

A stage play in three acts

By

Paul Howard Surridge

(Cast in order of appearance)

The cast comprises 5 men and 4 women

Pete Edmonds

Noel Leonard

Roger Blake

Jane Kenyon

Ray Wheeler

Brenda Leonard

Helen Blake

Patricia Edmonds

Mark Tyler

The play is presented in three acts. A single set representing the drawing room at Noel and Brenda's new home. Please see room layout at back of script. Other scenes for Jane's flat and the pub snug played in front of curtains. The time is the present.

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Synopsis

Pure Nectar is a comedy requiring a cast of 5 men and 4 women. If male cast numbers are a challenge the parts of Mark and Ray can be performed by the same actor.

Age range: Four men and three women early thirties to mid fifties: One male and one female in mid/late 20's/early thirties.

Work mates from a local engineering firm (Pete, Roger, Noel and Ray) are made redundant. They meet at the local pub to bemoan their future. Pete bumps into the lovely Jane whose also lost her job and convinces her she could be a Page 3 model. He offers to take pictures of her for a portfolio but his ploy backfires when her boyfriend Mark returns home early and catches them in the act (of taking pictures!) Some months later, Roger asks Pete if he's seen the picture of Jane on Page 3. Pete's lost for words, insisting it was him that took the photograph. Jane, now a minor celebrity shows her gratitude to Pete for giving her a start in the modelling business and asks him to be her Manager. He agrees, and as a consequence his wife Pat divorces him. A couple of years later, during which time Pete and Jane have secretly married and had a son, he returns for a re-union with his old work mates. They assume he's a millionaire, but the truth is he has a gambling habit that has led him and Jane into serious debt. On the evening of the Re-union, Noel amazingly wins over £6.8m on the lottery much to everyone's amazement.

After Noel and Brenda move into their new home, Pete calls in on Noel and cons him into investing Two hundred thousand pounds in what he claims is half the business he owns with Jane. Noel is told to keep the arrangement secret especially from Brenda. With Pete back on the scene Brenda organises a dinner party in an effort to re-unite Pete with first wife Pat without knowing that he has remarried. The evening proves a disaster as they discover his deceit. In the final act however, he wins a substantial amount of money on an Accumulator, enough to repay Noel and pay off his other debts.

ACT 1

Scene 1

Suggested Music prior to curtain opening and during scene changes where appropriate - Ian Dury 'Hit me with your rhythm stick'

(Present day. Lights up. The opening scene is played in front of a curtain. The space is sparsely furnished with 2 tables placed USC and DSL each have 4 chairs. As the curtain opens PETE is playing darts and NOEL is sitting at table DSL. They are both drinking pints of beer.

Pete: *(He's in his forties. A rough and ready character full of positive thinking quotes he picked up from his departed father. He enjoys lecturing his friends believing he always knows best. He will often take an opposing view to arguments simply to be contentious):* I never thought I'd be so happy at being made redundant! Think of all those things I can do I never had time for.

Noel: *(In his thirties. Noel lacks confidence and has his life organised by his wife Brenda. He's sitting facing the audience)* I wish I saw things the way you do. It couldn't have come at a worse time for me; kids at secondary school. Doc Marten's every term...

Pete: Doc who? Never heard of him...

Noel: They're shoes! Bloody awful things, more like jack boots. Who would have thought girls would want to be seen wearing jack boots with a dress? What's it coming to?

Pete: I didn't understand a word of that. Doc who? Jack boots! You lost me! Look. You must always look on the bright side. "Out of adversity comes Opportunity" my old man used to say.

Noel: He talks to you from the grave then?

Pete: Twenty years long gone, my dear old dad, but as you say, his wisdom still talks to me from beyond. 'Wisdom never dies'. Anyway, that new factory's opening; they're bound to have vacancies.

Noel: But I'm not trained for anything.

Pete: *(PETE joins him at the table)* Get trained my son! 'You're either moving forward or you're going backwards' ...another of his sayings.

Noel: Moving forward? Just getting by was my life goal.

Pete: Not very optimistic my old son. So, what will your Brenda say?

Noel: Probably blame me. Get the hump and not speak for days. Just like normal really.

Pete: Ah well it could be worse. After five days on the trot of picking a winner on the horses..., I put all me winning on an accumulator and...

Noel: (*Keen to interrupt*): Lost it all!

Pete: No! I won over six hundred quid!

Noel: Lucky devil. Just like you. You'd fall into a bucket of pigs' shit and end up smelling of tulips.

Pete: Smelling of tulips? I think you're mixing your metaphors, but it's not luck, its positive thinking; knowing the form.

Noel: I say luck! But what am I going to say back at home?

Pete: It could be worse you know.

Noel: Worse?

Pete: Tell her you've fallen in love with a young bird and are leaving her!

Noel: She'd be delighted if I told her that.

Pete: She loves you, I know she does. My old man used to say "better to get it off your chest than let it curdle in your throat for weeks on end".

Noel: He had a way with words!

Pete: Inspiration to me. Look, go home, tell her you love her, and then tell her.

Noel: Tell her I love her? Then tell her what...

Pete: Tell her you've lost your job. Get it out in the open. Then she can go barmy and it'll all settle down.

Noel: You don't know my Brenda.

Pete: Of course I know the lovely Brenda. They're all the same. Sisters! They want security, love and affection. If you're bold and confident she'll come round quicker than if you're down and worried. A part-time psychologist, that's me!

Noel: You could be right... Won't Pat have a go?

Pete: There's only one person wearing the trousers in my house.

Roger: (*ROGER enters. A rough diamond but popular with women; in his early thirties, hears tail end of sentence*) And it's not you, that's for sure! You boys depressed then?

Pete: Not me. Best thing that's happened in years.

Roger: What is it with him, we're given the heave ho, no job to go to and he's happy! Fancy a game?

Pete: Not for me mate.

(*Roger plays darts*)

Noel: He's he's got six hundred quid in his back pocket he won on an accumulator.

Roger: No one, ever wins on accumulators?

Noel: He did.

Roger: Lucky bugger. Do you know; this is the fourth time I've been made redundant. It's like the clap. When you've had it once you get it again and again.

Noel: The clap?

Roger: Gordon Bennett! (*Points at his crotch*) You know; the clap!

Noel: Oh. I see.

Pete: Somehow, I don't think you do! (*PETE and ROG laugh*)

Noel: (*Embarrassed*) Of course I do! (*To Roger*) What will Helen say about losing the job then?

Roger: Not much, don't care. Thinks I'm unemployable. I've never liked work. I started out at Matthews... you know the old engineering works. I had grand ideas of being an apprentice. No sooner I'd joined as general dog's body they announced they were closing down; out on me ear within weeks.

Noel: Then what?

Roger: I was left stranded. Helen had just had the first nipper so she was well pleased. Then I got another; lost that; got another, and well, that didn't work out; the wife of the boss fancied me you see and he knew it...

Pete: 'Turn adversity into opportunity', that's what I say.

Roger: You ought to come and live with my Helen for a bit...that's adversity!

Noel: Come on, what the hell am I going to say when I get home?

Pete: Take her a bunch of flowers. As I said, tell her you love her, and then tell her the news.

Noel: She'd be speechless - at me giving her flowers!

Roger: Give my old lady flowers and she'd probably faint. Tell her I love her and she'd know I'd been on the sniff again. Rather have a few pints.

Noel: Well, I hope you both have a better weekend than I'm going to have. See you here for a game of darts sometime, if I'm ever allowed out.

(Moves to exit SR and stops as PETE calls out)

Pete: Remember...tomorrow's the first day of the rest of your life... *(NOEL Exits and ROGER joins Pete at the table)*

Roger: Tomorrow's the what? His' missus will give him a hard time. I doubt we'll see him for a while. Mind you Helen wouldn't stop me going out for a pint, that's for certain.

Pete: He can't seem to rise above it all and see the bigger picture, if you know what I mean.

Roger: Talking of rising above it..., I wouldn't mind rising above that Jane.

Pete: Jane?

Roger: You know the one in the estimating office...

Pete: Oh yeah. I know the one you mean. She's a breath of fresh air.

Roger: I know. I can smell her perfume now if I breathe in deeply.

Pete: Oh dear, is that crude or what!

Roger: Crude? It's healthy for a man to appreciate a woman's femininity.

Pete: ..., but that's not what you had in mind.

Roger: You've often said 'the day you lose interest is the day you're dead'.

Pete: Did I say that? Very profound!

Roger: Anyway I suppose I'd better be off too. (*ROGER starts to exit SR but meets JANE on her way in*) Jane! The gorgeous Jane! We were just talking about you. See ya girl.

Jane: (*JANE enters. She is young, attractive, with a full chest but not very bright. She wears skimpy clothing and far too much make-up*) Yeah. See you Rog. Can I join ya Pete?

Pete: Course you can. See you Rog. Keep smiling and give your missus one for me. (*Realising his comments were crude in front of Jane*) Sorry love; didn't mean for your delicate ears to hear men's talk.

Jane: Don't worry I've heard it all before. You can't work in a factory full of men and not.

Pete: Not what?

Jane: Hear all the things that men say, and the things they're going to do. It's all trouser talk. That's all. They're all the same; all they want is one thing.

Pete: Oh I see, and what's that?

Jane: Use your imagination, Pete. I didn't see you as a prude.

Pete: No, not a prude. Just wanted to know that we were talking about the same thing that's all! So, have you been made redundant too?

Jane: Yeah. I was one of the last to join the department so I suppose it's only fair.

Pete: That's very philosophical, a very understanding attitude if I may say so. Shame, I'd heard you were doing so well, and very popular.

Jane: I suppose I was. Better than the last one I had, never really had anything to do. My boss was a real so and so. One day he caught me bending over the coffee machine and ...well, I won't tell you what he did. Cheeky devil!

Pete: That's terrible.

Jane: Not really. Just a bit too much Testarossa in his blood, that's all.

Pete: You'll soon get another one I'm sure.

Jane: What, another boss like him?

Pete: No, another job!

Jane: (*Excitedly*) I thought I might try my luck at being a hostess... on the coaches. You get a free uniform and things like that you know. You get to travel the country; meet lots of interesting people..., well, mainly old people with crutches and sticks, but I don't mind... Have you lost your job then?

Pete: Yeah, but it's OK. I can do all those things I've been threatening for years. So, a hostess job on the coaches for you then? You'd be good at that.

Jane: I really wanted to be a model, but my boyfriend wouldn't let me, said they'd be all over me.

Pete: Who would?

Jane: You know all those photographers. (*Pronounced fotografers*)

Pete: Oh I see. That kind of model!

Jane: What?

Peter: Walking down the catwalk kind of model, fashion, clothes, Naomi Campbell. You've certainly got the figure for it.

Jane: Do you think so.... No, I'm too fat.

Pete: Rubbish. Great legs and (*Eyes Jane up and down*) well good enough to be a model anyway.

Jane: Really! I just met this bloke in the pub one night who said he was a photographer... Said he'd do the modelling session for free.

Pete: I bet he did!

Jane: Sorry?

Pete: I bet there are lots of photographers looking for models like you, but have difficulty persuading them to take their clothes off, hence the free session.

Jane: He didn't say anything about taking my clothes off... (*Getting quite excited*) Mind you, I wouldn't have minded if he had. He was quite a dish really.

Pete: So, you'd be happy taking your clothes off and posing in front of a complete stranger would you?

Jane: Not anyone! He'd have to be tasty.

Pete: Blimey, so it's more about finding a tasty bloke who happens to have a camera handy then.

Jane: I'd like to be a model, that's all.

Pete: I'm a bit of a photographer!

Jane: Are you?

Pete: Yeah. I've offered my services in the past for art classes at the college you know. Reckon I'm quite good at getting people's best angles. I've had lots of people asking me to take pictures of them.

Jane: What sort of pictures?

Pete: Posh ones of people dressed up at weddings, family pictures; people without any clothes on. Nothing really erotic though!

Jane: Erotic?

Pete: The ones they take for newspapers. Page 3, that sort of thing!

Jane: I wouldn't mind being on Page 3.

Pete: Really! Well it's not that difficult if you have the right assets; like yours.

Jane: Don't think my boyfriend would like it though. He's the violent jealous type. (*JANE looks into space*) Quite macho really!

Pete: (*Somewhat deflated*) I see!

Jane: Do you really think I could be a model?

Pete: Have absolutely no doubt!

Jane: So you can do it, can you?

Pete: Do it? (*Eyebrows pop*)

Jane: Take pictures, like the professionals?

Pete: I've been told I've got real talent, like Lord Lichfield?

Jane: Isn't he the one that went missing on a beach and they've never found him?

Pete: (*Laughs*) No. That's Lord Lucan! Mind you they're all up to something though aren't they?

Jane: So can you?

Pete: What?

Jane: Take decent pictures of me. Not indecent! (*Laughs at her joke*) You know, I don't care what my boyfriend says. I'd be prepared to ditch him if he kicked up a fuss.

Pete: Well, I'd have to check to see my tackle's working, cameras, batteries and that sort of thing. Yeah, when would you like to give it a go then?

Jane: What about Monday afternoon. We've no job to go to have we; maybe this will be the start of my new career!

Pete: Monday afternoon then... Where would you like to do it?

Jane: What about your house? (*Thinking twice*) Or does your wife get fed up with people traipsing in and out for modelling sessions?

Pete: Yeah. As you say not a good idea really! What about your place?

Jane: Well. My boyfriend works late on Monday's. He's a lorry driver you know.

Pete: We won't be disturbed then. About 1.00 o'clock or: 'thirteen hundred hours', as man my old man used to say?

Jane: I'd prefer one o'clock.

Pete: You'd better give me your address and 'phone number then. (*PETE starts to look in his pocket for a piece of paper and pen. JANE fishes out a pen from her bag; grabs his arm and writes the detail on his hand. She speaks the detail out loud*)

Jane: 'Jane...Flat 18, Grove Road. Telephone 467872'! (*JANE looks up at Pete*): Now don't you wash your hands will you! (*JANE laughs and PETE can't believe his luck*)

Pete: I'll see you Monday. Get plenty of beauty sleep, my darling.

Jane: Cheeky devil. Okay, see ya. A model! I've always wanted to be a model. (*JANE exits walking like a model*)

Pete: (*PETE gets up excitedly examining his hand and plays darts*): What have I done to deserve this?

(*RAY, late 30's enters SR in a downbeat mood and watches PETE play darts. He's not very bright and slow on the uptake. PETE spots him enter*)

Pete: Hi Ray.

Ray: Hi Pete. I'll never get another job. Not in a million years. Will you be able to sort yourself out?

Pete: I reckon I have already. Best day's work for some time.

Ray: Really. What job have you landed so quick?

Pete: I don't quite know, but there's life left in the old dog yet!

Ray: You'll have some good news to tell your Pat then?

Pete: Yes ...No. Absolutely not! The least she knows the better...

Ray: Why wouldn't you tell her? It sounds as though you've done well for yourself...

Pete: I do believe in opportunity out of adversity, don't you?

Ray: So have you got another job or not?

Pete: Well let's say a new lease of life anyway. (*Chuckles*)

Ray: You talk in riddles you do. Who managed to keep their jobs at the factory?

Pete: (*PETE and RAY sit at the table*) Most of the technical lads that know about computers! ... Sign of the times I suppose.

Ray: I've got a computer at home. Well at least my boy has. A second hand one I bought for him. It's too complicated for me. Kid's today, they're brought up on them; show them a grafters tool box though; hammers, chisels, screwdrivers and they haven't got a clue.

Pete: If I were you my old son, I'd want to learn a lesson or two from your lad. Computers are the future ...and (*Chuckles*) photography!

Ray: Photography?

Pete: Never mind my son. I'd better be off. (*PETE starts to leave*) I've got to sort out my tackle if I'm going to look half serious.

Ray: You off fishing over the weekend then?

