasses broke before he even got on the field, and you wouldn't have wanted me to play a substitute, would you?

Dave We haven't got a substitute.

Norm There's me. I'm always willing to help out. I know my duty to queen and country, and Drainford United.

(Ken and Dave look at him, and shake their heads)

Ken Yes, well, thanks a lot, but you weren't even any use as a supporter. You were supposed to cheer for us, not swing your rattle every time they scored.

Norm I'm sorry, I got a bit carried away.

Ken Carried away?

Norm Yes! Didn't you see the way those two lasses jumped up and down when their lot scored a goal? Cor! Really well-equipped they were. (Indicates shape of breasts)

Dave Trust you to be watching the entertainment off the field instead of on.

Norm Well there was a lot of it. And those mates of yours, Ken – I thought there was going to be some action there.

Dave Were they the ones you said you'd bring to support us?.

Ken That's right. The members of the allotment holders committee.

Dave Is that who they were? I thought they were left-overs from the relief of Mafeking. They put more energy into shouting at one another than cheering us on.

Norm It was great. More exciting listening to them than watching the game.

Ken Yes, well it's a sensitive time for the committee. We've got the AGM coming up next week.

Dave Blimey! What's so special about the Allotment AGM that they have to have a battle about it?

Ken Well, old Parky, he's the secretary, so he wrote the minutes of last year's meeting and took them across to Bill Bulley, him being Chairman you see. Now, he was planting his onion setts, so he says to give them to him later, but Parky's in a hurry to get home to his Missus, 'cos he's had his instructions about what time to be back, so he puts the papers down on the ground under a stone. Next thing you know, Jim Jones, who has the next allotment, well his goat wanders over and eats the lot. So Bill says Parky'll have to write them out again, and Parky says not bloody likely, and anyway he can't remember what he's said, and they both have a go at Jim, and he threatens to report them to the council for running disorderly meetings, and....

Dave Yes, alright, sorry I asked. But the whole point of bringing them to the match was to give the team some support. I'm sure we'd play a lot better with some encouragement from the side lines.

Ken They're not really interested in football. Maybe I could persuade the darts team to come next time.

Norm Shall I go and put the kettle on?

Dave Yes if you like, but I'm out of teabags and I think the milk's off. There might be some beer in the fridge.

Norm (heading towards kitchen) What you need is some of them dancing girls.

Ken Dancing girls! I know there's women's football teams, but I don't see how they'd help.

Norm No, not to play, to encourage the supporters. They have them in America. There's a word for it. (Exits into kitchen)

Dave There's a lot of words for it...eh, wait a minute, he means cheerleaders. (Stands up and does actions) That's not a bad idea. I'm sure we'd do a lot better with that sort of support.

Ken Oh yes, sure. And where are you going to get a team of cheerleaders from? I haven't noticed many dancing round Drainford.

Enter Norm (with cans of beer)

Norm I've just remembered it.

Dave I should forget it again if I were you, you're too old.

Norm No – the word for them dancing girls. Cheerleaders, that's what you want. (Tries to do actions)

Dave Yes, alright, we know what cheerleaders are. You found the beer then?

Norm Yes, but you're right out of clean glasses.

Ken You're getting finicky in your old age, Norm. What's wrong with giving them a quick swill round under the tap?

Norm No, I daren't risk that. Add water to what's in the bottom of those glasses, and you'd have some weird kind of wildlife growing out and taking over before you could say "Day of the Triffids". Besides, I didn't fancy fighting my way to the sink through all those dirty mugs and plates.

Dave I suppose I'll have to do a bit of washing up tonight. I've invited Sharon to come tomorrow. With a bit of luck – and my irresistible charms of course – I might persuade her to move in with me.

Ken Don't be too quick to give up your freedom, Dave. And don't wear yourself out with a woman – I need you to stay in peak condition for next week's game.

Dave Oh, thanks very much. Just because you got stuck with Big Brenda, doesn't mean we're all going to make the same mistake. Sharon's a lovely girl – but I shan't be making any permanent arrangement.

Ken That's what you think. She might have other ideas. Women usually do.

Norm You're right there Ken, but let me give you a bit of advice Dave lad, from one who's had a lot of experience of women, and knows what they want.

Dave You filthy beast! When did you last have a woman up there?

Ken I thought your old woman went off with that debt collector.

Norm She did, but only because I couldn't be bothered to be nice to her any more. Good riddance to her, but I had plenty of girlfriends before Phyllis, and I wouldn't have dared to bring them into a filthy place like this. They don't like dirt, don't women.

Ken That's true. It's a turn-off for any self-respecting woman is this dump. Not that any respectable woman would think of shacking up with you, Dave.

Dave Do you mind. Of course my Sharon's respectable. But I see what you mean, it is a bit of a tip in here isn't it.

Ken Tip! I've seen cleaner looking skips. You'll have to do something about it if you want to impress this girlfriend. You have to have the right ambience these days. That's what our Brenda says anyway.

Norm. Ambience! Never heard of it. I always used Old Spice.

Dave (Feeling his chin and smelling under his arm)
Hey do you think your Brenda would sort the flat out for me. I'll pay her the going rate.

Ken Good God! You must be keen on this girl. I suppose I might consider loaning her out to you, for a suitable fee. Once she's done her housewife's duties next door of course. You'll have to ask her yourself though.

(Knock on door)
ENTER Brenda

Brenda Oh so this is where you're skulking. I might have known.

Norm Talk of the devil.

Brenda I beg your pardon. That's rich, coming from an old so-and-so who has to have his milk delivered to a neighbour's flat because the girl refuses to go near his door.

Norm That was just a misunderstanding, Brenda. I thought she was the District Nurse, come to treat my haemorrhoids.

Brenda Even so, did you have to shout out 'Come into the bedroom darling, I'm all ready and waiting for you with my trousers down'.

Dave Poor girl's never been the same since. She dropped a bottle of milk this morning, she was so nervous.

Ken Yes, but only because you told her old Norm was still up there waiting for her.

(Men all laugh)

Brenda (To Ken) It must be nice to be a man. Life's all one big joke to you lot isn't it. I told you to come straight home after the match. Had you forgotten you were supposed to be taking me shopping?

Ken Sorry love. We were discussing team tactics. As manager I have some vital decisions to make.

Dave Like should he commit Hare Kari now, or wait till he's had his tea.

Brenda You lost again then?

Dave Course we lost, but only Five Nil.

Norm Yes, but they'll do better next time. Your Ken's going to get some of them dancing girls, aren't you Ken?

Ken No I am not! I wouldn't know where to start looking for them, anyway.

Brenda I should think not indeed. Dancing girls! You're not safe to be let loose, any of you. What fantasies have you been dreaming up between you?

Ken It's all right Brenda, love. He means cheerleaders. You know, like they have in America to encourage the supporters.

Brenda Well if he's an example of the Drainford supporters, they don't need any encouragement of that sort. The further he stays away from women the better for all concerned.

Norm Wahay! It'll be great. Brenda. They have tassels, and wiggle their hips.

Come on Dave, show her how it works.

(Norm and Dave dance about. Dave knocks over the full waste paper bin)

- Brenda Men! You only have one thing on your mind, and it's not housework.
- Norm She means that word beginning with S and ending with X.
- Dave. Oh yes, that reminds me. I've got a favour to ask you Brenda.
- Brenda Ooh! have you now, Dave.....
- Dave My girlfriend Sharon's coming to see me tomorrow, and I'm thinking of inviting her to move in.
- Brenda Move in! Here! She'll need her head examining if she even thinks about it. Just look at the state of this place. (She rights the waste bin) You don't even bother to empty the waste bin.
- Dave I always thought bins were for putting things in, not taking them out, but then I'm only a man, and you're so good at that sort of thing Brenda, I thought you might help me out; clean the place up a bit. Run a duster over it or something.
- Brenda It needs more than a duster running over it. A bulldozer would be better, then you could start again from scratch.
- Norm Aye, there's plenty of scratches.
- Dave Go on Brenda. Your Ken says you might have time to fit me in.
- Brenda Oh, does he now. That's typical. He thinks I do nothing all day but sit around twiddling my thumbs. (To Ken) Why do you suppose our flat doesn't look like this then? It's because I spend all day skivvying after you – and cooking your meals and making sure you have clean shirts and underpants, and working part time as well....
- Ken I know love, I just thought.....
- Brenda Well you can just think again. Your trouble is you're all thought and not enough action. (To Dave) But I really don't think I can face tackling this, Dave.
- Dave I'll pay you, Brenda. You find out what the going rate is, and we'll do a deal.
- Ken I'll draw up a contract....
- Brenda You keep out of this Ken Bostock, this has nothing to do with you.

(To Dave) But if you're willing to pay, for a proper professional job, well I suppose we could come to some sort of – er - arrangement.

Ken Here – but only for cleaning.

Brenda Shut up! I'll deal with you when I get you home. I'll tell you what Dave, if I can find the time I'll come round in the morning and make a start. Tidy things up a bit at least.

Dave Thanks Brenda, you're a star.

Brenda Yes but I can't work miracles. More's the pity (looking at Ken), or I could have turned this useless toad into a prince. Come on you lazy lump. Quick march!

EXIT Ken and Brenda

Norm You should let that be a lesson to you. Don't get involved with any woman. Your life will not be your own ever again .

Dave My Sharon wouldn't be like that. Besides, I'm only asking her to move in, I'm not thinking of marrying her or anything like that.

Norm It doesn't matter what you're thinking, Dave lad. Once a woman gets a foothold it's her that does the thinking. They're good at that. Fast thinkers are women.

Dave Too fast for you, eh Norm? Do me a favour though. I don't mind you dossing around here when I'm on my own, but keep out of the way tomorrow night will you. She might not appreciate your company like I do.

Norm What you mean is, I might queer your pitch, you randy young devil. Don't worry, I know when I'm not wanted. Must be off now anyway, going down the Legion tonight. See you Dave.

Dave Yes, see you Norm.

Norm (Going towards door)
I say what's your fancy piece's mother like?

Dave Sharon's mother? I don't know, I haven't met her. Why?

Norm Oh, I just thought she could come and keep me company in my lonely flat upstairs.

Dave Get out of it, you old git! (Chases Norm out)

CURTAIN

Scene 2

Next Morning

Phone rings ENTER Dave, half-dressed
(Hunts for phone under papers, etc., and continues dressing as he talks)

Dave Hello, Dave Thornton here.
 Sharon, my darling. Ooh, I've gone all gooey at the sound of your
 voice. Hey, you are still coming here tonight aren't you? You
 haven't changed your mind?
 You're not coming tonight!what's that.....you want to come
 round earlier.....this afternoon.....well..
 No....no reason why you shouldn't.
 I shan't be home till five.....yes, Brenda next door has a key.
 Right, see you later then, my little honey bun.....I can't wait.....
 Bye for now...bysy bye(makes kissing sounds, etc)

(Puts phone down. Picks up cushion. Goes towards door, then realises and comes back
to exchange cushion for briefcase)

EXIT Dave

After a few moments ENTER Brenda with cleaning things.
(She walks round room picking things up here and there, flicking duster at
random)

Brenda Well Brenda Bostock, what have you let yourself in for? There's a
 week's work here at least, and I bet the kitchen's even worse. Oh
 well, best get it over with.
(Goes into kitchen, lets out a loud scream, comes back and falls into chair,
 fanning herself with duster)
 That does it! No civilised human being can be expected to deal with
 that kitchen. It's a professional job is that....professional...yes.
(Hunts around floor, finds Yellow Pages and thumbs through it)
 This will do. He did say he was willing to pay.
(Finds phone and dials)
 Hello, is that the Clean-as-a-new-pin Agency? No job too big to
 tackle? Yes, will you send some ladies round for my neighbour to
 interview. Yes, Mr David Thornton, Flat 3 Hallam Mansions.
 Tomorrow afternoon – yes, that should be all right. Yes, make sure
 they've got strong stomachs, that's all I can say. Thank you,
 Goodbye.

As she finishes speaking, ENTER Norm, unnoticed. He sidles up to her and pinches her bottom.

Brenda (Shrieks). What are you doing, creeping about in other people's homes. Dave's working today, you know. I'm not sure he'll want you cluttering the place up.

Norm Oh Dave doesn't mind me sitting in here. It gets lonely up there on the top floor. Besides it's warmer down here.

Brenda Only because you turn your heating off and use Dave's. He's too good natured is Dave, he lets people take advantage.

Norm Well you should know. I'm not the only one am I?

Brenda Whatever are you talking about, you silly old fool?

Norm I heard you, yacking away on Dave's phone. Gossiping about him to your cronies, I bet, and all at his expense.

Brenda What! Well if that isn't the limit. Do someone a favour and you get it thrown back in your face. For your information – not that it's any of your business – that phone call was on Dave's behalf. In fact you can do something useful for once, and tell him if you're still here when he gets back – which I suppose you will be – tell him I've been on to an agency and they're sending some women tomorrow for him to interview. Do you think you can manage to remember that?

Norm Agency? Women?

Brenda Yes. He'll know what you mean. I'm off now. It's coffee time, and I'm certainly not risking anything that comes out of that kitchen.
(She goes towards door)

Norm (As Brenda exits) Brenda, what women?

Brenda (now offstage) Char ladies!

Norm Cheer leaders! Hee hee! Good old Brenda.
(He gets up from chair and does actions, then sits down again with newspaper)

LIGHTS DIM TO INDICATE PASSAGE OF TIME

Knock at door.
ENTER Sharon

Sharon Hello. The door was open. Is there anyone here?

Norm Oh yes, come right in my love, I'm here.

Sharon (Looks at chaos in flat, sees Norm)
Oh I'm so sorry, I must have got the wrong flat. I'm looking for Dave Thornton's place.

Norm And you've found it, you little beauty. What's a lovely lass like you want with Dave?

Sharon Oh, he is expecting me, but I'm a bit early. Perhaps I should go and come back again when he's here.

Norm No, no, don't go. No need to run away. And I know who you are now.

Sharon You do?

Norm Yes, you're one of those girls aren't you?

Sharon What do you mean? What girls?

Norm The ones that Dave's going to inspect. You look as though you'll do, but I'm surprised you're on your own, I thought you'd all come together.

Sharon You mean – he's invited other girls here as well?

Norm Of course he has. You'd not be much good for what he wants on your own, now would you?

Sharon I don't know what you mean. And how do you know what Dave wants? Who are you anyway? He didn't say anything about his grandad being here.

Norm His grandad! No, I'm his neighbour, and his..er...consultant on how to live life as a bachelor. In fact I shall be advising him on how to select the right girls for this team he's getting together.

Sharon Team! What sort of a team? He's not some sort of kinky pervert is he?

Norm Good gracious, no. Dave's a grand lad. It's all perfectly natural. I would have thought you'd have known that, in your profession. Can you do the actions? Go on, give us a preview.
(Stands up and does cheerleading moves as an excuse to get near Sharon)

Sharon Get away from me. It's you that's the pervert. I come across plenty of weirdoes in Simpson's Lingerie department. – but who told you what my job was. Has Dave been discussing me?

Norm Not yet, he hasn't, but he will do, when he's put you through your paces. Mind you, if you're not a proper dancing girl, I'm not sure he'll even want to interview you.

Sharon. Interview! I haven't come here to be interviewed. I think you've got hold of the wrong end of the stick, Grandad.

Norm Oh no. I was here when the arrangements were made.

Sharon What arrangements?

Norm With the agency. There's lots of girls coming to be interviewed so Dave can decide which ones he wants. After taking advice from me of course.

Sharon Let me get this straight. Dave's contacted an agency, to supply dancers, and they're coming here so Dave can choose which ones he likes, and he's going to have more than one at once – and I'm just one of them?

Norm That's about the size of it my lovely.

Sharon And I thought he was a kind, generous, sensitive man. I'd no idea he was a..a...lecher!

Norm Oh he is generous. He's not just doing this for himself, you know.

Sharon (sounding hopeful) Oh really?

Norm No, he's doing it for everybody. We'll all be involved. Me and Ken and Drainford United, of course.

Sharon His football team?

Norm That's right. He'll be sharing his girls with all of us.

Sharon Group sex! That's disgusting. I'm getting out of here. And you can tell him from me I never want to see him again. He'll not need me anyway if he's got all those girls – and his football team.

EXIT Sharon in floods of tears.

Norm Well I wouldn't have thought someone who wants to be a cheerleader would be so sensitive. But then, they're peculiar creatures, women. I haven't met a sensible one yet.
(Goes back to chair and spreads newspaper over his face)

FURTHER PASSAGE OF TIME

ENTER Dave (in semi-darkness)

Dave Hello! Sharon! My little kutchy-koo! Where are you hiding?

Norm (Waking up) Huh?

Dave There you are, you little tease. I'm coming to get you.
(Makes his way to chair and embraces Norm)

Norm Hello Dave lad. I never thought you'd be so pleased to see me.

Dave Ugh, Norm! (Switches light on) What are you doing skulking in here?

Norm Skulking! I'm doing no such thing. I'm looking after the place for you, and I've got a message for you.

Dave From Sharon? (He is walking around looking into all rooms)

Norm I don't know any Sharon, no it's a message from Brenda. Guess what – she's arranged for some of them dancing girls to come here, so you can interview them. Well, with my help of course. Hee hee! There'll be no stopping Drainford United then, you'll see. (He does actions)

Dave Are you on about those cheerleaders again? You've got dancing girls on the brain, you have. It doesn't sound like the sort of thing Brenda would approve of. Are you sure you've got it right. It's not just another of your fantasies is it?

Norm No, honest Dave. She was using your phone to arrange it when I came in. Asking them to send some girls round here. She said to make sure you knew about it, and they'd be coming tomorrow, on your day off.

Dave Right, well I'll check with Ken later, but are you sure my Sharon hasn't been? You haven't frightened her off, have you?