

DAVID/FRANK/HUGO/OWNE/MRS CROPLY/JIM

SCECE ONE - The Village Hall - Lights come up

DAVID Are we all here?
FRANK Yes, perfectly.
DAVID Not *can* we all hear - are we all here?
(Hugo enters and sits at his usual place.)
FRANK I'm sorry. Yes, all except Owen.
DAVID Well, let's get on shall we? Owen's always late and we've got a lot of business. Right, I call this meeting of the Dibley Parish Council to order. David Horton in the chair, Frank Pickle taking minutes.
FRANK Shall I minute that sir?
DAVID What?
FRANK About my taking the minutes.
DAVID Do you normally minute it?
FRANK Well, yes I do.
DAVID Then do it again.
FRANK Oh, thank you.
DAVID The agenda this week starts with the tragic news of the death of Reverend Pottle two weeks ago. **(They all murmur agreement.)** He had been a great servant of the village ever since his arrival here as a young-ish man in 1927.
JIM Happy days.
DAVID And while we are looking forward to welcoming our new vicar this evening I am sure we will all remember Reverend Pottle with great fondness. Particularly for his Christmas sermon which I think we all know by heart. He shall be greatly missed.
HUGO Hear, Hear.
DAVID Anyone want to add anything to that?
JIM Ah, no, no, no, no, no, no, yes. Just one thing. If that's all right
DAVID Yes fire away.
JIM No, no, no, no, no, but I thought maybe we should mention the marrow.
DAVID And what marrow's that?
JIM Ah - he, he, he came second in the marrow-growing contest in 1956.
HUGO Oh, bravo.
DAVID Well, excellent - yes, we'll include that. Anything else?
JIM No, no, no, no, no. **(David stares at him in irritation.)**
DAVID That's 'no' is it?
JIM No, no, no, no, no, yes. **(Owen enters.)**
DAVID Right. Moving on.
OWEN Sorry, I'm late.
DAVID That's all right, Owen, we've only just begun.
OWEN My bladder's been playing up again. I've spent so much time in the bloody stables toilet I'm thinking of sending out change of address cards.
DAVID Yes thank you, Owen. Moving on, last week was the Village Of The Year Competition and I've written to Buckingham Palace thanking them so much for Prince Edward's visit.
MRS CROPLEY Hear, hear.
OWEN Shame.
DAVID I beg your pardon.
OWEN I've nothing against Prince Edward, though I don't usually trust bald blokes. **(David reacts)** I'm just surprised we don't start with the Reverend's death.

DAVID We dealt with that before you arrived, Owen.
OWEN Oh.
DAVID Now moving on.
FRANK Perhaps you'd like me to read the minutes back to you, Owen, so you can catch up.
DAVID I don't think that will be necessary. We don't need to waste our whole evening because of Owen's dodgy waterworks.
FRANK Shall I minute that?
DAVID **(Firmly.)** No, Thank you . Right...
FRANK Shall I leave a gap then?
DAVID Whatever you think, Frank.
FRANK Well, it's not going to flow very well.
DAVID (Now annoyed) Oh, for goodness sake, Frank - you are the Parish Clerk, not Alfred Lord Tennyson. Right - I'm sorry everyone for that rather annoying interlude, but if we *can* move on to the question of the successor to Reverend Pottle.
FRANK Are you sure about that?
DAVID What, Frank? - What?
FRANK Well, you just described Prince Edward's visit as a rather annoying interlude.
DAVID I certainly did not.
FRANK Well, I'm afraid you did - I cut that jolly interesting bit about Owen's bladder, so now it reads, 'So much for Prince Edward's visit. And if we can move on from that rather annoying interlude'.
DAVID Oh God.
OWEN Look, could we get on? I've got a worrying feeling in my colon.
MRS CROPLEY Errm...
DAVID Yes.
MRS CROPLEY Nothing.
FRANK Do you want that minuted, Mrs Cropley?
MRS CROPLEY Oh, yes, I suppose so.
FRANK Excellent. (Writing.) 'Then Mrs Cropley said nothing'.
DAVID Now, moving on. I did of course ask the Bishop for someone a little younger than the Reverend Pottle.
MRS CROPLEY Yes, please.
DAVID But then I think it would be hard to find anyone older ... without actually recruiting a member of the Rolling Stones. **(He finds this hilariously funny but no one else does and they all look at him with derision.)** Right. Now before the new vicar arrives if we can quickly go through the planning applications which I think you'll find on pink 7a **(They all shuffle through their papers.)** The Herberts want a new Barn. Rejected. The Franklins want a new kitchen. Rejected. And, my son Hugo here is putting up a conservatory for his South American flower collection which I think should be fine. HUGO Excellent news. Somewhere for the pool table at last.
DAVID Right, any other business?
OWEN Definitely not. (He rushes off to the toilet.)
DAVID Thank you all very much. Have you got all that Frank?
FRANK Yes, ' .. without actually recruiting a member of the Rolling Stones.' What comes next?...**Blackout**

DAVID/GERALDINE/ALICE/MRS C/JIM/FRANK/OWEN/HUGO

THE ARRIVAL

DAVID I think our new vicar has arrived, either that or the milkman's very late again.
GERALDINE (off) Can you hurry? It's tipping down out here. **(David opens the door)** Hello.
DAVID Hello.
GERALDINE David Honiton... Err... Hawtree?
DAVID Horton.

GERALDINE Horton. That's the chap. Can you just take these while I... **(she hands David a couple of bags and turns to pick up the rest of her luggage.)**
I'm Geraldine, I believe, you've been expecting me.
DAVID No, I'm expecting our new vicar. Unless, of course, you are the new vicar and they've landed us with a woman. (he laughs) as some sort of insane joke. **(Geraldine has undone her coat and turns to reveal she is wearing a dog collar and cross.)**
GERALDINE Oh dear. **(David is absolutely stunned by this and the others look on in disbelief.)**
DAVID Oh my God.
GERALDINE You were expecting a bloke: beard, Bible, bad breath...
DAVID Yes, that sort of thing.
GERALDINE And instead you've got a babe with a bob cut and a magnificent bosom.
DAVID So I see.
GERALDINE Hello, everyone I'm Geraldine. Call me Gerry. **(pause)** Boo.
HUGO **(Still slightly stunned.)** Delighted to meet you. I'm Hugo. Call me... Hugo.
GERALDINE Right **(She pokes Hugo's chest.)** Do you mind if I say that that is a devastatingly smart tie, Hugo.
HUGO Is it?
GERALDINE Yes, it is.
FRANK How do you do - I'm Frank Pickle. I take the minutes on the Council.
GERALDINE Splendid. Very important job. Do forgive me if I instantly forget your name, won't you? I'm absolutely dreadful with names. Ask me to name the virgin Mary's eldest son, and ... nope - mind's gone blank. **(She laughs absurdly.)**
FRANK Jesus.
GERALDINE That's it! Yes. **(Geraldine moves to Mrs Cropley.)** Hello, Geraldine. Gerry.
MRS CROPLEY Letitia...er, Letty. Er, Cropley. I play the organ and do the flowers in the church.
GERALDINE Oh splendid. And what flowers have we got in this week?
MRS CROPLEY Well, we're in mourning for Reverend Pottle.
GERALDINE Of course. Lovely Carnations?
MRS CROPLEY That's right. And I thought I'd put in a pineapple as well.
GERALDINE Mmmm. Unusual. **(She moves towards Jim.)** And you are?
JIM No, no, no, no, Jim.
GERALDINE Jim?
JIM No, no, no, no ...
GERALDINE Not Jim.
JIM No, no, no - yes, Jim.
GERALDINE Good, good **(She walks to Alice.)** And finally...
(They shake hands and Alice curtsies.)
ALICE Delighted to meet you.
DAVID This is Miss Tinker, she *was* the verger under Reverend Pottle.

GERALDINE Oh, splendid. Do you want to go on with the job?
ALICE **(Curtseying again.)** Oh, yes please, Ma'am. I'd like that.
GERALDINE Good, good. Don't call me Ma'am. Sounds like the Queen. Lovely lady - but very odd taste in hats. Don't you think - Miss Tinker?
ALICE **(Laughing.)** Yes, yes I do! Oh, you can call me Alice.
GERALDINE Right.
ALICE Because it's my name.
GERALDINE Right. **(The doorbell rings and Hugo goes to answer it. Mrs Cropley offers a sandwich to Geraldine)** Thank you. **(She takes a small bite.)** Very unusual sandwiches. What's this with the ham?
MRS CROPLEY Lemon curd.
GERALDINE Good lord. Mind if I just pop it down there? **(Puts sandwich back on plate.)** Just for a moment. **(Owen enters.)**
OWEN Sorry about that. I wouldn't go in the khazi for a while.
DAVID Stomach still bad?
OWEN To be frank, it's like the Battle of the bleedin' Somme down there.
DAVID Ah, Owen. This is Geraldine - she's the new vicar.
GERALDINE Hello.
OWEN **(Ignoring Geraldine.)** No, she isn't.
GERALDINE Why not?
OWEN She's a woman.
GERALDINE Ah, you noticed. **(She points to her breasts.)** These are such a give away aren't they?
HUGO Drink Owen?
OWEN I think I might need one.
GERALDINE Why not make it a double I feel a party coming on. **Blackout**

ALICE AND GERALDINE

SCENE 3 - The Vicar' Cottage – Later

GERALDINE Well, here we are, number 2 - base camp. From here we launch our great mission. With, of course the proper rations. **(She pulls handfuls of chocolate bars from her pockets and stashes them away.)** You're going to have to take me through a few things.

ALICE Yeah.

GERALDINE What kind of crowd are we pulling to the Sunday gigs here?

ALICE Oh, er, about ... four.

GERALDINE A Crowd of four?

ALICE Yes, on a good day.

GERALDINE Well, four's not bad is it? I mean, there were four Gospels, four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Four Rocky movies. Until they made Rocky 5, and 6!. Very bad move I thought.

ALICE Well it may go up to five if Mr Newitt's bowels settle down.

GERALDINE Let me get this straight. We've got Mr Trott, Mr Pickle, Mr Horton ...

ALICE **(Excitedly.)** Oh! And sometimes Hugo comes ... but not very often.

GERALDINE So who's the forth one?

ALICE Mr Newitt, I mentioned with the bowels.

GERALDINE No no no. He was the fifth one wasn't he?

ALICE Was he?... **(she counts again on her fingers)** Oh me. Thickness! **(she points to her forehead with fingers like a gun)** Pow!

GERALDINE Well what about Christmas?

ALICE Oh well at Christmas it's special. There's only three because Mrs Cropley goes to visit her sister.

GERALDINE I see. And what do you do Alice when you're not in charge of crowd control here.

ALICE I help the teacher in the nursery school.

GERALDINE Oh God Alice. Do you think we're going to be alright?

ALICE Of course. I'm going to support you all the way.

GERALDINE Well then. We can't fail can we.

ALICE I know all about tropical fish as well.

GERALDINE Splendid, splendid. Then we shall be fishers of men.

ALICE I don't know much about them though.

GERALDINE Watch and learn kid. Watch and learn. **Blackout**