

Act One - Scene One - The Beaumont Arms Pub - Monday Morning

As the curtain opens, Tracy is sitting behind the table, centre stage. She is looking down at a magazine on the table. She flicks over a page and seems to be engrossed. She is also chewing gum and tries to blow the occasional bubble.

Roger is behind the bar. He is writing on a large blackboard which rests upon the bar. He is using white chalk.

Stage right, Jester has what appears to be an electronic games machine. He has a front panel off this and is tinkering around inside it, with a long screwdriver and a hammer, popping out from time to time to examine some piece of the machine's inner workings. The machine is positioned so that its front cannot be seen from the audience.

After a few seconds pause, Owen walks quickly onto the stage

Owen (To someone off-stage) **All I said was.....**

Before he can finish his sentence he ducks as a plate is thrown onto the stage, missing him and crashing to the floor. The plate breaks as it hits the stage. None of the cast react to this.

Owen (Continuing) **I've taken a booking for twelve at nine o'clock tonight.**
(He walks over to the bar and looks down at the shattered plate.) **That was one of our wedding presents. Thirty six piece dinner set it was.**

Roger (Not looking up) **How many you got left?**

Owen **Hundred and forty seven.** (He looks down at the blackboard Roger is chalking on, and pauses) **There's only one 'K' in Bolognese.**

Roger sighs, takes a cloth and starts to rub off the writing on the board.

Jester (Hammering from inside the machine) **Oh bugger!**

Owen **How long's he been working on that thing now?**

Roger **About an hour and a half.**

Owen **Any progress?**

Roger **So far we've had five electric shocks, two cut fingers, a trapped thumb, and forty-three swear words.**

Another hammering comes from inside the machine.

Jester **Bugger!**

Owen/Roger (Together) **Forty Four**

Owen walks over to stand to one side of Tracy and slightly behind her

Owen **Here, Tracy, clear that mess up.....**

Tracy carries on reading and appears to ignore Owen.

Owen **Am I here?** (He looks around, makes a face at himself and waves his arms about) **Apparently....**

He walks back to the bar, picks up a telephone directory, walks back towards Tracy and drops the book onto the table in front of her. Tracy finally looks up at him.

Tracy **Are you talking to me?**

Owen looks up to the ceiling and sighs.

Owen **No, I was just looking up the number of the jobcentre since it seems we might have a vacancy for a cleaner soon.**

Tracy **Wha?**

Owen **I'll make it simple....(he points at Tracy) Cleaner (he points at the broken plate) mess....mess (pointing at plate again), cleaner... (pointing at Tracy again). Is a pattern starting to form in what you laughingly call a brain.**

Tracy thinks for a moment, as another hammering comes from inside the machine where Jester is working.

Tracy **'Ere, are you saying I'm stupid?**

Roger **As if he would.**

Tracy **'Cos I'll have you know I've got two GCSE's, needlework and woodwork**

Owen **Well, when you've cleaned that up you can put a hem on that table for me.**

Tracy **It's always me.....**

Owen **Don't be so ungrateful. There's loads of people would be happy to do your job.**

Tracy **Yeah but Broadmoor don't do day release.**

Tracy tuts, stands and walks slowly off stage, sighing as she goes. As she leaves, Jester is putting the front of the machine in place. Roger is still chalking on his board.

Jester appears from inside the machine. He spends a moment looking at the front of it. Meanwhile, Owen is looking down at the magazine Tracy has left on the table. He turns over a page.

Jester **Here, I've just noticed. There's a sign on the front of this thing.**
(Reading) **This machine is alarmed.**

Roger **I'm not surprised. Some great hairy thing attacked you with a hammer, screwdriver and language like that, you'd be alarmed too.**

Jester **Well, you can't be too careful. A big power surge and I could get killed here.**

Roger **That would be a real tragedy Jester.**

Jester **Aw that's so nice.....you being concerned about me like that.**

Roger **Of course I'm concerned. (He pauses) You still owe forty quid on your bar tab.**

Jester shrugs and vanishes back inside the machine. He brings out a piece of circuit board and throws it offstage. Then he places the front panel back but does not screw it into place.

Jester **Anyway, I think I've fixed it now.**

Owen **I had six orgasms in one night of passion**

Roger **I knew you were looking tired lately. That'll explain it then.**

Owen **No you prawn. It's an article in this magazine Tracy was reading.**

Roger **You'll have to keep an eye on her if she's reading stuff like that.**

Owen **Or possibly both eyes.**

Jester is gazing into space. Owen notices this.

Owen **Are you having erratic thoughts about Tracy again?**

Jester comes back to reality.

Jester **You mean erotic.**

Owen **I know what I mean. Have you tested that machine yet?**

Jester has been rummaging in his pocket and now comes out with a coin. He places this into a slot on the machine and presses a button. We hear the click, click, click sound effect of a modern games machine being played.

Roger is gazing intently at the machine. Owen walks over to see the result.

The reels stop and after are followed by a "success" sound effect. Then a large number of coins start to drop into the coin tray. Again this can be achieved with a sound effect however, coins should have been placed into a tray so they can be collected.

The three men watch as the coin sound continues. It goes on for ten to twenty seconds (as a guide). Jester is starting to look a little sheepish. Finally, the coins stop.

Roger **Not bad for two lemons and a cherry.**

Jester looks over towards Owen.

Jester **Sorry about that. I'll have another go.** (He takes the front panel off the machine again and vanishes back inside)

Owen **Yeah, you do that Jester.**

Tracy re-enters carrying a brush and dust-pan.

Owen (To Tracy) **Oh at last. Hurry up, we open soon and I don't want the customers seeing all this mess. They'll think they're at home.**

Tracy **Keep your wig on.**

She sweeps up the debris of the plate with Owen watching her carefully. As this is happening, Jester gets up again and starts to scoop the coins from the machine tray and thrust them into his pockets.

Owen **Just you make sure it's all cleared and then take yourself back into the kitchen where those things can't be seen.** (He gestures at her boobs)

Tracy **And what's wrong with my boobs?**

Roger **Nothing at all.**

Owen **You get on with chalking up today's special. I don't pay you good money to talk about her boobs.**

Roger **Quite right Owen. You don't pay me good money**

Jester is back inside the games machine

Tracy **Can we all stop talking about my boobs. It's like I wasn't here or something**

Owen **Jester, stop thinking about Tracy's boobs**

Jester (From inside machine) **I wasn't**

Owen **Yes you were. You've gone quiet in there**

A hammering comes from inside the machine

Owen **That's better. (To Tracy) Come on you, get a move on.....**

Tracy **I'm just a slave in this place.**

Owen **If you were a slave I'd sell you.**

Jester (Still inside the machine) **I'd buy her.**

Tracy **Don't be disgusting.**

Owen playfully puts his arm around Tracy. Jester's head appears out of the machine

Owen **You've no chance Jester, Tracy prefers the older, more mature man.**

Tracy gives Owen a look of disgust and pulls away from him.

Tracy **Mature yes.....flesh rotting off the bone, no.**

Tracy finishes clearing up the mess and goes to leave. At that point, Pat enters, carrying a plate of food in her hand which is raised to shoulder height as if she is about to use the plate as a shot-putt.

Pat **And another thing.....**

Tracy dives under the table. Roger ducks down behind his bar but his head is still showing. Jester moves back. Owen hides behind Tracy.

Owen **Pat my little gorgon, you know I was only joking. What happened to your sense of humour?**

Pat **I married it.**

Owen **Put the food down. There are people starving in Africa.**

Jester **I don't think she can throw it that far.**

Pat seems to relent and puts her hand down so that the plate is at waist height.

Pat **Just you remember....I want to talk to you all before the pub opens. We have important things to discuss.**

She turns on her heel and storms off. The rest of the cast stand again. Tracy walks gingerly off with the brush and dustpan. Jester is putting the front of the machine in place again.

Owen (In a German accent) **Ve haf important things to discuss**

Roger (In a German accent) **Zer is no escape**

Jester (In a German accent) **Any von trying to escape vill be shot**

Pat re-appears in the doorway, she is brandishing a large knife. All three men smile nervously. Owen clasps his hands over his crotch. Roger whistles tunelessly. Jester turns back to his machine.

Pat **If I thought you lot were mocking me.....**

She looks at each man in turn and then leaves slowly.

Owen (Sarcastically) **If I was mocking you my darling may I be struck down on the spot.**

Jester drops his hammer on the floor, making a loud noise. Owen clutches his chest.

Jester **Sorry.....**

Owen **Idiot.**

Roger comes from behind the bar, with his blackboard and places it close to the restaurant door. We see that he has written "Today's special - Boloknays"

Roger **So what's actually wrong with this machine then?**

Owen **Nothing much. It was just paying out a bit too much and Jester said he knew how to adjust the reels.**

Roger **Oh.....**

Owen **Simple little job he said. Be in and out in ten minutes he said. Why do I listen? I should know better. Remember when he had a go at fixing that leaking tap in old Mrs Cannon's house**

Roger **Isn't she the lady who lives near the village pond?**

Owen **She is now, but before he fitted a new washer for her, we didn't even have a village pond**

Jester stands up

Jester **Er, I've definitely fixed it now.**

He takes a coin from his now bulging pocket and puts it into the machine. As the reels click, Owen steps forward to see the result. Roger stands next to Owen and watches the reels.

Finally, the reels stop and nothing happens.

Owen **Three bells and sod all. That's the way I like it.**

Jester **Want me to try again?**

Owen **Don't be stupid. Have a drink, I'll even let you pay for it.**

Owen goes behind the bar. Jester sits on the stool at the end, close to the french windows. Owen pulls a pint for Jester and places it on the bar. Jester picks it up and takes a drink. Roger is still studying the games machine.

Owen **Seventeen pounds thirty please.**

Jester almost chokes

Jester **What?**

Owen **You heard. Two pounds thirty for the pint and fifteen quid you took out of the machine.**

Jester **I put twenty pence back in.**

Owen **Fair enough, seventeen pounds ten please.**

Jester points at the machine

Jester **I've got three bells.**

Owen **Get a job in the circus then, it's still seventeen pounds ten.**

Jester sighs and starts to empty his pockets of the coins, placing them on the bar. Owen goes back into the main area and exits as Roger goes back behind the bar and starts counting the coins.

Jester **He doesn't miss much does he?**

Roger **Pat taught him everything he knows, though he wouldn't admit that of course.**

Jester **Owen and Pat. Unlikely couple.**

Roger **Yeah but it's good they're together. After all, why make four people unhappy?**

Jester **Wonder why they never had children**

Roger **Good job they didn't. Can you imagine something that looks like Owen and has Pat's personality?**

Jester **Doesn't bear thinking about**

Owen enters. As he does, the phone rings. Owen picks up the receiver, Roger reaches under the table and brings out a large diary, which he puts on the bar in front of Owen who opens it, at the page with a pen inside.

Owen **Beaumont Arms....yes sir, no problem.....table for four at eight o'clock next Saturday.....could I have your name sir.....thank you, and your telephone number.....thank you Mr Hughes. Goodbye.**

As Owen ends the call by placing his finger on the cradle, Roger turns the diary round and reads out a number. Owen dials as the numbers are read out.

Roger (Reading) **Five....seven....seven....two....zero....six**

Roger puts the book away as Owen waits for the call to be answered.

Owen **Ah Mr Hughes, just confirming your booking sir.....no.....that's fine.....no problem.....see you on Saturday.**

He puts the phone down and writes something in the diary

Jester (Looking puzzled) **What's that about?**

Roger **Somebody once made a booking and didn't turn up. He doesn't take chances anymore.**

Owen **Make a note to add thirty pence to his bill to cover that phone call.**

Owen potters about the room, generally tidying up.

Jester **Talk about tight with money.**

Owen **I'm not tight. I'm thrifty.**

Roger **Yeah, thrifty as a drum.**

Owen puts Tracy's magazine behind the bar, then goes to open the french windows. Roger picks Tracy's magazine up and starts to flick through it.

Owen **I wouldn't read that thing it'll give you ideas.**

Roger **That's what I was hoping for.**

Jester is looking into space. He crosses his legs. Owen slaps him on the shoulder.

Owen **And you stop thinking about Tracy.**

Jester **What....how.....?**

Owen **That vacant expression and your crossed legs.**

Pat and Tracy enter. Pat is carrying a sheaf of papers.

Pat **Right, time for that meeting.**

She and Tracy sit behind the table. Pat placing the papers in front of her. Owen brings a stool from the bar and sits behind them. Roger comes from behind the bar and stands near Owen. Jester brings his own stool and goes to position it next to Roger. Pat fixes him with a stare.

Pat **And what do you think you're doing?**

Jester **I thought we were having a meeting.**

Pat **We are. I don't remember inviting you to put your two pennorth in.**

Jester **But I work here too.**

Pat **You do odd jobs, sometimes, and by the time we get someone in to fix what
light you've done, it costs us twice as much. I haven't forgotten that bedside
 you had a go at. Everytime I switched it on I got a shock.**

Owen **You weren't the only one**

Pat **I beg your pardon**

Owen **Nothing my love. Nothing at all.**

Jester **Look, I've just fixed your games machine.**

Roger **Yes, he's done a good job.**

Owen **I can vouch for that. I think he's.....**

Pat **(Interrupting) When I want your opinion, I'll tell you what it is. (To Jester)
 Back to the bar and don't interrupt.**

Jester drags his stool back to the bar, making a two-fingers sign at Pat's back as he does.

Pat **And don't do that, it's not clever.**

Looking somewhat surprised, Jester sits on his stool. Owen glances at his watch.

Owen **We'll have to make it quick. It's nearly opening time.**

Pat **Very well. Briefly then we need to do something to improve business.
 We've already had some suggestions. (She picks up a sheet of paper)
 Tracy here has suggested a quiz night and she'd be happy to set
 the questions.**

Owen, Roger and Jester look at each other and after a pause, all laugh. Tracy looks hurt.

Pat **Yes that's what I thought too.**

Tracy (Indignantly) **Why does everyone think I'm thick?**

Owen **Well we wouldn't say thick exactly**

Pat **Intellectually challenged perhaps.....**

Owen **Hard of thinking.....**

Roger **But not thick**

Tracy **I came third in the quiz at the White Bull last week**

Pat **And how many entered?**

Tracy (She pauses before answering) **Three.....**

Pat returns to her sheet of paper.

Pat **I rest my case. Other suggestions are karaoke, a theme night, live music or a stripper.**

Jester **That one was mine.**

Pat **Oh I am surprised. Now, my own idea was a race night**

Tracy **That would be good. All those different people.**

Everyone looks at Tracy, puzzled.

Owen **What different people?**

Tracy **You know.....white people, black people, orientals, and those floaty people from the far east.**

Owen **It's not that kind of...(He pauses).....what floaty people from the far east?**

Tracy **Those very light ones.....what are they called now.....oh yes, Cork Asians**

Owen shakes his head

Pat **Er no Tracy, you don't understand. A race night is where we show horse racing on a screen and people make bets. They have about six goes at it.**

Tracy **But once they've seen the race, won't they know who wins?**

Pat **No dear, we show different races.**

Tracy **Oh!**

Pat **And caucasians are white people Tracy. You're caucasian**

Tracy **No, I'm from England**

Owen **If I strangled her now, no court would convict me**

The telephone rings. Jester picks it up.

Jester **Beaumont Arms.....yes, just a moment.** (He cradles the phone to his chest)
Pat, it's for you.

Pat stands and walks over to the phone. She snatches it from Jester.

Jester (To those around the table) **It's a male voice.....** (He smirks)

Pat starts to talk quietly into the phone.

Roger **Perhaps she's got another man.**

Owen **Don't be stupid.** (Smugly) **Where would she find someone else of my pedigree?**

Tracy **Crufts?**

Owen is about to remonstrate with Tracy when Pat starts clicking her fingers and waving her hand. Owen stands up slowly and walks over to the bar, his eyes fixed on the waving hand.

Pat **Diary, diary.....**

Owen **Sorry, I thought you were drying your nail varnish.** (He reaches behind the bar and puts the diary on the counter. Pat opens it and waves again to signal that Owen should leave. Owen walks back to his stool, mimicking Pat's hand waving.)

Pat **Yes, Wednesday shouldn't be a problem. I'll pop in this afternoon to sort the details out.....thank you.....bye.** (She puts the phone down)

Pat returns to the table, picks up the papers rapidly.

Pat **Right, well, you think about these ideas and let me have any more.....**(She turns to face Jester) **sensible ones please.** (To Tracy) **Come on Tracy, let's get things ready in the kitchen.**

Tracy stands. She and Pat go to walk off. Tracy leaves but Pat stops in the doorway.

Pat **Oh, just one thing. I won't be available to cook on Wednesday night. It's always**

our slackest time in the restaurant and I've already checked the diary. There aren't any bookings, so don't take any.....right?

No-one answers. Owen is moving his stool back to the bar, Roger is walking back to his position behind the bar.

Pat (Loudly) **Right?**

Owen, Roger and Jester all jump.

Owen/Roger (Together) **Right!**

Pat leaves.

Owen **She may have her faults but she's not effeminate.**

Jester **So what's she up to on Wednesday then?**

Roger **Perhaps it's a cover. Like I said, maybe she's got a secret lover.**