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Characters

(See production notes for descriptions of the characters)

Colin (M)	-	Theatre Group Member thinking of leaving the group.
Patricia (F)	-	The Theatre Group rain cloud.
Derek (M)	-	Theatre Group Member. Fiancé of Dawn.
Dawn (F)	-	Theatre Group Member. Fiancé of Derek.
Dan (M)	-	Quiet member of the Theatre Group
Mona (F)	-	Unpopular member of the Theatre Group
Roger (M)	-	Chairperson of the Theatre Group
Alice (F)	-	Shy member of the Theatre Group. Martin's Girlfriend
Martin (M)	-	Member of the Theatre Group. Alice's Boyfriend
Simon (M)	-	Aloof member of the Theatre Group
Sharon (F)	-	Loudest member of the Theatre Group
Kevin (M)	-	Weirdest member of the Theatre Group

Act 1

Scene 1 – The meeting room

(The tabs open to reveal an empty stage. There are a few posters on the walls advertising past shows by The Wallington Theatre Group. Colin and Patricia enter wearing outdoor coats and carrying bags.)

Colin: Well, another night of arguments, ridiculous suggestions for shows we can't do and absolutely no drama whatsoever!

Patricia: There's always plenty of Drama.

Colin: Not of the acting kind.

(They remove their coats and place them downstage along with their bags. Dawn and Alice enter.)

Dawn: **(To Alice)** Look Alice, I don't know where Martin is; helping Derek in the bar probably.

(Colin and Patricia glance over at Dawn and Alice with disgust. Dawn does likewise to Colin and Patricia. Alice, looking told off, removes her coat and places it with the others downstage.)

Alice: Hello Colin, Pat.

Patricia: My mother calls me Pat. Don't call me Pat.

Alice: Sorry

(There are a few moments of uncomfortable silence until Sharon enters brashly. She is dressed in bright colours and is wearing bright orange shoes. Sharon speaks loudly, quickly and with frightening energy.)

Sharon: **(Childish and over-exuberant)** Heellllooooo!! What's going on?

Patricia: Oh, hello Sharon –

Sharon: **(Interrupting)** I've been shopping today and I bought these orange shoes what do you think?

(Sharon spins round, grinning inanely)

Patricia: They don't go with that skirt, and what have you done to your hair?

Sharon: Ooh, I was hoping you'd ask. Well, I went to the hairdressers and I was going to get them to do a sample first to see whether the bleach would make it white or white white –

(Martin, Derek and Dan enter wearing outdoor coats. Colin rolls his eyes and sighs at Sharon's tirade.)

Colin: Can we start getting some tables out for the meeting? Martin, Derek – Dan!

(Colin leaves the stage and beckons to Martin, Derek and Dan to follow. They look a little bewildered but follow nonetheless. Sharon continues unperturbed.)

Sharon: Well, if it was white then they couldn't put the red in, it would look orange and –

Patricia: **(Interrupting)** We have to get some tables out.

(Patricia walks away. Sharon turns her conversation on Alice who looks a little frightened.)

Sharon: Well, if it was white white then I had no chance –

Dawn: Pat –

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Patricia: Don't call me Pat.

Sharon: So she cut it all short on one side and put lots of red streaks in it but I hated it so I got her to cut the other side –

Alice: **(Interrupting)** Can you wait there two seconds

(She leaves to help fetching tables)

(Simon enters. Sharon notices and moves towards him. Simon quickly makes his exit to help fetching tables. Sharon, looking disappointed, then starts rummaging in her handbag; pulling out a lipstick and compact. She opens the compact and begins to apply the lipstick. The group members begin to file back on stage carrying tables, which they set up end to end forming one long table)

Colin: **(Carrying a heavy table on his own)** Watch you don't strain your arm lifting that lipstick Sharon.

Sharon: I've had a very hard day. The escalator's broken in Debenhams and do you know it's uphill all the way from Evans to Marks and Spencer's? **(Suddenly has a thought)** Hey Colin, if I was a kind of chocolate bar, which one would I be?

Colin: **(Sarcastically)** I hope you don't trap your finger shutting your compact!

(Colin leaves the stage again to fetch another table. The other group members assemble in their cliques. Martin, Simon, Alice, Derek and Dawn on one side, Pat and Dan on the other. They stage chatter to each other.)

Sharon: **(To nobody in particular)** Well, I think I'd be an Aero, because I'm bubbly and sweet –

(Alice throws an indignant look in her direction. Kevin enters.)

Kevin: Good evening fellow earthlings. Na-Noo-Na-Noo.

(Everyone ignores Kevin including Sharon)

Kevin: Don't worry, I'm so unpopular even my imaginary friend ignores me. Don't you Steven? **(Pauses)** See?

Patricia: You decided to grace us with your presence this week then? Good of you to turn up.

Kevin: Ah, you're talking to my trousers yes? **(He emits a nerdish snigger)** Turn-up you see?

Patricia: Kevin, no one gets your jokes. You really are wasting your time. Could you help Colin with that table and make yourself useful?

Colin: Don't bother, you'll probably start talking about which country they made the legs in or how many tables were sold in Botswana last year.

Kevin: No, actually, I was just going to –

(Colin hits him with the table, pretending it was accidental)

Colin: I wouldn't stand there if I were you. Can we all sit down for the meeting please?

(The group members sit in order from stage right to left : Kevin, Dan, Martin, Alice, Mona, Roger, Colin, Simon, Sharon, Derek, Dawn, Patricia. Mona and Roger have not yet entered the scene.)

Dawn: Where's the Chairperson?

Simon: (Remembering) Oh, I have a message on my phone from Roger saying he's going to be –

(Mona enters. She is flustered, carrying shopping, wearing an oversized coat and acting annoyed)

Mona: It's alright, don't bother helping me. I'll just find out what room we're in on my own, like I always do!

Colin: Mona! What's the matter with you?

Mona: (Acerbically) Well nobody thought to tell me which room we were in so I've had to wander the corridors with all this heavy shopping. I haven't been sitting around in here laughing and chatting.

(Mona places her shopping downstage along with her coat)

Derek: Eh? We're always in this room. Did you not ask at the front desk?

Mona: I shouldn't have to. (She takes her seat) And why do I have to sit next to misery guts? (She points to Alice)

Alice: (Looking startled) Eh?

Mona: These plastic chairs are stupid. Are we going to ask them to get us better chairs? I suppose I'll have to do that myself as well, like I do everything else around here. I've still got a cut on my leg off two weeks ago. (She eventually sits)

Derek: (Angrily) From when you kicked the chair across the room?

Colin: Right, that's enough. Can we have a bit of hush please? As Vice-Chairperson I'll stand in for Roger until he gets here. Right, I think we should play a warm up game.

Simon: (Timidly) I have a message on my phone from Roger –

Colin: Right, word association. I'll start. Shoe.

Sharon: (Exuberantly) I bought some new shoes today

(Sharon giggles, lifts her leg up and places a foot on the table to show everyone her shoe. She then claps with childish over-the-top excitement)

Colin: (Shouting) Can we concentrate? This is supposed to be fun. Shoe. Simon?

Simon: Tongue

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Mona: What has tongue got to do with shoe?

Simon: (**Doubting himself**) Well, shoes have tongues?

Mona: Not all shoes!

Colin: Sharon, tongue.

Mona: Ha! The irony!

Sharon: Eh? I was just talking to my hairdresser today about you, she used to go to school with you and she said –

Colin: Sharon. Tongue.

Sharon: Speak

Derek: Talk

Dawn: (**Pauses to think of an answer. To Derek**) You think of one for me

(**Roger enters**)

Roger: Sorry I'm late I had to –

Colin: Thank Christ

Patricia: Colin, language!

Colin: Sorry.

(**Roger takes his seat**)

Roger: Good evening everyone. Sorry I'm late; I left a message on Simon's phone. Right, sorry I couldn't make it last week, had to see a man about a dog; (**To Colin, excitedly**) a car actually.

Colin: (**Bored**) Can we get on?

Roger: Yes, did I miss anything?

Derek: Only a scale six riot. (**To Dawn**) Did I tell you about when I was in the riot police by the way?

Dan: Mona accidentally hit me in the face with a broom handle. It was nothing really.

Mona: (**Over-reacting**) Oh my god! I knew you would bring that up. I didn't do it on purpose.

Roger: (**Calmly**) He just said it was an accident. Calm down.

Derek: She beat him to within an inch of his life

Kevin: Well we're metric now so it would have been to within 2.5 centimetres of his life

(There is silence for a moment while Kevin awaits the laughter that never comes)

Roger: Right, let's get on shall we?

(Roger sits, shuffles some papers and composes himself)

Roger: Welcome to the *[current year]* Annual General Meeting for the Wallington Theatre Group. **(He glances at Alice)** Are you not writing this down?

Alice: What?

Roger: The minutes?

Alice: Was I supposed to?

Roger: You are the secretary.

Alice: Oh, yes, right.

Roger: Does anyone have paper and a pen?

(Dawn produces a big red file with a Raccoon on it and hands it over, along with a purple pen with a spring attached to feathers or a cartoon character wobbling on the top. Alice tries to write with this and is clearly agitated by it.)

Roger: Alice, do you have the letters from the committee?

(Alice looks furtive and shakes her head.)

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Roger: Ok, I understand all the present committee members wish to stand for their positions again this year?

(There are nods and grunts of agreement from Colin, Mona, Alice and Simon)

Roger: I have made the decision to co-opt Sharon Donald as a full member until she leaves the country in June and I also propose making Jenny Harmon an ex- officio member of the committee in recognition of her long service to the group.

Patricia: She's only been in the group for two years. You can't say she's given long service just because she's 65 years old.

Colin: **(Sarcastically)** No, she's actually only twenty nine, it's because she's been in this bloody group for two years that she looks sixty five!

Patricia: Colin, language!

(Colin furrows his brow in Patricia's direction)

Roger: She's an integral part of our team and she does a lot of the background work. Usually with a shovel cleaning up our –

Colin: **(Interrupting)** While you lot are swanning around on stage in your leg warmers, she's operating lights, curtains and sound while I'm behind the tabs humping all the scenery.

Kevin: You do what with the scenery?

(Colin glares at Kevin who is unnerved and smiles back)

Roger: Anyway, that's the proposal.

Mona: Where is she anyway?

Roger: Jenny? She's in hospital getting her hip done.

Mona: Well that's no excuse. It says in the constitution that you can't be given a place on the committee if you're absent at the AGM.

Colin: Is this the old constitution, the new one or the newer new one? **(Listlessly)** We re-write it every year.

Mona: The newest one. It says she can't be on the committee.

Derek: No it doesn't. **(He produces a copy of the constitution and flicks through it for a considerable time)** Ah, here, it says "Notwithstanding, hereby notice afforded to said members of aforementioned clauses 3(a), 4(b) and 17(f), any member exempt under rules 7(d) and 23(w) shall not henceforth be under consideration for rule 4(n)"

Roger: Well, that's cleared that up. Ex-officio member isn't really a role –

(Mona snatches the constitution from Derek and reads for the next five minutes)

Roger: **(Glancing at his agenda)** Apologies?

Kevin: Accepted.

(More stony silence meets Kevin's joke.)

Roger: Apologies?

Alice: Jenny, who's in hospital and Leanne, who has not informed us in advance of her non-attendance tonight.

Martin: Has anyone seen her since the pantomime last month?

Colin: No. And no-one had seen her before the pantomime either. She only turns up when there's a show on. People who come here every single week and work hard were completely ignored for the lead role as usual – Martin.

Martin: **(Meekly)** She gave a good audition.

Colin: She walked in an hour after the auditions had started, waltzed to the front and then used a script! And she still got her lines wrong! Patricia had learned the monologue on page 34 and did it perfectly. She should have got the part.

Roger: Ok, ok, we discussed this at the Emergency General Meeting in October; we need to move on.

(Colin slumps reluctantly back in his chair)

Roger: Right, the first matter on the agenda –

Dan: **(Raising his hand nervously)** I haven't got one

Patricia: I haven't got one either

Roger: Really? I could have sworn I'd given them out. Mona, could you go and photocopy this please?

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Mona: I'm reading!

Roger: Mona, could you go and –

Mona: **(Snatches the agenda)** Right, I heard you the first time.

(Mona leaves)

Roger: Right, the first item was insurance.

Sharon: Shouldn't we wait until she comes back?

Roger: No, no it'll be alright. There were concerns about the amount of insurance we had for the Theatre Group members and the audience whilst at the local primary school. We raised this issue with the school and they assured us that we were comprehensively insured.

Derek: Is Dan insured for getting hit in the face with a broom handle?

Patricia: Your obsessed with that aren't you?

Derek: **(Irritably)** Mona should be thrown out of the group. I had 17 names on that petition.

Colin: Eh? There's only 14 people in the group **(Pauses)** and one of them is her!

(Mona enters carrying the photocopied agendas)

Mona: Well, that's just marvellous.

(She hands out the photocopies)

Simon: What's up?

Mona: The Receptionist has just pulled me up on the photocopying bill. Apparently it hasn't been paid since last year and we owe £397.30p.

Colin: What have we been photocopying? Sharon's phone bill?

Roger: How much did we make from the pantomime?

Mona: **(Sits and opens her file)** After expenses?

(Roger nods)

Mona: Minus £140.

(There are uncomfortable shuffles around the table)

Roger: **(Positively)** That's better than last year though. Right, Chairperson's statement. **(He clears his throat and reads from a scrap of paper)** Last year was a busy and profitable year with three productions.

(Mona takes the paper from his hand, scribbles on it and gives it back)

Roger: Last year was a busy year with three productions. Animal Farm by George Orwell, directed by Dawn Rand which was successful in that it brought in 3 new members; The cabaret, co-ordinated by Tony Dyson who has since left with stress and King Arthur, the pantomime, written and directed by Martin Jones, with the set constructed by Alan Dixon, who has since left with stress, and special effects by Keith Nicholson, who has also left, reason unspecified. This year's productions will be agreed later in the meeting. Patricia successfully appealed for the start time of our productions to be put back to 7:45 as it gives us more time to convince people in the bar to come and watch the show on nights which are a bit light on audience. We didn't win any awards this year, again, but we did have an exhibition celebrating twenty five years of the Wallington Theatre Group at which we performed a few of Aesop's Fables. Which went down well with the kids.

Patricia: **(Sarcastically)** Went down well with the kids?

Roger: They both enjoyed it. We had the beetle drive, the Birkenhead trip, Simon's beach hut party to raise money for his trip to Peru for a trek across the Pennines –

Simon: Andes –

Roger: The ballroom dancing and line dancing workshops organised by Jenny, before she had to go to hospital with her hip, and congratulations to Dan who appeared in an educational video for the St. John's ambulance. That's what this group is all about. Any questions?

Sharon: Yes, have you seen my shoes? I got them at Debenhams, only £75!

(Sharon puts her leg on the table once more)

Colin: Can we have the treasurer's report please?

(Sharon removes her leg from the table, her smile unwavering)

Mona: (Listlessly) We didn't make a profit again this year.

(Closes her file)

Roger: Could we have a bit more detail

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Mona: Fine. (Opens her file again) We spent £2300 last year on productions and received £387 in ticket sales. £30 from the beetle drive and £2.50 from the exhibition, though we spent £130 on food for the buffet. The Theatre group donated £400 towards the Christmas party and £100 to the local eye hospital.

Roger: Could I have a look at the statements?

(Mona hands the file over and sighs)

Roger: What are all these withdrawals?

(Mona glances at the statement, then widens her eyes in fear.)

Mona: We haven't had to pay for anything since buying the props and costumes for the pantomime. I don't know what they are.

Roger: We only authorised two hundred pounds for the Pantomime. What are all the other withdrawals? Anyone?

Colin: Don't you need two signatures to take money out?

Roger: Yes. Mona, do you have the cheque book?

(Mona searches for the cheque book in the back of the file.)

Roger: You can only take money from the account by writing a cheque.

Mona: I can't find it.

Roger: Where do you normally keep it?

Mona: (Confused) Just in this file. As I say, we haven't had to write a cheque since buying props about three months ago.

Dawn: (To Derek) She should be kicked out of the group.

Roger: Who?

Dawn: (To Roger) I wasn't talking to you

Mona: You need two signatures and the only people who can sign are the committee. (She points to each in turn) Roger, Colin, Alice, Simon and me.

Colin: So how much has gone out of the account since buying the props?

Roger: (Scanning the statement) Five hundred quid.
(Sharon's mobile phone rings. She answers it.)

Sharon: Hello?

Colin: (Suspiciously) And you've just bought a new car?
(Roger scowls at Colin)

Patricia: Where did Sharon get the money for those new shoes?

Dawn: What is the current balance?

Mona: 34 pence.

Sharon: (Into phone) What? When?

Roger: The accounts were audited last year weren't they?

Mona: The blond one on the reception desk did it. I proposed the accounts and Jenny seconded them.

Sharon: (Into phone) Well, I hope you got them back off him!

Alice: So there's no money left?

Mona: No

Patricia: What about the ticket money from the pantomime?

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Sharon: If he's going to shake it that hard, it's bound to snap off isn't it?

Roger: Sharon –

Sharon: Well if he puts it up there, you'll never get it back out

Roger: Sharon, could you take that outside?
(She gestures to Roger to be quiet)

Mona: The pantomime cheque was cashed three weeks ago and that money has been withdrawn too.

Roger: (**Stuttering and diffident**) Right, well this is clearly a serious matter.

Colin: Come on Mr. Chairperson. Let's see your leadership skills! You can't just do a vocal workshop to get out of this one!

Roger: We'll have to adjourn the meeting for the executive committee to discuss what to do. I'll need the other members to leave the room until we come to a decision.

Sharon: He's going to have to buy you a new one then. You'll never get it clean.

Dawn: Can we go to the bar?

Roger: Yes, I'll let you know when we have discussed things and we can reconvene.

(**Everyone exits leaving Sharon, Roger, Mona, Colin, Simon and Alice behind.**)

Sharon: – and what colour was it before he borrowed it?

Roger: Sharon; take that in the bar

Sharon: Hang on a minute sis, I'm being told I'm not wanted. (**She gets up to leave**) So anyway, enough about you, what do you think – green flared skirt, orange shoes –

(**Sharon's voice trails off as she exits. Close Tabs**)

Scene 2 – The Bar

(**Dan and Kevin enter front of tabs, walking to the bar.**)

Dan: Well, I think it was the cabaret that broke the camel's back.

Kevin: What do you mean?

Dan: There never used to be so many arguments before the Cabaret.

Kevin: I heard about that. Half the group refused to be in Animal Farm didn't they, just because Dawn was directing it.

Dan: Complete disaster that was.

Kevin: The cabaret was nearly the end of the group by all accounts.

Dan: – and the least said about 'King Arthur' the pantomime, the better. The vote for a new committee is going to be a nightmare. It doesn't matter who gets to be Chairperson, the group is just going to get worse and worse.

(Tabs open. There are three tables, stage left, centre and stage right. The table stage right has Derek, Dawn and Martin sat at it. Stage left is Patricia and Sharon, who is still on her mobile phone. Kevin and Dan sit at the table in the centre. The lights rise stage right while the other two cliques continue to stage chatter.)

Dawn: Well ask him then – (She digs Derek in the ribs)

Derek: (Despondently) Martin, can you lend me a fiver?

Martin: You still owe me a tenner, you know that don't you?

(Dawn makes her bottom lip protrude, hoping for sympathy.)

Martin: (He hands Derek a five pound note) I want it back!

Derek: Yeah, I'll give you it in a couple of weeks when I get paid.

(Derek exits)

Martin: Who are you voting for then?

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Dawn: Derek wants to be press and publicity officer. I think he should be Chairperson, he's so commanding.

Martin: Are you going for a position?

Dawn: Secretary. Derek bought me a stationary kit for my birthday. It's got raccoons on it. (Ponders this for a while and smiles) Are you going for a position?

Martin: Vice Chairperson. I think it would be like being Darth Vader.

Dawn: What is this obsession you have with Star Wars?

Martin: It's not an obsession. It's a passion. I just like it.

(Derek enters with two drinks. He places one on the table in front of Dawn and one in front of himself. Martin looks a little put out by this.)

Martin: In Star Wars, there's an Emperor, who would be the Chairperson, and Darth Vader is his apprentice and would be vice-Chairperson.

Derek: So anyway, who do you think stole the money?

Dawn: Mona. No doubt about it. She had the cheque book and now it's mysteriously gone missing.

Derek: No, she wouldn't. She wouldn't have announced it in front of the group like that if it was her. She would have tried to keep it quiet.

Dawn: Why are you defending her?

Derek: I'm not. I'm just saying –

Dawn: If you notice though, when she was asked about the accounts, she just said that we hadn't made a profit and wanted to leave it at that.

Martin: I think it's Colin. He's always blaming everyone else. It's just a cover.

Dawn: He's never signed the cheque book though. He hates all that admin stuff.

Derek: The cheques were cashed at the bank though weren't they?

Dawn: Were they?

Derek: Well, Mona said they had didn't she?

Martin: No.

(Derek looks sheepish. Lights dim stage right and are raised stage left.)

Sharon: **(To Patricia)** He hasn't rang since one o'clock. **(Into phone as the answer machine beeps)** Hi, it's just me, I haven't heard from you, just making sure you're alright. Give me a ring. Love you. Bye.

Patricia: How many messages have you left now?

Sharon: **(Pauses)** Seven.

Patricia: Since one o'clock?

Sharon: Yes but he said he was going to ring me –

Patricia: He'll have his phone switched off for a reason. I always switch mine off when I go for a 'you know what'.

Sharon: What's a 'you know what'?

Patricia: You know – a 'you know what'. I won't even let my Terry talk to me when I'm having one.

Sharon: Terry?

Patricia: My boyfriend, you met him at the after-show party last week.

Sharon: Was he the one who threw a whiskey glass through the patio door?

Patricia: No, that was Jade. She looks a bit like Terry though.

Sharon: Oh her! The one who tried to kiss Dawn before she head-butted the table and knocked one of her teeth out? **(Looks at her phone again)** Well where is he?
(Shakes her phone in annoyance)

Patricia: He might be in the bath or something. Calm down woman, you've got me all flustered.

Sharon: I didn't see him last night though.

Patricia: Well he's probably avoiding you. You are being a bit possessive.

Sharon: **(Pauses)** Do you think I should send another text?

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(Patricia slaps her head in frustration. Lights fade stage left and are raised centre stage.)

Dan: What will happen when they find out who stole the money?

Kevin: Don't know. Do you think they'll get the police involved?

Dan: Well, it is serious isn't it? As much as she annoys me, I think someone is trying to frame Mona to get her thrown out of the group.

Kevin: Why?

Dan: Nobody likes her. She just sucks any happiness out of the room like a fun-vacuum. She's always shouting at someone or complaining about something. They got a petition up to get her thrown out of the group.

Kevin: Who started that?

Dan: Derek and Dawn. Well, Dawn, she controls Derek like puppet.

Kevin: So you think they might have taken the money out of the account to frame her?

Dan: Dawn used to be treasurer. She's probably got an old cheque book or something.

Kevin: I heard Roger tell Colin he'd just bought a new car

Dan: For five hundred pound? Sharon just bought some new £75 shoes.

(Kevin and Dan take sips from their drinks. All lights raise and Roger enters)

Roger: We've finished our meeting; you can all come back in now.

(They all collect their belongings and exit. Tabs close)

Scene 3 – The Meeting Room

(Everyone is seated as before apart from Mona, who is absent)

Roger: Thank you for your patience. As you know, we had to adjourn the meeting for the executive committee to discuss the problem with funds being withdrawn from the Group's bank account. We have looked at the statements and the cheque numbers are from an old cheque book. One of them is definitely from the book that was signed over to Mona by Dawn when the position of treasurer changed hands last year. This does not mean that either of them is under suspicion, but it has been decided by majority vote that Mona be relieved of her role as Treasurer given that the cheque book has gone missing under her care.

(Dawn chuckles)

Roger: **(To Dawn)** Do you have something to say?

Dawn: No. Just clearing my throat.

Derek: Where is the thieving little witch?

Roger: If you mean Mona, nothing can be proven. She's given me written notice of her intent to leave the group

(Derek, Dawn, Martin, Alice and Simon give a muted cheer and seem to congratulate each other.)

Dawn: **(To Derek)** She must be guilty if she's leaving.

Roger: I've decided not to accept her resignation.

(Those celebrating cease immediately)

Roger: She is adamant she has nothing to do with the theft and although her carelessness has led to the cheque book getting into the wrong hands and funds being taken, we don't feel that her resignation from the group is necessary. We will however be placing an embargo on her holding a committee position again for 3 years.

Dawn: **(Angrily)** That's ridiculous. If she wants to leave you can't stop her. **(To Derek)** Make them make her leave Derek.

Derek: Well she's not here so –

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(Mona enters and stands with her arms crossed behind Dawn.)

Mona: I went to the toilet. **(Pauses)** Well?

Roger: We're just discussing your intention to leave the group and that I have persuaded you to stay.

Mona: What were you saying about me? Couldn't wait for me to get back before starting your little meeting again?

Sharon: Whatever we said will be in the minutes.

Roger: Alice?

(Roger glances at Alice and she jumps into action, picking her pen up and scribbling furiously having not written anything down since the meeting reconvened.)

Dawn: A lot of us would be happier if she left. At least she can't be on the committee now, bossing us about.

Roger: Which brings me onto the second part of the embargo. As the cheque book was lost during the hand over from Dawn to Mona, we have also placed an embargo on Dawn holding a committee position for the next 3 years.

Dawn: What? Bu – Derek – I've got a raccoon stationary set! Derek, tell them I've got a racoon stationary set.

Mona: Ha!

Roger: Ok, that's enough. Mona, can you take your seat?

(She sits down and crosses her arms.)

Colin: **(Exasperated)** Week in, week out, it's always the bloody same. Acting like bloody children. You're all in your twenties and thirties for God's sake! Why don't you just bloody grow up and start acting like bloody adults!

Patricia: I agree, you're like toddlers, honestly! Why can't we all just get on and do what we're here to do? And Colin, stop your bloody swearing!

Roger: Ok, before we move on to the vote for the committee, I believe Colin has something to say regarding the current holders of the positions.

Colin: **(Standing up)** Yes. Now, over the past 12 months, although I've had my say as Vice-Chairperson, I haven't been able to directly influence things within the group. The points I want to raise concern the poor way, in my opinion, in which the committee members have gone about their jobs. Firstly, Secretary –

Roger: Alice, can you write this down for the minutes?

(Alice looks embarrassed and picks up her pen, she has not written anything down apart from the one sentence when it was last pointed out she wasn't taking the minutes.)

Colin: A case in point! Our new members have never received a welcome pack. We have never received a copy of the minutes from any meeting we've had. We've never had

a newsletter which was promised at the last AGM. I've had to book the theatre so we can do all this year's shows. All those things are the Secretaries job.

Alice: Well, I've had overtime and the people in the canteen at work don't speak to me and –

Colin: **(Interrupting)** Treasury! Well, I think we've covered that one quite nicely already. Press and Publicity –

(Simon shuffles uneasily in his chair.)

Colin: I have here a copy of the poster for our pantomime last month. Simon, do you have any background or qualifications in marketing or publicity?

Simon: I've got a BTEC –

Colin: In?

Simon: Art

Colin: Right. **(He examines the poster more carefully)** That's not glaringly obvious I must say.

Simon: Art is about challenging the viewer and making the viewer challenge their own perceptions.

Colin: That's not massively important when designing a poster to get people to come to a panto, is it?

Simon: As an Artist –

Colin: Oh, you're an artist alright – Let's have a look at your artistry. Great big title, "King Arthur" – the what? Musical? Book? Film? Pyjamas?

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Simon: Pantomime –

Colin: Pantomime? Well, it doesn't say that on here. Just because you know that doesn't mean the public do.

Simon: Well –

Colin: Here are two posters **(He holds up two posters. Simon's on the left and another on the right)** which one attracts your attention?

Martin: The one on the right

(Everyone mutters and nods their agreement)

Simon: (Whispered to Martin) Judas!

Colin: The one on the right. Why?

Patricia: Well, it's got a nice picture in the middle of a dog

Colin: It's a donkey actually, but yes. What did Simon's poster have in the middle?

Simon: It was a piece of editorial –

Colin: A load of flim-flam, that's what it had in the middle. You might as well have written "This show is crap" in red marker pen across it. Look, spelling mistakes, bad grammar – **(He reads)** 'King Author, a galliant knight, becomes a knight after getting a sword out of a rock and becomes a king. He and his beauty girl-fried becomes his wife in a battle of death with the terrifying clack knight controlled by his cousin. They many times and marry each other after the black knight is killed in a sword fight at the end of the fight and live happy ever after.' Roger, you were the producer weren't you?

Roger: (Suspiciously) Yes

Colin: How did you let this poster go out?

Roger: I didn't! When I saw it, I suggested that Simon make changes. You know, put a picture on it, put the dates on, the venue – things like that. He thought I was having a go at him, not the poster and then all his friends joined in and started shouting at me

Colin: You're the Chairperson, why didn't you assert yourself?

Roger: Well, I was the producer too, but that didn't seem to matter to them. Martin came over being all protective of his best friend saying I was being obstructive. He said I was jealous of him because he was directing the show and not me.

Martin: No I didn't –

Roger: Well what did you say then?

Martin: I said Simon's poster was lovely **(he smiles at Simon)** and –

Roger: Anyway, I made revisions and told him what I wanted, as it was my right to do as producer. He brought a revised poster in which I had to OK seeing as the show was on in 2 days and we hadn't sold any tickets. That was when Simon and his friends got up a petition to get me removed as Chairperson.

Colin: - and you didn't realise that it was this one that actually went out? **(He shows Roger the poster in his hand)**

Roger: No. I guess they did it out of spite.

Colin: Simon?

Simon: (Daydreaming) Sorry? **Colin:** What do you have to say?

Simon: About what?

Colin: About what we've just been talking about?

Simon: (**Aloof**) Sorry, I've got glue-ear; what were you saying?

Colin: Martin wrote the show and directed it. He wanted bums on seats more than any of us. You're his best mate. What possessed you to try and sabotage the show?

Simon: I don't know what you mean

Colin: Look at the times you've put on here "7:30 to 8:30". We've just mentioned that Patricia proposed we change the starting time to 7:45, and the show lasted an hour and a half – with a fifteen minute break

Simon: But –

Colin: Here's the best bit. You'll love this everyone. Where did you put these posters up?

Simon: My Gran's care home

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Colin: And?

Simon: I don't –

Colin: Your Dad's car window?

Simon: Well yes but –

Colin: Well Road Runner and Linford Christie were going to come to the show after seeing the poster while running along the dual carriageway at 50 miles per hour alongside your Dad's car, but you didn't put any dates or a venue on so they couldn't.

Simon: I'm not going to sit and listen to this

(Simon pushes his chair out, stands up and walks off in a sulk. Martin follows him.)

Roger: (**After a short pause**) Well, he's an artist isn't he?

Alice: So?

Roger: Just saying –

Patricia: I don't think he tried to sabotage the show, I just think he's stubborn and doesn't like people telling him he's done anything wrong. Martin was the same when Roger suggested changes to his pantomime script, you know, when he tried to add a plot and some jokes; Simon was probably still upset about that.

Colin: We need to get this sorted before our next show. It was a complete shambles. **(To Roger)** I honestly don't know how you cope as Chairperson. Poisoned chalice? Poisoned knife, fork, table cloth and condiments!

(Colin sits)

Roger: Indeed, well, I think that shows that it's probably best if we have a new press officer and secretary. We'll have to have a new treasurer of course and if Martin and his friends have their way, there'll be a new Chairperson as well.

Colin: So let's get this straight; Kevin hasn't served a full year in the group yet so can't be on the committee, Dan has been threatening to leave for the past few months, Martin is as culpable for the shambles of the Pantomime as Simon so it's plain he hasn't got the right attitude, Alice has done possibly the worst job any secretary ever has –

(Alice picks her pen up again and starts scribbling)

Colin: Mona and Dawn are serving embargos, Sharon is leaving the country in June, which leaves Me, Roger, Derek, Patricia and Jenny, who is in hospital and according to the constitution, can't take a position because she's absent. I think the vote for a committee is going to be a short one.

Patricia: **(Raising her hand gingerly)** Excuse me, I don't want to be on the committee

(Colin falls forward in despair and his forehead hits the table. Lights off.)

End of Act 1

Act 2

Scene 1 – The Meeting Room.

(The group members are sat at the table as before except Simon, who is absent)

Roger: Ok then, to reiterate. We have had to exercise emergency powers –

Martin: **(To Derek)** I told you it was like Star Wars!

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Roger: – and allow Kevin to be our new press officer; I will still be your Chairperson **(he glowers at Martin)**, Colin continues as Vice and Alice will continue as secretary. Under the circumstances we cannot allow Derek to take up the role of treasurer, because of his relationship with Dawn. We have proposed Jenny as the new treasurer but obviously we can't confirm this until she returns from her operation. Do we have agreement from the floor?

(Dawn and Derek nod and grumble in agreement. All the other members react with apathy.)

Roger: Ok then. According to Martin, Simon has left the group, citing victimisation. Do we all agree that this matter should not be investigated under the 'misconduct' clause in the constitution?

Colin: Well, it would take us the rest of the meeting to find the clause, then another week to decipher it.

Roger: Ok, let's move on to point 2 on the agenda, last year's shows. For our last show we performed 'King Arthur' the Pantomime.

Kevin: Oh no we didn't!

(The 'joke' is met by a stony silence)

Roger: Anyway, to remind you, it was written and directed by Martin Jones. Do we have any comments about the show?

Dan: I thought there were too many Star Wars references in it.

Patricia: Yes, I thought that and I haven't even seen Star Wars

Martin: I only put a few quotations in there. Pantomime is all about parody isn't it?

Alice: I told him there were too many –

Dan: Well, I didn't like it when Arthur drew the light-sabre from the stone

Martin: Well, yes, there was that –

Sharon: The lady of the lake was called Princess Leia

Colin: – and at the end, Arthur told the Black Knight that ‘Obi Wan had taught him well’

Patricia: And, why did a gorilla wander on in the second act?

Martin: That was Chewbacca

Alice: **(Aside)** I still haven’t got the smell of cinnamon swirls out of my hair.

Roger: Well, without being too critical, I thought it was a mistake getting Kevin to play 3 parts. There was a point in the second act where he had to hold a conversation with himself

Mona: I’ve got some audience feedback forms here. This one says ‘Why was King Arthur’s brother trying to kill him?’

Roger: It might have helped if Kevin had changed his accent, or his top perhaps?

Colin: Positives?

(There is silence)

Roger: The show before that was Animal Farm

Alice: No, it was the cabaret

Roger: **(Clears his throat)** As I said, the previous show was Animal Farm, written by George Orwell. This was directed by Dawn Rand. Any comments?

Patricia: I would go to point 3 on the agenda if I were you.

Dawn: Derek –

Derek: What?

Dawn: Tell them what you told me.

Derek: Oh, well, I was just thinking – if everyone had pulled together for that show, it would have been a success; instead of forming cliques.

Colin: **(Sarcastically)** Like that was going to happen? Mike left after 2 weeks because he was repeatedly being called ‘Horsey boy’ by Stuart.

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Mona: Then Stuart left 2 weeks later after Dawn forced him to take the part of Boxer the Horse.

Dawn: Derek?

Derek: We had to teach him a lesson. Anyway, the atmosphere in the group improved without him didn't it?

(Sharon's phone rings)

Sharon: Hello?

Kevin: I heard that things got worse. What with the cabaret.

Roger: **(Interrupting)** We agreed not to talk about that –

Sharon: **(Childishly enthusiastic)** Yes. Yes. Yes. I know!

Colin: **(Reproachfully)** Sharon, can you take your personal life outside?

Sharon: It was definitely you. Definitely. Pat –

Patricia: What do you want woman? And don't call me Pat!

Sharon: **(To Patricia)** Have you got those photographs of the Christmas party?

Patricia: **(Exasperated)** I showed you them in the bar woman.

(Patricia looks in her bag for the photographs)

Roger: Animal Farm, any comments?

Mona: Well I think the number of tickets we sold spoke for itself.

Dawn: It was a very good show, wasn't it Derek? It's not my fault nobody came to see it.

Roger: Mona, what were the audience figures?

Mona: Ten

Roger: Per night?

Mona: In total over the three shows. Well, two shows.

Sharon: **(Into phone)** I know! You won't believe who I saw kissing who!

(She motions to Patricia to hurry up passing the photographs. She then opens the packet and starts to thumb through them.)

Colin: Sharon, we're having a meeting.

Kevin: 2 shows?

Mona: Well, the first night we had eight people in the audience. 6 were friends and family of the cast. The second night we convinced two people in the bar to come in.

Sharon: **(Into phone)** It's definitely him; if you turn it sideways.

Dan: We opened the curtain on the third night to an empty theatre. We hung about for twenty minutes, in costume, but no one showed up so we just went home.

Martin: We used the papier-mâché masks again at the 25 year anniversary thing though. So it wasn't a complete disaster.

Dawn: See, and we got a few new members.

Colin: I was pleased I had to wear that pig mask in the end. It hid my embarrassment!

Sharon: Yes, well, I have to go, I haven't got much credit left and I'm skint so I can't put any more on – ok see you.

Mona: She rang you!

Sharon: What? **(Clicks her phone closed. She ignores Mona and gazes at one of the photos)** Aw, that's sweet. Martin and Alice still snogging after all this time. How many years have you been together now?

Martin: **(Listlessly)** Five

Alice: Six!

(Sharon studies the photograph more closely)

Roger: Can we concentrate on –

Sharon: Your hair looks really short on this photo.

(Colin takes the photo from Sharon)

Colin: Sharon, we're trying to have a meeting – **(looks at the photograph)** and that's not Alice's throat he's putting his tongue down –

(Alice rushes over and takes the photo from Colin. Martin gets up slowly and edges towards the door. Alice drops the photo and follows him angrily.)

Dan: Who was he kissing?

Roger: **(Picking up the photo)** Simon???

(There is an uncomfortable silence.)

Dawn: Did you know about this? **(She strikes Derek in the arm)**

Derek: No, why should I have?

Dawn: Well, you're his brother

Derek: He doesn't tell me everything you know

Dawn: You lived with him long enough.

Derek: Gay people don't always wear pink shirts you know. When I was in the police we had to sit a test on how to –

Dawn: Why are you getting all defensive?

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Derek: (**Agitated**) I'm not!! (**Calmly**) I mean, I'm not.

Dan: (**Shouting**) Just be quiet!

(A shocked silence descends as this outburst is completely out of character for Dan)

Dan: (**Flustered**) I haven't had fun here since that workshop about 6 months ago!

Colin: What workshop?

Dan: The one where we all had to go outside and stand in lines.

Colin: That was a fire-drill.

Dawn: (**To Derek**) Are you not going to go after them?

Derek: Why? They can sort it out between them. When I was a negotiator in the police –

Patricia: I can't believe you didn't know. Whenever you see Martin, Simon is no more than an inch behind him.

Roger: We've still got a lot to go through and we're running out of time.

Colin: I wouldn't worry; I can't remember an AGM that didn't go into a second week.

Mona: Derek, I knew you when you were in the Police. You were seventeen years old on a Youth Training Scheme. Why do you tell everyone you were in the Vice squad and whatever? Why do you lie all the time?

Derek: (**Stuttering**) Why are you such a moaner?

Dawn: (**Sarcastically**) Very witty Derek!

Roger: Right, can we all calm down please. We've still got a lot to get through. Point three; next show.

Kevin: Are we just choosing the next show or the shows for the whole year?

Roger: We'll see what suggestions we get and decide from there eh?

(The group nod in agreement.)

Roger: Are there any suggestions?

Kevin: Star Trek?

Roger: Is that a stage show?

Kevin: I don't know.

Roger: I did ask you to research the shows you were interested in.

Kevin: Did you?

Roger: Well yes. We need to know first of all if there's a script available, how much the performing rights are –

Colin: Have we ever paid for performing rights?

Roger: No, but that's beside the point. You need to find out how many cast are needed, how elaborate the sets might be –

Kevin: Phantom of the Opera?

Roger: Yes, that could be fun. The old story by Gaston Leroux?

Kevin: No, the Andrew Lloyd Webber one.

Patricia: You do know that none of us can sing don't you?

Mona: - and you'd need an orchestra.

Colin: - and we'd never get the performing rights, it'll be on in London for the next hundred years.

Kevin: Roger said we never pay performing rights anyway

Roger: No, we can't do that. Are there any other suggestions?

Dan: Oliver

Patricia: No one can sing.

Dan: No, the Charles Dickens one.

Patricia: Well that's called Oliver Twist you nitwit.

Colin: We struggled with King Arthur, I don't think we're in any position to tackle Charles Dickens

Kevin: I didn't even know he played Rugby

(Kevin's comment is met with stony silence)

Dawn: The crucible?

Kevin: There's a play about snooker?

Dawn: It's about the witch trials actually.

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Colin: Didn't we try that a few years ago and put it away again ten minutes into the first read through?

Roger: Yes, I think that one is beyond us at the moment Dawn.

Kevin: My Fair Lady?

Mona: **(Sarcastically)** Oh yes that'll be easy! Might as well do it on ice as well, just to make it a bit more of a challenge.

Sharon: Yes! That would be excellent!!

(Sharon takes her phone out again and dials a number.)

Roger: My fair lady is a musical. We've just agreed none of us can sing.

Sharon: **(Into phone)** Hya, it's me – guess what show we're doing next? My fair lady! On ice!! How fab is that?

Roger: Sharon –

Sharon: I'll get you front row tickets.

Roger: You will have moved by then anyway

Sharon: **(Into phone)** I know, I'm going to audition in my orange shoes –

Colin: Right, so we're going to end up doing a kids show as usual then?

Kevin: What do you mean?

Colin: Well, whenever we can't think of a show to do, we write our own based on Aesop's fables or Grimm Tales or –

Kevin: Hans Christian Andersen!

Sharon: **(Into phone)** Guess what show were doing next, Hans Christian Andersen!!

Dan: We'll need props. We've got no money left for props.

Sharon: I'm going to be a rabbit, yes, with a scouse accent –

Roger: Alice, what props do we – **(he glances at her empty seat)** oh, well, to memory we have some flats with trees painted on them which actually look like Daleks, a wig worn by the dame in the pantomime that we can't get the smell of stale squirry cream out of, a tin of luminous paint and a small rug with a picture of Filey on it.

Dawn: We've got a pirate costume

Colin: Half a pirate's costume.

Roger: Which half?

Colin: The eye-patch and the wooden leg.

Sharon: I'll let you know. He still hasn't rang me you know.

Dan: So why are we sitting here? We've got no money to buy any scenery or props, we can't afford the performing rights and the only audience we've had in the past year is for the Pantomime, which was so full of mistakes, I doubt people will bother coming next year.

Roger: Well, if we can get a sponsor, and some new members –

Dan: Whenever anyone new walks in, nobody talks to them, no one tries to get them involved. Next week and the week after is just going to be the seven of us, bickering.

Sharon: **(Into phone)** I don't know why I bother. Honestly.

Patricia: Sharon!

Sharon: Two seconds **(To Patricia)** what?

Patricia: You're always jabbering on into that phone and interrupting our sessions. When we were rehearsing the pantomime –

Mona: **(Listlessly)** Pat's annoyed everyone –

Patricia: **(To Mona)** – and you can shut your hole as well missy. While we were supposed to be rehearsing the pantomime, you always had your phone on with it flipping ringing every five minutes, disrupting my flow. No wonder I've got high blood pressure.

Sharon: **(Still in a good mood)** Well, I can't switch it off in case I get an important call.

Patricia: I don't see how telling the world what colour your shoes are, is important.

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Sharon: Well it's better than floating around every week whinging on about what your mother used to say when you were ten.

Patricia: What?

Sharon: Yes, and all the rest of you are just as bad, judging everyone for not being that good at singing or acting or because they take a bit of pride in their appearance.

Mona: It's always the same. Somebody says something innocent and all hell breaks loose.

Colin: And it's normally you who starts it.

Mona: Because everyone gangs up on me.

Dawn: That's because we hate you.

Patricia: At least I know how people in here feel about me.

(Patricia stands up to leave)

Roger: Can you all just listen to yourselves? Patricia, Sharon is the one insulting you, not us.

Patricia: I don't care, I've had enough of this place. I always feel upset when I come here. My mother told me never to go anywhere I feel upset. I've got high blood pressure.

(She gathers her things and leaves. Sharon sits down and picks her phone up again.)

Sharon: Sorry about that, what were you saying?

(Dan gathers his things and stands up.)

Dan: I said I was going to leave if anything like this happened again. I don't have to put up with getting upset like this.

(Dan exits. There is silence.)

Roger: Point 4, retention of members.

Mona: Well, if people stopped all the name calling and fighting

Dawn: Hypocrite! You're the –

Colin: If you don't stop this right now, there'll be another one walking out of the door. This is supposed to be a theatre group, not a youth club. If you can't get on with each other, we'll never get anything done.

Roger: **(Calmly)** I understand that not everyone is going to get on with one another all of the time. Could we set our differences to one side for once and try to pull together?

Mona: It's a bit late now isn't it? Half the group's left.

Dawn: Well they wouldn't have if it wasn't for you.

Roger: This is exactly what I'm talking about

Dawn: Derek, did you hear the way he spoke to me?

Derek: (With false bravado) Roger, don't speak to my girlfriend –

Dawn: Fiancé

Derek: - fiancé like that please

Roger: Why are you here? Do any of you know why you are here? Do you know that you can meet in the bar every Thursday and throw your spite at each other over a few pints of lager? Everyone wants to be in charge. Everyone thinks everyone else is the wrong person to run this group but if you all just take a minute to think; think what it would be like if we all took on a specific role, looked at what your particular skill was and applied it, what we could achieve? We have a stage, a theatre, an audience, lights, and it's all free to use how we want to use it. Whatever we want to say, whichever way we want to express ourselves, we can. But this theatre group hasn't done anything but express how childish, spiteful and jealous it is for the past couple of years. Dan was right, I can't remember the last time I actually wanted to come here, the last time I got excited about reading through a script, standing at the front of the stage and delivering a speech into a packed audience with the heat of the lights in my face and the fear of getting my lines wrong ripping at my chest. All I've done is deliver incomprehensible drivel at a few confused looking people who have either been dragged from the bar against their will, or accidentally wandered in while trying to find the toilet. What happened? We used to like each other.

Kevin: Well, I joined because I wanted to act.

Roger: And have you?

Kevin: Not really. I didn't know who I was supposed to be half the time during the Pantomime.

Derek: I joined because I wanted to sing.

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Roger: And have you?

Derek: Only once, during the cabaret

Roger: Exactly. What can we do to make this a theatre group again, instead of a social club?

(There is silence.)

Roger: Well, we need to advertise for new members. We need to assure them that we are a happy family, keep them involved, welcome them and don't section them off as a member of your 'army', using them against the other half of the group.

Derek: It's never going to work. When I was in the Police –

Roger: With all due respect Derek, this isn't an episode of Inspector Wexford Investigates. It's something we all do to try and get away from the stresses of work and paying bills. A chance for us to play out fantasies and to be a hero or a villain, to be something you always dreamed of being, just for a few hours a week.

Mona: Why don't we do 'An inspector calls' then Derek can play out his Policeman fantasy?

Dawn: Come on Derek, we don't have to take this –

(Dawn stands up and knocks her racoon bag on its side. A cheque book falls out onto the floor.)

Sharon: You dropped this **(She looks more closely)** hang on; this is the Theatre Group's cheque book.

(Dawn makes a grab for the book but Sharon evades her grasp.)

Sharon: **(Flicking through the book)** There are cheques missing in here. There's nothing written on the stubs.

(Roger takes the book from Sharon)

Roger: There are three cheques missing. **(To Mona)** How many withdrawals were there?

Mona: Three

Roger: Can I see the Treasurer's report?

Dawn: Yes Sharon, we heard you say you were skint before, where did you get the money for your shoes and your hair?

Mona: There, three withdrawals.

Roger: And the one up here **(Points into the file. Mona stays silent.)**

Dawn: Thief!

Roger: Dawn, the cheque book fell out of your bag. Three of these withdrawals are from cheques out of that book.

Dawn: I haven't made three withdrawals –

Roger: Well how many have you made?

Dawn: **(Pauses)** None. **(To Derek)** I haven't made three – tell them Derek.

(Derek looks sheepish)

Dawn: Was it you?

Derek: **(Finally snaps)** Well you spend all my money. I'm not in the Police anymore, I work in a call centre. I can't afford to keep buying you whatever you want whenever you

want it. I had to take that money from the Theatre Group bank account or we would have lost the flat.

Mona: There's your thief

Roger: That only accounts for one of the withdrawals.

Derek: I'll pay it back, I just don't have the money right now.

Roger: How much did you take?

Derek: £200

Roger: Seeing as how we're having a kind of amnesty, anyone else want to admit to anything?

(Derek nudges Dawn)

Dawn: What?

(Derek nudges Dawn again)

Dawn: I took a few pounds out of the account.

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Colin: I've heard enough **(He gets up to leave)**

Roger: Colin, sit down. I need a sensible head here.

(He sits again and crosses his arms, clearly unimpressed with proceedings)

Roger: How much

Dawn: Two lots of £50; I was just unhappy that the petition to get her **(She points to Mona)** out of the group didn't work. I wanted to get rid of her, blame the theft on her as she was the treasurer. The group would have worked without her.

Roger: So that leaves the fourth withdrawal

(Sharon and Mona eye each other)

Mona: I took it.

Dawn: See!?

Roger: I don't think you've got the moral high ground right now.

Mona: Sharon wanted to borrow some money so I told her she could take it out of the Theatre Group's bank account as long as she paid it back.

Sharon: Mona!! **(Innocently)** I didn't know where the money came from FYI.

Roger: How much?

Sharon: A few hundred.

Mona: Look, I noticed money had been taken out of the account and assumed it was Dawn. I figured if I took the rest out before she did and someone found out the money had gone missing I could just blame her. Sharon was going to pay it back anyway so I don't see how we've done anything wrong. They stole money, we just borrowed it.

Derek: I've had enough of this.

(Derek collects his belongings and leaves. Dawn tries to stop him and ends up following him out of the room)

Sharon: Well, we've still got enough members for a committee.

Roger: Kevin do you want to come and sit over here?

(Kevin moves from the far end of the table takes the seat that Alice had once occupied.)

Mona: Shall we do a one-man show next then?

Colin: Can you give me a reason why I'm still sat here?

Roger: **(Thinks for a while)** I really can't. I just want to do a serious show.

Sharon: We've been saying that for the last 2 years. I think we should do Hans Christian Andersen. We could do the princess and the pea and I'll be the Princess.

Kevin: Who's going to do the pea? **(Snorts)**

Mona: The little Mermaid or the ugly duckling?

Colin: Ha

Mona: Are you saying I'm ugly?

Colin: What?

Roger: Mona, this notice of resignation you gave me earlier. Would you consider honouring it?

(Mona is speechless)

Roger: It's just you're so put upon. You complain about everything, you're always negative, you don't really contribute anything to the group, you just kind of hang around making people feel bad about themselves.

Colin: He's right you know. **(Addresses the rest of the group)** Well, there's nothing to lose now is there, might as well be honest with you.

Sharon: She organised that field trip last year.

Colin: So?

(There is silence)

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Mona: Why didn't you just ask me to leave? **(She starts to place her file and papers hurriedly into her bag)**

Colin: Because it's not up to any one individual who is in the group and who isn't. You're just very unpopular with most of us.

Mona: I've got a life outside this place you know, unlike all of you. **(She puts her coat on)** Are you coming Sharon?

Sharon: **(Bewildered)** No, we're doing My Fair Lady next.

(Mona huffs and charges off stage.)

Kevin: We're going to be a double act at this rate.

Colin: You know if we ring everyone to tell them Mona's left, they'll come back?

Roger: I think it would be counterproductive to get anyone back who knows how this group has been, there's too much history. If we can get fresh ideas in and fresh enthusiasm, it can only be positive. The new members can only improve.

Colin: I agree.

Kevin: We could do 'Waiting for Godot' for the next show. There are only two characters in that.

Roger: Excellent suggestion.

Sharon: I want to be a rabbit with a scouse accent and I want to do My Fair Lady.

Kevin: We could write a rabbit into 'Waiting for Godot' couldn't we?

Sharon: This is boring. Is the group going to be boring now?

Colin: What do you mean? Is sitting around, watching the group die on its arse not fun for you? Sorry to have stepped on your social life.

Sharon: You do know that I don't have to be here? I've got loads of friends.

Colin: People on Facebook that you've never met don't count.

(There is a long silence)

Roger: **(Attempts to improve the mood)** Shall we play a game?

Colin: What do you want to play? Hunt the enthusiasm?

Kevin: If we can advertise –

Colin: My dog died last week.

(Another silence)

Roger: Shall we play a game –

Colin: My dog died. I didn't think things could get worse. I used to come here to forget about my life. Forget about the divorce, the irritable bowel syndrome, the car radio being stolen, the rip in my new Matalan shirt, the badly-paid labour I'm subjected to every day of every week. I slipped a disc two years ago and I still can't get channel 4 on my portable upstairs. To top it off, when I came in here tonight I found that there were no crisps in the vending machine.

Roger: I didn't realise things were so bad. Do you want to –

Colin: No, I can't be doing with all this at my age.

Roger: You're 34

Colin: **(To Roger)** You've done a good job here. Good luck.

(He offers his hand for Roger to shake, which he does. Colin leaves, no one tries to stop him. Sharon takes out a compact and starts to touch up her make-up)

Sharon: So are we not doing My Fair Lady then?

Roger: I don't think we'll be doing anything this year.

Sharon: I'm emigrating in a few months –

Roger: You're going to Scotland

Sharon: Same thing.

Kevin: We could still do Hansel and Gretel –

Sharon: This is boring. **(To Kevin)** No offence. **(She finishes applying her make up)** What do you think of my lipstick?

Roger: Sharon, we don't care. No one has ever cared. You might as well leave too, you're not interested in Theatre, you just want to feel like you've got friends.

Sharon: What?

Roger: You talk into your phone when there's no one there. Do you ever listen to anyone but yourself?

Sharon: I'd like to say I care what you think but I don't.

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Roger: Well you plainly do, you asked what I thought of your shoes, your lipstick –

Sharon: I was being friendly. **(She stands up)** Hope your next show goes well.

(She leaves. Roger and Kevin glance at each other. Kevin puts his coat on and without speaking, also leaves. Roger sits for a while gazing shiftily around the room before taking his mobile phone out, dialing and placing it to his ear.)

Roger: Hi, it's Roger, how are you? Good. Listen, you don't know anyone who wants to join a Theatre Group do you?

(Lights off. Tabs close)

THE END