

Characters

- Darby (M)** - A shipyard worker, Joan's husband
- Geordie (M)** - Darby's best friend and co-worker at the shipyard
- Joan (F)** - Darby's wife
- (John) Porter (M)** - Darby's foreman at the shipyard
- Ed (M)** - A heavy-set shipyard worker
- Billy (M)** - Darby's ten-year-old son
- Jim Johnson (M)** - The current shipyard owner, Frank's son
- Frank 'old man' Johnson (M)** - Retired former shipyard owner. Jim's father.
- Freda Johnson (F)** - Frank's Wife/Jim's Mother
- Barker (M/F)** - A fairground talker
- (Gary) Adams (M)** - Reporter for the *Evening Chronicle* Newspaper
- Barman (M)** - Barman (Non-speaking)

Act 1

Scene 1 – Dockside

(Song 1, ‘North of Tyne’ plays to an unlit stage with closed tabs. The following words are projected onto a screen or where this is not possible, read out over a PA system.)

“As soon as the siren would sound and the shipyard gates would open, out would spill the men who built the ships that made Britain great, that made our country a leader of the seas and oceans of the world. The sound of hobnail boots marching on the cobbled roads, the chatter and laughter of the workers carries through the air. The evening would be alive with the song of these working men.
– Alexander Millar”

(Darby enters front of tabs a few bars before the music ends. SFX. River tides splashing and seagulls barking. Darby addresses the audience.)

Darby: Sharp wind blows from the harsh North Sea
Bitter the Monday morning chills cast
Gone are the days of rope and sail
Of Anchor and chain, of block and of mast

This cobbled road strolled many a time
By me, my father and his before him
Walking down dockside with lead-heavy boots
Through sun, hail or wind, bright or grim

My father the shipwright struck the first line
For keel, frame and bulkhead angled to berth
Ship built, his duty to take it to launch
Where Platers and Caulkers would prove their worth

Too little tide and off berth it would slip
Too much, the stern would trail and break
The launch it would rest on defined water rise
Years of sweat and hard graft were at stake

The first iron ship built here on the Tyne
The *Amity* in eighteen fifty three
As long as there's trade or spoiling for war
Plenty of iron ship orders there'll be

Did I ever mention a story 'bout Bill?
He is a shipwright, just like my old man
A disaster near happened a few months ago
The launch of a ship didn't quite go to plan

T'was the day of the launch, he was under the hull
Knocking out blocks to lower the ship
The slipway prepared and all set to go
To set on her way for her maiden trip

The launch party stood on ritual view

The sponsor to christen the ship held in hand
The bottle to name, on lanyard to swing
Champagne to break as vessel leaves land

Owners, workers and sailors all hold
Belief that bad fortune in time will impact
A ship that is not properly christened at launch
And this superstition caused our Bill to act

The ship it moved off, the bottle released
Her name called aloud as glass ship-side struck
But no crash of foam and no splintered crack
The bottle intact would bring her bad luck

The worker up high on the forecastle deck
Expecting glass burst, the lanyard release
Gasps as it fell, hitting the berth
Defiant and stubborn, t'was still in one piece!

Off set our Bill, the slipway in wake,
His flat cap flew off, his lead-boots unlaced
Snatching the bottle he tore down the berth
The first iron ship to ever be chased!

With arms of elastic he lifted the drink
Then flung it with might as the boat hit the Tyne
Avoiding the blocks, the wires and chains
The shatter spread bow with white fizzy wine

The ship had its name and Bill saved the day
The shipyard owner did his bravery hail
When asked what payment he asked in return
Bill merely replied, 'a cold glass of ale'

(Darby rests on a gate or part of a fence stage-left. Geordie enters.)

Darby: Alright Geordie?

Geordie: Not too bad, Darby. You?

Darby: Yeah. **(Takes a deep breath through his nose)** Smell that!

Geordie: You haven't have you?

Darby: No, smell that salty air. No matter where I am, I'll always be able to smell that salt air you know.

Geordie: What? Even in the toilets in Norries bar?

Darby: Maybe not in there; it does take a good ten minutes for your sense of smell to return after a visit to Norries netties, but you know what I mean.

Geordie: Yeah, there's nothing like that chilly salt air mixed with the smell of fish and chips drifting down Bertram Street on a Friday afternoon.

(They both stand sniffing the air for a moment)

Geordie: Anyway, when does your shift start?

Darby: Half eight.

Geordie: **(Checking his pocket watch)** What you doing here so early then? It's only eight O'clock.

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Darby: Thought I'd get a coffee from old Parsons before my shift, but he's not here yet. His tram's probably broke down or it hasn't turned up or something. Nothing prepares you better for a shift than a cup of coffee, looking out across the yard, getting ready for some hard graft. That and the fact it's beer allowance day.

Geordie: **(Regretfully)** Ah, that reminds me -

Darby: 'Ah'? It's always bad news when you say 'Ah'.

Geordie: My wife was talking to Mrs Johnson, you know, the new boss' wife?

Darby: Go on -

Geordie: He's scrapping the beer allowance.

Darby: What?

(Porter enters)

Porter: That's right lads. Jim mentioned it in the office yesterday. He's thinking about scrapping it.

Darby: **(Incredulous)** What?

Porter: Apparently, and you never heard this from me, ship orders are falling. The new boss says we need to make cut backs to save money.

Darby: **(Incredulous)** But, that's the reason we've satisfied every single order ahead of schedule for the past five years - beer allowance.

Geordie: He's a menace that new boss. It's only been a couple of months since his Dad, Old-Man Johnson retired and he's already changed all the shifts and break times.

Porter: He reckons the rest of Europe is catching up with their shipbuilding; we're entering a depression you know. The financial guarantees under the Trade Facilities Act only go so far. I wouldn't be surprised if this yard was closed in a few years by the NSS.

(Darby and Geordie gaze at Porter blankly)

Darby: I've no idea what you're talking about. **(To Geordie)** What's he talking about?

Geordie: Politics or something; I dunno.

Darby: **(To Porter)** You can't stop the beer allowance. **(To Geordie)** Tell him they can't stop the beer allowance.

(Geordie gazes back helplessly until he finally gives in to Darby's desperate expression, willing him to say something to Porter.)

Geordie: **(Speaking with some authority but mostly seeming unsure of what he's talking about)** Look, you need to go tell that new boss a little bit about how us working class function. Things like getting rid of the beer allowance is why the unions started in the first place; all the high and mighty rich fat cats at the top making all the decisions. They don't understand what it's like trying to exist on a pittance while they drink their Whiskey and eat their Lobsters. They look down on us like we we're a drunken rabble.

Porter: Bear in mind that we're talking about a *beer* allowance here.

Geordie: Well, yes but –

Darby: Give us a little bit of rope and we're all happy. We do as we're told and we get everything done on time. Take a few little perks out of the job and we'll only work as hard as it takes not to get fired. It's not like the days of the Keelmen you know. You can't just replace us with steamboats and staithes.

Porter: Look lads, I'll have a word but I wouldn't hold out much hope. I've only just been promoted to foreman so I doubt Jim will even listen to me. Jim Johnson's not good at listening. Shouting, he's good at that, but not listening. He wants to do things differently to his Dad, that's why he's stamping his boots all over the way we used to do things. Remember, he can do what he wants. He's in charge. He pays our wages. I mean think about it, he's only thinking about stopping a perk, something you're not *really* entitled to in the first place. It's hardly Red Friday is it?

(Ed, a heavy-set tough-looking worker enters carrying a tool box.)

Ed: What's up lads?

Darby: Oh, hello Ed, did *you* know they're stopping the beer allowance?

(Ed drops his tool box with a clatter and stands gazing at Porter, open-mouthed.)

Porter: They're only thinking of –

Ed: **(Matter of fact)** You can't stop the beer allowance.

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Porter: As I'm trying to say, it's to try and save –

Ed: **(Bewildered)** No. You can't do that. We have to have our beer allowance. I take home five pounds, eight shillings and sixpence. I have to feed three kids. I can't afford beer out of that. You can't stop the allowance.

Darby: It's the only way we can all afford to go to Norries bar on the last Friday of every month. It's like Christmas that.

Ed: – or your birthday.

Darby: It happens every month

Ed: – and every month we all look forward to it.

Darby: You can't stop it.

Porter: Well, it's not up to me – I'm just the go-between.

Ed: We'll strike then!

(Darby and Geordie look startled)

Porter: Eh? You can't –

Geordie: We can't strike Ed.

Ed: Yes we can. We'll walk out; down tools. Make a stand.

Darby: **(Unsure)** Can we do that?

Ed: Course we can. If we don't go to work then they don't make their orders and they don't get paid and they'll have to reinstate the beer allowance.

Porter: They haven't actually stopped it yet.

Ed: Doesn't matter. We'll show them we mean business. The Keelmen did it. Started paying them *can money* they did. Part of their wages in tokens they could only spend in the pubs run by the pit owners. They went on strike. They soon got their own way.

Porter: This isn't the same thing. You could lose your jobs over this. You're not in a union, and anyway, the Keelmen are all gone now.

Darby: You don't get it do you?

(Porter shakes his head)

Darby: Let me put it another way –

Scene 2 –Norries Bar

(Half tabs open to reveal a backdrop of Norries bar. A barman stands behind a bar, upon which are pints of beer. Four other workers dressed in flat caps and overalls join Ed, Darby, Porter and Geordie on-stage. Where the dialogue states ‘all’, everyone on stage should sing except Porter.)

(Song 2. ‘Lewance of Beer)

Darby: At 7am as the shipyard gates open
The working men reach the yard-way
The sirens that stridently bellow their sound
Announcing the start of the day

We quickly file in, ready for graft
Half seven and work has begun
I take a look over at Geordie’s post
And notice no work has been done

Geordie: I tell him the tale when at last I arrive
That I was outside the locked gate
So now I’ve been docked half a day from my wage
For being just five minutes late

Darby: The clock hits mid-day and us workers head off
To a man back home for some grub
Turnip and ‘taties, or left-over stew
After giving our hands a quick scrub

Ed: We follow that up with a bowl of dessert
Rice pudding or custard and cake
When it’s mushed up, well it all looks the same
And our stomachs, they never do ache

Back to the yard for the one o’clock siren
Two paybacks do our work inspire

(Darby covers Porter’s ears for the following two lines)

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

The first, though illegal, we feel we deserve
Stolen off-cuts of wood for our fire

(Darby takes his hands from Porter’s ears and moves upstage centre)

Darby: The second a bonus rewards our hard work
The reason our step has a spring
If we beat the quota before the month end
You’ll hear us all roar for one thing

All: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
Darby: The end of the month getting near
All: Our tonsils they yearn, through our hard work we earn
To cash-in our 'lewance of beer

Geordie: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
The landlord will give out a cheer
All: Us workers will fill the Norries bar till
With our entire 'lewance of beer

Ed: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
Let no other man interfere
All: We stand at the bar then we say 'au revoir'
To our entire 'lewance of beer

Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
We know it will soon disappear
Still in heavy coats we will throw down our throats
Our entire 'lewance of beer

Darby: Food on the table and clothes on our backs
Geordie: Tram fare
Darby: and rent
Ed: and football!

Darby: A few bob left over for sweets for the kids
Geordie: And a trip to the cinema hall

Ed: We work oh so hard for five days a week
To make sure that there is no fear
That we won't end up at the end of the month
Without our 'lewance of beer

(Half tabs close and the four supporting actors leave. Darby, Ed, Geordie and Porter move upstage centre. This will allow for Scene 3 to be set behind half tabs. Half tabs close.)

All: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
Darby: The end of the month getting near
All: Our tonsils they yearn, through our hard work we earn
To cash-in our 'lewance of beer

Geordie: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
The landlord will give out a cheer
All: Us workers will fill the Norries bar till
With our entire 'lewance of beer

Ed: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
Let no other man interfere
All: We stand at the bar then we say 'au revoir'
To our entire 'lewance of beer

(All on stage hold their final pose as the music ends. Porter should be centre stage with the others flanking him in their final triumphant pose, holding beer tankards. Lights off and tabs close.)

Scene 3 – Management Office

(Tabs open to reveal a grand-looking office. Jim, the Shipyard owner clearly enjoys working in luxury. Jim is reclining lazily at his desk, sucking on a large unlit cigar without a care in the world. Porter enters hurriedly, holding his flat cap to his head.)

Jim: Ah, there you are Porter. **(He eyes Porter suspiciously)** Where's my tea?

Porter: Tea? Oh - yes, coming up sir.

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

(Porter goes down stage and pours water into a cup from a tin kettle. He brings the cup to Jim's desk upstage and sets it down. Jim picks up the cup, inspects it and sniffs at it.)

Jim: What's this?

Porter: Tea sir.

Jim: No, this is hot water. For it to qualify as tea, it needs a tea-bag.

Porter: **(Looks into the cup and panics)** Oh, sorry sir.

(Porter takes the cup downstage once more)

Jim: You know how I like it; lots of milk, two teaspoons of sugar. Proper shipbuilder's tea that.

Porter: **(Bringing the tea back and speaking tentatively.)** Except, you've... never actually built a ship though have you sir?

Jim: Doesn't matter lad - I'm steeped in the history of it all me. My Father owned this yard before me, before he retired last month and my son, if I ever have one, will inherit it from me. Doesn't matter that I've never done a day's labour in my life, I'm the heartbeat of the place me. Just *watching* the men out there labouring away makes me feel tired if I'm honest; so I don't *like* to watch. It makes me proud nonetheless that us British are the forerunners of shipbuilding world-wide. It all started here you know.

(Jim moves upstage. He gazes off-stage as if looking out of a window. He looks confused.)

Jim: What's going on out there – or should I say, what's *not* going on out there?

Porter: What do you mean sir?

Jim: Where is everyone?

Porter: Ah –

Jim: (Threateningly) Ah?

Porter: Well I was going to –

Jim: Going to what? Hope I didn't notice?

Porter: No.. I was going to –

Jim: (Picks up his tea) Bring me more of the worst tea of all time?

Porter: The lads have, well – gone home.

Jim: (Approaching Porter and narrowing his eyes) What time is it Porter?

Porter: Ten, sir – in the morning.

Jim: That's not home time is it Porter?

Porter: No sir.

Jim: There better be a good reason why my ships aren't being built. That cargo ship must be finished by a week Tuesday. It's the big launch. It's worth thousands to us that.

Porter: Well sir, you see - it's because of the planned stoppage of the beer allowance.

Jim: Ah! A fine idea - one of my best don't you think?

Porter: The men don't agree. They say since you took over last month you've changed so many things. They're a bit –

Jim: (Threatening) A bit what?

Porter: (Meekly) A bit annoyed about it. They say the beer allowance is the only thing that gets them out of bed in the morning sometimes; the only reason they work twice as hard to get the ships finished ahead of schedule.

Jim: I've never heard such a load of pathetic nonsense in my entire life - apart from when I did your job interview of course. Don't they know that the beer allowance is a privilege? It's an out-dated ploy to keep the morale up. They don't need that sort of thing these days. Having a trade, a skill, a job – that's motivation enough. The beer allowance is a perk we don't have to give, I'm sure they understand that. Look at my bottom line.

(Jim picks up some papers from his desk)

Porter: Look at your *what* sir?

Jim: It's all red!

Porter: Your... *what* is all red sir?

Jim: My bottom line - look - it's been in the red for the last few months.

(Jim slaps the invoices with the back of his hand)

Porter: **(Relieved)** Yes sir, right sir. But if we make this order on time that will make up the short-fall and we'll be operating at a profit this year. There's trouble brewing in Europe apparently so they'll be needing war ships pretty soon – we'll be ok. The beer allowance keeps the lads happy. Happy workers are much better than miserable ones. They work harder.

Jim: If I stop the beer allowances, we'll be operating at a profit whether that ship gets built on time or not. Hang on, you don't sympathise with that lot do you?

Porter: Sympathise sir?

Jim: You're not one of those do-gooder welfare safety-first namby-pamby workers' rights union idiots like that Wat Tyler are you?

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Porter: Who? No sir. I'm just the go-between - you know, trying to keep the channels of communication open between workers and management. I don't have an opinion - not me - I just do as I'm told. John 'no opinion' Porter – that's what they call me.

Jim: Good man. Britain's greatness was built on its navy. Like in World War One when we sank the French fleet.

Porter: But they were on our side sir?

Jim: Doesn't matter. They were just floating there and our ships were better than theirs. What better way to assert your greatness than by sinking the ships of not only your enemies, but your allies as well? Where do you think Captain Bligh would be if he gave his crew beer to stop them moaning?

Porter: Well, it would have stopped the mutiny for a start.

Jim: Wasn't it Nelson who said 'I see no ships'?

Porter: Well, ironically sir – **(he points out of the window)**

Jim: **(sinisterly)** I have a job for you Porter.

Porter: Sir?

Jim: I want you to go out and find each one of those work-shy alcohol-loving wet-necked lazy good-for-nothing layabouts and tell them – **(nearing Porter threateningly)**

Porter: **(gulps)** Yes sir?

Jim: I'll let them have their little tantrum for today but if they don't turn up for work tomorrow, that they're all **(even nearer to Porter)** fired.

Porter: Fired?

Jim: Like the cannon on Blackbeard's ship. **(comically)** 'boom'!

Porter: **(Scared)** Boom?

Jim: Then you can go out and find people who are glad to work for a salary and not whinge when they don't get a pint of beer at the end of a shift.

Porter: You want me to go out and find a complete new staff of men with shipbuilding experience?

Jim: That's all. **(Sips his tea and spits it out)** Who taught you to make tea? A two-year-old? Get out.

(Porter turns and leaves urgently)

Porter: Yes sir. Immediately sir.

Jim: **(Grinning to himself)** Beer allowance. **(He chuckles lightly then sits at his desk, sucks at his cigar and starts writing. Tabs close.)**

Scene 4 – The Back Steps

(Joan, wearing a flowery dress, headscarf and apron steps through the curtains so she is standing front of tabs. When she addresses her son Billy, she addresses him as if he is standing at the back of the audience, which in context is the back lane behind their terraced house.)

Joan: Billy! Billy! Stop poking Gary with that stick. Five minutes and your tea will be out! **(Noticing the audience, whom she addresses as if a neighbour over the yard wall)**. Oh, hello there. Just putting the washing out are you? Monday is *my* wash day. **(She folds her arms in a smug fashion)** We've just bought a new mangle. State of the art it is. You've still got wooden rollers on yours haven't you? Mine? Rubber. It'll last years. We've just got a new clothes horse as well. It folds both ways. When we're not using it Billy turns it on its side, throws a blanket over the top and plays 'tents' in the front room. Oh, he has hours of fun. Well it's either that or we give him the sugar bowl to play with. **(Pauses to listen)** Is your George not playing out with the others? **(Shouting)** Billy, I told you to put that stick down. **(To audience)** Measles? **(Grimaces)** Ooh, you'd better make sure he stays in then, poor thing. My Billy's never had anything wrong with him, healthy as an Ox that boy **(listens)** Well yes, except for that bout of mumps **(listens)** and the flu yes **(listens)** yes yes, and the chicken pox last year but apart from that, healthy as a dose of Bile Beans that one. **(Shouting)** Billy, don't put it up there, it'll get stuck. **(To audience)** So, how's your husband getting on at the printers then? **(Shock)** Manager? **(Composing herself)** I always said he was management material. Didn't I always say that? **(Listens)** Darby? Oh, he's on his way up. *Fingers in all pies* as they say. He'll be running that ship yard one day. Anyway, must go, Billy's tea's ready. **(Shouting)** Billy! Your tea's out! **(to audience)** speak to you later.

(Tabs open to reveal a 1920's style front room. There is a dining table with a gaudy tablecloth stage left. Joan sits at the table. Darby enters.)

Darby: (wearily) Hello love.

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

(Darby kisses Joan on the headscarf. She sniffs the air as he passes. He takes his large overcoat off and lies it on the back of a chair.)

Joan: What are you doing here so early? Have you been drinking?

Darby: I might have had one or two.

Joan: One or two? **(Looking at a clock downstage)** Your shift doesn't finish for another two hours.

Darby: **(Dismissive)** Well, I can explain that.

Joan: **(Standing over Darby ominously)** I'm all ears.

Darby: **(Nervously)** Well, the lads are having – well, a bit of a strike.

Joan: A strike?

Darby: Yeah. Not a big one like, you know, just a little one.

Joan: A strike as in a 'not going to work' strike?

Darby: Sort of.

Joan: Well have you been to work or not?

Darby: Sort of.

(Exasperated, Joan exits stage right)

Joan: **(O.S. Shouting stridently)** Billy, I won't tell you again, your tea's ready.

(Joan enters carrying a dinner plate and sets it on the dining table. Billy enters, sits at the table and begins eating. Joan approaches Darby once more.)

Joan: This had better be good. We've just bought a new mangle.

Darby: Well, you know the beer allowance we get at the end of the month for hitting all our quotas?

Joan: Yes

Darby: Well, they're stopping it.

Joan: And that's why you're on strike?

Darby: Not entirely. When we were down the pub there were lads complaining about the lack of safety, the long hours, the poor wages – but mostly it was the beer allowance. We're striking tomorrow as well.

Joan: **(Looking angry but then suddenly excited)** This is your chance you know Darby.

Darby: Eh?

Joan: No more getting our water from the tap in the outdoor toilets. **(Lost in a vision)** Charlton the butcher will start keeping *us* the best cuts under the counter. We'll have teacakes every day Darby. Every day! It'll be the frog's eyebrows.

Darby: **(Confused)** What are you talking about woman?

Joan: You have to turn up for work tomorrow.

Darby: I can't they're –

Joan: I know, but you'll impress the bosses. Show them how committed you are to your job and to them. They'll make you manager! Him next door's just been made manager at the printers on Percy Street. If you make manager we'll be able to have Steak and Kidney for tea and I'll have something to brag about to her next door. Stop her beating her gums for a while at least.

Darby: You do know what they do to people who go to work when there's a strike?

(Billy picks something up on his fork and gazes at it suspiciously)

Joan: (To Billy) They're green beans, eat them all up or you won't get curly hair.

(Billy gazes back at Joan with a confused expression. He carries on eating tentatively.)

Darby: I can't go in when there's a strike Joan. Not a chance. Look, seeing as how I'm off work tomorrow why don't we go to the Temperance Festival on the Town Moor? We haven't been for ages.

Joan: The *Hoppings* are in town?

Darby: Yeah, it's been held at Jesmond Vale for the last few years, it's not the same as when it's on the 'Moor.

Joan: We went a few years ago didn't we? You're right, nowhere near as good as when it was on the 'Moor.

Darby: Well it's back this week. Stopping the showmen setting up on the Town Moor is like closing the River Tyne to ships.

Joan: (Nostalgically) I love the smell of cooking onions and candy floss.

Darby: Well, instead of wasting this day off I've got tomorrow why don't we go to the Temperance Festival? They've got fairground rides for Billy and –

(Billy drops his fork with a clatter and stares at Darby with a wide eyed excited expression. Joan picks up the fork and hands it to Billy who remains oblivious to her presence.)

Darby: Prize bingo, magicians – everything really. Chips –

Joan: (Attempting to suppress her excitement) But, I've got housework to do. I couldn't possibly –

Darby: Forget that, forget work. It's about time we had a bit of fun as a family. We might not get another chance.

(Darby grabs Joan by the waist)

Joan: Oh, Darby. You've got me all flustered. (To Billy) Eat your dumplings son, we've got a big day tomorrow.

Darby: (Laughing) We're off to the fair!

(Darby again grabs Joan and waltzes with her until they exit stage right, singing a jaunty waltz tune as he goes. Lights off. Tabs closed.)

Scene 5 – Cobbled Street

(Porter and Ed enter front of tabs.)

Ed: You've changed you know Porter. Becoming foreman has changed you. You used to be on our side.

Porter: See sense Ed, it's not that I don't agree with you. I'm paid not to have an opinion. I'm a go-between.

Ed: And I bet you were doing the same to fat Jim as you're doing to me eh? Telling him to see sense?

Porter: Well –

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Ed: You're terrified of him. He's only a bloke.

Porter: He pays the wages.

Ed: Sod wages. This is about principles and **(pauses)** human decency.

Porter: Well it *is* about wages isn't it, because if we don't get any we can't feed our families.

Ed: When we picket tomorrow morning he'll soon see sense. He'll see that we're serious.

Porter: He said if you don't turn up for work tomorrow you're all fired.

Ed: He's bluffing.

Porter: He's not the type to bluff. He won't think far enough ahead to realise the consequences of firing you all and then he'll be too proud to ask you back. By striking all you'll do is force the shipyard to close. He won't be able to hire an entire new staff to meet that order. When the yard doesn't deliver, its name will be mud and with an unfulfilled order against its name and no workers, that'll be it. It'll all collapse because of his stupidity and pride and you and the other *cellar smellers* with your beer and principles.

Ed: **(Defiantly)** It's not just about the beer you know. It's about wages and safety as well.

Porter: Don't try and baffle *me* with flim-flam. I know what it's about. No one even mentioned the safety or wages until the beer allowance was mentioned.

Ed: **(Insolently)** We're striking Porter, and that's that.

(Ed exits. Song 3 – Sandhills)

Porter: The setting sun and the lowlights
Bring another day to an end
The marching crowd with their soldier's songs

Something they all defend

The closing dark and the whispers
The Sandhill streets crowd displayed
Along the road of hobnailed cobbles
Of the working man's parade

Sea of faces going home
Lonely road filled with flat caps and cigarette smoke
Evening voices die under the cinnamon sky
The distant hum of the working folk

Another working day over
Nothing said, nothing heard
No marching figures through nightfall
Stony pathways left unstirred

No more dust in the air
Chains drag through the yard no more
The smell of tallow and rust has gone
A silence hard to ignore

Sea of faces going home
Road no longer filled with flat caps and cigarette smoke
No evening voices under the cinnamon skies
Forgotten hum of the working folk

(Lights off. Porter Exits.)

Scene 6 – The Temperance Festival

(Barker enters front of tabs. He is dressed in bright clothing and carries a cane with which he can accentuate his points by stabbing it towards the audience. Song 4. Roll up, Roll up.)

Barker: Roll up, roll up and wait your turn
Your delight is of my concern
The greatest show in Tyne and Wear
The Temperance Festival's here

Such an event it's a general rule
All of the kids get the day off school
From far and wide, a collective Fair
The greatest day of the year

(The tabs open to reveal a fairground. Brightly coloured stall fronts with backdrops of a rifle range, coconut shy and tombola.)

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Come along to the Town Moor fair
We've got all sorts of things in there
Pay your money and win a prize
From a devil in disguise
Come along just follow the sound
Of Europe's chief travelling fairground
Take a shot, have a go
You might win, you never know!

We'll tell your fortune from a tea cup
Let's hope the North-East weather holds up
If the rain comes and causes a flood
Well it wouldn't be the *Hoppings* without the mud

(Darby, Joan and Billy enter stage right)

Darby: Toffee apples and cones of chips
Joan: Cinder toffee and sherbet dips
Darby: Coffee and cake and lemonade
Barker: Much more besides and it's all homemade

(Darby picks up a leaflet from a table near the gates)

Darby: **(Reading)** Grinning for tobacco and Ribands at ten
Joan: **(Pointing at the leaflet)** Donkey derby and races for men
Darby: Bingo and hoopla, the rifle range
Barker: **(To Darby)** We've curiosities more than strange

(Darby, Joan and Billy approach the Barker and listen intently.)

Barker: We've got a lady with a full beard

But listen to this if you think that's weird
A photograph that's true, not fake
A mermaid being eaten by a two-headed snake

Come along to the Town Moor fair
We've got all sorts of food in there
Hot dogs and candy rock
Open all day 'til eight o'clock
Come along and follow the lights
We're here for two full days and nights
Spin the wheel, it could make your day
The cards they might just fall your way

(Billy tugs at Darby's sleeve excitedly)

Billy: Dad, I can't wait 'til we get inside
I want to go on every ride!
Barker: Painted horses that'll make you shout
On our steam driven roundabout

(Darby, Joan and Billy visit each stall in turn, throwing a ball or talking to the stall owner. The Barker turns his attention back to the audience as he tries to encourage them to come to the fair.)

Barker: Coconuts on posts with balls to shy
The Ghost Train will literally make you cry
We've got sports, folk music and dance
Stalls full of prizes and games of chance

Come along to the Town Moor fair
There'll be all sorts of people there
Pay your money, and take a shot
Lose again or win the lot?
Come along and follow the crowd
A fair to make all the Geordies proud
Give it a try, come on have a go
You might win, you never know!

Roll up, roll up, tuppence for a programme
With a free toy and choice of balloons
A Penny for the fun house, Tuppence for the big wheel
Hear the Brass Bands playing Gershwin tunes

Roll up, roll up tuppence for a program
Roll up, roll up there's never a frown
Roll up, roll up come along now
The temperance fair is in town.

(End of song. The Barker leaves. Fairground music or ambient sound effects play in the background as Darby, Joan and Billy chatter excitedly with the owner of one of the stalls. Frank 'Old Man' Johnson enters stage left with his wife, Freda.)

Darby: **(To Joan, stage whispering)** Look who it is!

Joan: **(Looking over at Frank and Freda)** Who?

Darby: It's Old-man Johnson, you know, the bloke who used to own the shipyard before he retired last month?

Joan: Well get over there and tell him what's going on. He'll soon sort it out.

Darby: No, he'll ask all these awkward questions. I'm not a negotiator Joan.

(Frank notices Darby and approaches him. Darby tries in vain to avoid him by looking around and pointing at things.)

Frank: Danny **(pauses)** Donny.

(Darby grimaces and turns around to face Frank.)

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Frank: David?

Darby: Darby

Frank: That's it. How the devil are you man?

Darby: Well, you know.

Frank: Marvellous. Hang on, shouldn't you be at work?

Darby: Yes – and no.

Frank: Come again?

Darby: **(hesitantly)** Day off?

Frank: Day off? **(Laughing)** Has my son gone soft giving people days off?

(Frank slaps Darby on the back and encourages him to laugh along. Darby does so tentatively.)

Frank: Well, it is the temperance festival after all. So how are things down the shipyard?

Darby: Well, you know.

Frank: Excellent. You let me know if that son of mine works you too hard won't you?
(Laughs) All the best Darcy.

(Frank links Freda and exits laughing whilst pointing out stalls to his wife.)

Joan: Why didn't you say something?

Darby: How can I? First, he's not going to like me badmouthing his son and second, I can't just stop him in the middle of a day at the fair and start complaining about the decline

in conditions at the yard since his son took over. No, if we tell him at all it will have to be all the lads together somewhere he has to listen to us. If it just comes from me it'll have no impact at all. Come on, let's just enjoy the fair and deal with all that tomorrow.

(Darby, Joan and Billy approach a different stall and chat with the stall owner as the lights go down, the ambient music and sound effects fade and the curtains close.)

Scene 7 – Outside the Shipyard gates

(The tabs open to reveal Ed, Geordie and several other workers standing outside the gates holding banners with various slogans on them such as ‘Better pay or no anchors aweigh’ and ‘Give us back our beer!’)

Ed: What time is it?

Geordie: (Looking at a pocket watch) Half three.

Ed: Whose idea was this strike anyway, I’m freezing.

© Scripts for Stage

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Geordie: Yours.

Ed: Was it? Well you didn’t have to agree with me.

Geordie: We’re not the ones complaining about the cold.

(Ed sniffs indignantly, plunging his hands into his pockets to keep warm.)

Geordie: It’s got *everyone* riled up this beer allowance business.

(Darby, Joan and Billy enter. Darby sings a refrain of ‘Roll up, Roll up’ while stepping merrily onto the stage carrying a red balloon.)

Ed: Well, not everyone clearly. (To Darby) Had a nice day have you?

(Darby stops dead, his face painted with horror.)

Darby: Eh? What’s going on here?

Ed: Clean shaven, clean clothes and a smile. Doesn’t he look nice lads? Something slip your mind when you left the house this morning?

Darby: I didn’t know you were picketing. You said we were striking.

Ed: When you strike you don’t just *not* turn up for work you know. You stand outside, make noise, stop other people going in, gain their support. How else are we supposed to make the idiots that run the place listen to us?

Darby: But you said –

Geordie: Where have you been then?

Darby: (Tentatively, looking sheepishly at his balloon) The doctors –

Ed: – and he wrote you a prescription for a balloon did he?

(Darby hands the balloon to Billy)

Darby: I thought we were just having the day off so I took the wife and bairn to the fair. I thought we were just having a little strike, not a big one like.

Ed: A strike's a strike Darby, with pickets and everything.

Darby: **(Innocently)** Right. So what's happening?

(Porter and Jim Johnson enter from the shipyard through the gates.)

Porter: **(Conflicted)** Listen up lads; because you didn't work yesterday you've all been docked a day's pay.

Jim: **(Gruffly)** You'll be docked for today as well.

(Darby and Geordie look at Ed hoping he has a plan. Ed looks back at them desperately.)

Jim: **(Sarcastically)** Good news though; the last ever beer allowance will probably cover what you've lost in wages so it looks like your little strike has backfired.

Geordie: So it's official then? You *are* stopping the beer allowance?

Jim: I am *now*. You can't get what you want in life by throwing a tantrum when things don't go your way. Where would we be if Britain's great historical figures just threw tantrums whenever they didn't get what they wanted? Take Henry VIII for example, a great king and a great man.

Porter: Erm, he did murder and divorce most of his wives. That's a *little bit* 'tantrummy'.

Jim: Details. You've all done yourself out of the last ever beer allowance through your little strike – **(sadistically)** isn't that right Porter?

Porter: **(Despondently)** That's right sir.

(Jim looks at some of the signs which complain about working conditions, poor pay and long hours.)

Jim: What's this? **(reading)** More money? Shorter hours? I thought you said the strike was about the beer allowance?

Porter: That's what they told me.

Ed: The beer allowance is the straw that broke the Monkey's back –

Geordie: Camel

Ed: Camel's back. Since you took over from your old man, you've changed all the shifts around, the breaks are shorter, we don't get any safety gloves or shoes, we're working longer hours and we're not getting paid any more money.

Jim: It's called progress. These are desperate times. You're paid to work and if you don't like it, you can find a job somewhere else. **(Noticing Joan and Billy)** – and don't think bringing women and children down here will win you any sympathy.

Joan: Oh we're not here for the picket, we're just on our way back from –

Darby: – the doctors. **(Pointing at Billy)** Sore leg.

(Billy looks confused)

Jim: **(sucking on his unlit cigar)** You've got two options as far as I can see. One, you get back in there and finish your shift and we'll hear no more about it; or two, you can all form an orderly queue outside the employment exchange tomorrow morning.

(The workers all start muttering amongst each other and looking nervous)

Ed: **(Attempting bravado)** Well we're not going back in there until you agree to review the hours, the pay, the safety and reinstate the beer allowance.

(The men grumble in agreement)

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Jim: **(Narrowing his eyes and pausing)** Hmm... looks like you're all fired then. Porter –

Porter: Yes sir?

Jim: Who's side are you on?

Porter: Erm – well **(looking desperately from the working men to Jim and back again)** I'm not on anyone's side, I'm –

Jim: Well, John 'no opinion' Porter –

Porter: Yes?

Jim: You're fired as well. **(Smugly)** That's all.

(Jim exits through the gates whistling merrily and leaves the stage. The remaining characters stand in silence for a while until Jim has exited.)

Ed: **(Sardonically)** That went well.

(Geordie and Darby throw Ed a disgruntled look. Lights off. Tabs closed.)

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

Scene 1 – Shipyard

(Tabs open to a dimly-lit stage. Downstage left is the security hut, which is a wooden panel with a window cut into it. Ed, Geordie and Darby sneak on stage-left, tip-toeing and trying to be silent. SFX. Clatter as Darby drops his bag of tools.)

Geordie/Ed: Shhhh!!

(Darby picks up his bag. Darby, Ed and Geordie duck under the window of the security hut; they crouch there and stage whisper.)

Geordie: Jim must be in there; I can smell his cigar.

Ed: Is everyone here then?

Darby: I haven't seen Porter anywhere.

Geordie: (Forgetting to whisper) He's still got his keys. He's been here since five this morning setting everything up with the Caulkers.

Ed: Shh!

(Jim pokes his head out of the security hut window. With a cigar dangling from his lips, he looks about for a moment and then goes back inside. Porter enters stage right.)

Porter: (Stage whispering) Lads.

(Geordie, Ed and Darby clearly cannot hear Porter)

Porter: (Louder) Lads!

(Jim pokes his head out of the window once more with a lantern. The stage lights brighten slightly. Jim notices Porter.)

Jim: Porter? What are you doing here?

Porter: Ah! Mr Johnson, I –

Jim: (Exiting the hut) You do remember that conversation we had about you not working here anymore?

(Jim walks over to Porter with his back to Darby, Ed and Geordie. The three men all climb to their feet.)

Jim: I'd call security if I hadn't fired them all. Well? Explain yourself.

Porter: (Stuttering) Well, sir. You see –

Darby: We're here to work!

(Jim turns with shock)

Jim: You what? What are you three doing? You're all fired. You do know what 'fired' means don't you?

Ed: Obviously. We're protesting though, aren't we lads?

Jim: **(Confused)** Protesting? Hang on – you all *had* jobs but decided not to come to work; now you're fired you decide you *want* to come to work?

Geordie: Yeah. We've all got our tools and we're ready for a day's graft.

Jim: A day's – **(pauses in amazement)**, you do know you won't be paid don't you?

Ed: Of course.

Jim: And you... still want to go in there and finish that ship?

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Darby: Yip.

Jim: **(Yelling)** Porter!

Porter: **(Startled)** Sir?

Jim: My office! Now!

(Jim strides off downstage and exits through the half-tabs. Porter scurries after him. Once they are backstage the half-tabs open to reveal a backdrop of cranes and the river with boats on it. Darby, Geordie, Ed and four chorus members enter. The chorus members are dressed as follows: 1. Overalls (Labourer) 2. White shirt and dark trousers (Loftsman) 3. Shirt with waistcoat, half-mast trousers, flat cap and neckerchief (Rigger) 4. Shirt, tatty tweed coat, dark trousers and heavy boots (Riveter). Geordie, Darby and Ed pick up Caulking Mallets from downstage. They lift them and bring them down as if hammering the side of an imaginary ship during the chorus of the song (when 'all' is stated))

(Song 5. The Caulkers Song.)

All: Hear the hammers falling
Hear the song of the working man
Hear the Irons calling
The clanking toll of the working man

Darby: Men working 6 day weeks
Hammering 'til their ears hurt,
The steady sound of building
Cutting, chiselling and sweeping up dirt

Geordie: Before the cutting and filing
Before the force of hammers grip

(The Loftsman rolls out a blueprint on a table downstage and studies it)

The Loftsmen and template makers
Must draw out the lines of the ship

(The Rigger mimes pulling a rope as if to raise a sail.)

Ed: Their chain plates anchor the port stay
The Riggers with their wires of steel
Their fibre ropes and shackles
From fixtures to laying down the keel

(The Riveter swings his hammer at the side of an imaginary ship, taking his flat-cap off to wipe the sweat from his brow from time to time.)

Darby: The burners cut the ship plates
Geordie: With sparks that fly like a Catherine wheel
Ed: The Riveter joins together
The caulker works with joints to seal

All: Hear the hammers falling
Hear the song of the working man
Hear the Irons calling
The ringing toll of the working man

(The Labourer joins the Riveter, holding up an imaginary plate for the Riveter to hammer into place)

Darby: Operating in three man teams
One Riveter to join each Plate
One heater readies the rivets
And one holder up to take the weight

Geordie: The riveter's job is appalling
The constant noise of the hammer's fall
The strident clang and banging
Not quite the sound of a music hall

(The heater, dressed in the shabbiest attire enters and stands at the brazier with a pair of tongs, lifting seemingly white hot rivets out with them.)

Ed: A heaters life no better
The first to arrive at the dock
To get the fires going
Their first half hour is off the clock

Darby: Making the rivets white hot
With his fish-plate and tongs
Geordie: Down the pipe into the coke box
And so ring out the shipyard songs

All: Hear the hammers falling
Hear the song of the working man
Hear the Irons calling
The clanking toll of the working man

Darby: **(Pointing at Ed)** The Caulkers seal the hulls
Make decks watertight and leak free
With horsing irons and seam rakers
To repel the force of the sea

(Ed mimes caulking, hammering rope into the ship's hull and sealing it with pitch, signified by a bucket marked 'pitch' nearby)

Geordie: With Caulking mallet and chisel
Spike irons, reef hooks and pitch poured
With scrapers to clean the seams
Oakum, manila and hemp cord

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

(Ed removes a cloth from his pocket and polishes the head of his hammer)

Darby: They carry a crocus cloth
Stopping frequently to polish the mallet head

(Ed mimes being out of breath and taking a rest)

No care their tool's condition
Just for rest, though nothing is said

Ed: Into the hammer's head
We carve a notch, a tuning slit
To make the hammers falling
Sing the same note as iron's hit

All: Hear the hammers falling
Hear the song of the working man
Hear the Irons calling
The clanking toll of the working man

Hear the hammers falling
Hear the song of the working man
Hear the Irons calling
The clanking toll of the working man

Hear the hammers falling
Hear the song of the working man
Hear the Irons calling
The ringing toll of the working man

Hear the hammers falling
Hear the song of the working man
Hear the Irons calling
The ringing toll of the working man

(The supporting actors file from the stage, singing the chorus until only Ed, Geordie and Darby are left upstage centre. Tabs close to allow the construction of Scene 2. They sing in a 'round' as the music fades to the sound of the metal

hammers that introduced the song. Ed takes the first line, Geordie the second and Darby the third. They leave in this order, Darby singing the final line on his own before he leaves the stage.)

All: Hear the hammers falling
The unpaid song of the working man
The work-in protest starting
All for the pride of the working man

(Once Darby has left, the lights fade off and the tabs close.)

Scene 2 – Management Office

(Tabs open to reveal the office set out as in Act 1, Scene 3. There is a large decanter of whiskey on Jim’s desk alongside a pile of paperwork. There is a large golden ashtray filled with discarded cigar stumps and an expensive-looking silver box which contains large cigars. Jim enters angrily and is followed meekly by Porter.)

Jim: Listen to them! Just listen. **(Jim points off stage as if out of a window)** Singing away like nothing’s happened. **(Incredulous and wide-eyed)** They’re not getting paid – it makes no sense!

(Jim turns and gazes at Porter, awaiting an explanation. Porter stares back timidly.)

Jim: Well?

Porter: **(stuttering)** I’m – I don’t – well, it’s like this...

Jim: Pull yourself together man. Stop gibbering and spit it out.

Porter: We’re staging a work-in.

Jim: A what?

Porter: A work-in.

Jim: And what’s one of those when it’s at home?

Porter: **(Nervously)** Well, I don’t think I’m the right person to –

Jim: For pity’s sake man.

Porter: I’m not at liberty to say right now.

Jim: Tell me or I’ll –

(Darby enters, smiling with hands on hips.)

Darby: – or you’ll what? Dock his wages? Fire him?

Jim: Exactly! Both very good ideas.

Darby: Well, you can’t actually do either can you?

(Jim furrows his brow in frustration attempting to fire a come-back at Darby. After a silent few seconds he grabs the whiskey decanter and pours himself a drink)

Jim: You won't get away with this you know.

Darby: Get away with what? We're building your ship and completing your orders free of charge.

Jim: **(Nearing Darby menacingly)** What are you up to? I had you destined for great things at this yard. My old man told me all about your Father; skilled shipwright apparently. We were looking at moving you up from the yards. You can say goodbye to all that now.

Darby: **(Hesitantly)** Promotion?

Jim: Correct. Now, we can talk about that if you tell me what's going on out there.

Darby: **(Regaining his composure)** Nice is it, that whiskey?

Jim: **(Proudly)** Vintage malt, 1870.

(Jim struts over to the 'window' upstage and stares pensively off-stage)

Darby: Worked all your life to afford that have you?

Jim: What?

Darby: Earned that have you? By working nine-hour outdoor shifts in all weathers six days a week. Or did you inherit it off Daddy?

Jim: **(Approaching Darby)** I don't have to justify myself to you. I work harder than all of you; stressful this management lark. I *need* my cigars and my whiskey. Helps me to make the right decisions, the decisions that put food on your tables. We all have our place in society. I'm smart, which means I don't have to lift, carry, hammer or sweep to earn my living. If it wasn't for people like me you'd *all* be sweeping streets and collecting bins. **(Shaking his head and walking upstage once more)** Bloody beer allowance. **(Threateningly)** I'm the hand that feeds you Darby, and you've taken a great big bite out of it. Now tell me what's going on out there.

Darby: **(Ignoring Jim)** Let's just say you had an important decision to make and you reached for that vintage malt and it wasn't there.

(Darby snatches the decanter. Jim looks on aghast.)

Darby: Let's say you had to set the budgets for the next ship order and you reached for a fresh cigar to find your little silver box empty.

(Darby grabs the cigars from the silver box and stuffs them in his pockets)

Jim: You give them back right now!

(Ed enters and stands between Darby and Jim, forebodingly)

Darby: Let's just say these little perks of the job, just like the beer allowance, were taken away. How would that make you feel?

Jim: **(Manically)** Security!

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Porter: **(Timidly, poking his head in-between the group)** Erm – you fired them all sir, remember?

Ed: **(Threatening)** I'm security now

(Jim looks at Ed nervously and backs off a little)

Jim: You're all fired! I mean – get out!

Darby: We're going back to work now.

Jim: Well, you're not getting paid!

Ed: We know.

(Darby leaves followed by Ed who snorts at Jim before exiting.)

Jim: **(Flustered)** Well – they're even more stupid than they look. They're not getting paid yet they're still working. They can't outsmart me **(desperately)** I'm cleverer and richer than them. Porter?

Porter: Yes sir?

Jim: I'm smarter than them. Why don't I know what they're doing?

Porter: You'll just have to wait and see sir.

(Porter leaves)

Jim: Porter, where are you going?

(Porter exits)

Jim: **(Flustered)** Porter!! **(Pauses)** I need a drink.

(Jim approaches his desk to use the decanter and remembers it has been taken. He then tries to get at the few last drops of whiskey in the glass he's holding by tipping it over his open mouth. He then puts the glass down on the table and begins nervously brushing at his greased hair with his hand.)

Jim: Got to fix this before Dad finds out. He'll go spare. I'm smarter than this!!

(Jim exits nervously. Lights off. Tabs close.)

Scene 3 – Darby’s front room

(Darby and Joan enter front of tabs. Darby is walking whilst reading a Newspaper, not really listening to Joan as she talks. Joan is ahead of Darby, nursing a cup of tea.)

Joan: You know Jeff?

(Darby shakes his head and grunts negatively.)

Joan: Big hair –

Darby: No

Joan: Worked in the factory?

Darby: No

Joan: With Brian?

Darby: Brian?

Joan: You know, big nose, no chin?

Darby: No.

Joan: He used to drink with Arthur?

Darby: Arthur?

Joan: The one with the greyhound, always smelled of chips? Popular as a Haemorrhoid at a sit-in?

(Darby shakes his head)

Joan: He was married to Brenda remember? Used to host the put and take – won the quoits round robin two years ago; always down the mission with Stan after she and Arthur separated?

Darby: Stan?

Joan: You know... Stan? Used to bring the iced buns and the nougat for the Prudhoe Street mission’s Christmas party. We saw him two weeks ago when we went to pay the ticket man down at Wengers.

Darby: **(Puts his Newspaper down)** Oh, that Stan!

Joan: Well, Stan and Brenda –

Darby: Oh, Brenda – yes I know her.

Joan: Brenda and Arthur...

Darby: Yes yes, I’m with you. I know who you mean.

Joan: Right, so Arthur and Brian –

Darby: Brian no chin?

Joan: That's him, worked in the factory with Jeff

Darby: Grainger market Jeff?

Joan: Yes –

Darby: Right. Yes. I've got you. **(Pauses)** What about him?

Joan: Well, you know the woman who used to sit next to him at the club?

(Darby groans in exasperation. There is a knock at the door.)

Joan: That'll be Rita with the condensed milk.

(Darby looks confused as Joan exits stage left. She enters moments later with Geordie and Mr. Adams, a newspaper reporter.)

Joan: Couple of people to see you Darby; they said it's about the shipyard?

Darby: **(Confused)** Shipyard? It's Saturday?

Joan: **(To Geordie)** Would you like a cup of tea?

Geordie: No thanks

Joan: **(To Mr. Adams)** You?

Adams: I'm alright thank you.

Joan: Ok, I'll leave you lot to it then.

(Joan exits)

Geordie: This here is Mr Adams, he's from the *Evening Chronicle* newspaper.

Adams: I just wanted to have a word with you about the work-in at the Shipyard.

Darby: Shhh!! Keep it down, I haven't told the missus about that yet.

Geordie: Really? Good luck mate. Mine gave me a proper *Geordie Coat* when I told her.

Adams: A what?

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Geordie: A telling-off.

Adams: **(Confused)** Right.

Darby: Why do you want to speak with me about the work-in?

Geordie: Well you're the most sensible aren't you? You're like, the spokesman for the lads aren't you? We didn't want Ed doing it did we? He loses his temper and then forgets what he's talking about most of the time.

Darby: Well what about you Geordie? You're as passionate about the work-in as anyone.

Geordie: Well, I'm not so good at words as you.

Darby: Clearly.

(Mr Adams takes out a notebook)

Darby: **(Glancing over his shoulder and whispering)** Look, I can't talk here. What about if we go down the local; down to Norries bar? You can buy us a few pints and we'll give you the whole story.

Adams: No can do. I'm covering the football match this afternoon for the paper. Need to get some action shots of Hughie Gallacher in action. **(Adams taps the lens of the camera around his neck.)**

Geordie: The Newcastle - Sunderland match? It'll be a sell out that.

Adams: It is; you lads not going?

Darby: We can't afford to go seeing as we're working at the yard for nothing until the dispute is settled. We're all living on the lodge fund at the minute and we've no idea how long that will last; we'll have nothing left for the Christmas party at this rate.

Adams: Tell you what, I'll get you both into the match and you can give me the whole story before kick-off. How does that sound?

Geordie: Seriously?

Darby: Sounds great, I'll get my coat.

(Joan enters)

Joan: Everything alright Darby love?

Darby: That's an understatement! Mr. Adams is taking me and Geordie to the match!

Joan: Must have been a good story you gave him, was it?

Darby: What do you mean?

Joan: **(Suspiciously)** Well, you went on strike for a few days and then went back to work and he's giving you free tickets to the match? Not much of a story that.

Darby: **(Hesitantly)** Yes – I'm going to be throwing in a bit of hyperbole.

Joan: A bit of what? You speak to a journalist for a few minutes and you think you've got a degree in English!

Darby: **(Distracted)** Right, yes – see you later love

(Darby ushers Geordie and Mr. Adams from the stage whilst stuffing his arms into a large overcoat. They all exit.)

Joan: **(Sarcastically shouting after Darby)** It's alright, me and little Billy don't want to go to the match or anything. We'll just stay here and play parlour games.

(Joan shakes her head and exits.)

Joan: **(Speaking to Billy off stage whilst exiting)** Billy, get the snakes and ladders out!

(Tabs close.)

Scene 4 – St. James' Park Football Stadium

(The lights rise as Frank and Jim Johnson enter front of tabs. SFX. Football crowd sound plays under the scene to add atmosphere.)

Frank: The most important game of the season this Jim, son. Newcastle United versus Sunderland. Doesn't matter what else happens this season, we can't lose at home to this lot.

Jim: True; and we've got the best seats in the house right up near the press box. I can't wait.

Frank: We've only won one of the last eight against these you know; we're due a big result. We beat Dixie Dean's Everton 7-3 last week and if we win today it's a big step towards winning our fourth league title.

Jim: 60,000 sell out today they reckon.

(Tabs open. Frank and Jim's seats are set on risers centre stage right with cut-outs of fans either side. Further rows of tiered cut-out fans could be placed between these seats and the area upstage left where Darby, Geordie and Mr. Adams will take their places later. Jim and Frank make their way to their seats.)

Frank: **(Checking his watch)** Only five minutes to kick off, we got here just in time. Haven't even got time to grab a pie and a Bovril. You can get them in at half-time eh lad?

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Jim: Will do. Will do.

(Frank and Jim sit down.)

Frank: So Jim, how's things at the shipyard now I'm not around? It's been a couple of months now; thought the place would have been burned to the ground by now, eh?

(Frank laughs heartily and slaps Jim on the back. Jim winces.)

Jim: **(Panicked)** Shipyard? Erm – great. Couldn't be better.

Frank: How are you getting on with that big contract for the Navy? They signed it yet?

Jim: **(Tentative)** Not yet, no. But they will; I'm sure they will. **(Unconvincingly)** Everything is on schedule. Definitely. No problems whatsoever.

Frank: **(Eyeing Jim suspiciously)** You not smoking today? I *never* see you without a big cigar dangling out of your mouth.

Jim: **(Stuttering)** No. Yes – I mean, no. **(suddenly)** I'm giving up! Gone off cigars to be honest with you. Horrible stinky things.

(Jim fidgets desperately and looks sad.)

Frank: **(Suspiciously)** Strange boy. You'll be telling me you've given up Whiskey next. Eh?

(Frank digs Jim in the ribs with an affectionate elbow. Jim chuckles lightly and nervously. Darby, Geordie and Mr. Adams enter upstage.)

Geordie: **(Yelling)** Ha'way the lads!!

Adams: Shush! You're in the press box; we all act respectably up here. There's no ruffians and hooligans up here; and we're supposed to be impartial.

Darby: No chance of that if we score is there? We'll all go mental.

Adams: Please try to contain your excitement, you're my guests remember. I don't want to be thrown out because of you. I could lose my job. Speaking of which, what's this story about Johnson's shipyard?

Darby: Oh that, well, we all went on strike last week - just for a couple of days like. It wasn't an official one, we're not as organised as those boilermaker people.

Adams: I was involved with that actually. Shorter hours and more pay they wanted; reform. Got it as well. I'm a bit of a radical see; it's my view that Newspapers can and will change the world one day. Telling the truth, that's what it's about; I'm all for bringing about reform and getting a fair deal for the working man. **(Stands proud for a moment before remembering the point of his speech)** So, what was the strike about?

Darby: *We* wanted a bit of that reform you mentioned. Proper equipment to protect ourselves, more pay, shorter hours **(Pauses. Hesitantly.)** – and reinstatement of the beer allowance.

Adams: Beer allowance?

Geordie: Aye, you know, the carrot at the end of the stick.

Adams: So what happened after the strike?

Geordie: We were all fired.

Adams: Fired? What, everyone?

Darby: We thought the Gaffer would panic and give us what we wanted. He did the exact opposite and got rid of everyone.

Geordie: Remember the lads at Palmers shipyard when that closed down?

Adams: Yeah, tragic that. They used to just turn up at the locked gates every morning, walking up and down and peering through the fence at the empty yard. Didn't know what to do with themselves.

Darby: They were all skilled as well. Didn't know how to do anything else. Didn't *want* to do anything else. Every time me and Geordie see George down the local all he does is talk about the days he worked at Palmers. Can't let it go.

Geordie: Tragic it is.

Adams: Right, so what did you do?

Darby: We thought of a *different* way to protest. We couldn't strike 'cause we'd all been fired. So we did the opposite – decided to stage a *work-in*.

Adams: Which is what?

Darby: We turn up for work and put in our normal shift.

Geordie: But we're not getting paid.

Darby: We're taking our wages from the lodge fund.

Geordie: We were hoping it would kick up a bit of a fuss, bring attention to the injustice; publicity. Through your newspaper, we could get people to support our cause.

Darby: We could get some of the footballers on-side? Famous people even. Local people – to help pay our wages until we manage to get our jobs back and get a bit of that thing you said –

Adams: Reform?

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Darby: That's it. It's not about leaders or power, it's about going home to your family at the end of a shift and knowing you've provided for them; that you've made a difference.

Geordie: We've got pride in what we do. We can show through your article that we're not work-shy; we want to work, we work as hard as we have to, to make sure our families are fed.

Darby: Look, here come the teams.

(Darby, Geordie, Jim and Frank stand up and applaud.)

Adams: I need to be down at pitch-side, get some pictures. I'll see you at half time; and no trouble you hear?

Darby: **(Singing to the tune of 'John Peel')**

Geordie: **(Singing to the tune of 'John Peel')**

*"Do ye ken Hughie Gallacher the wee Scots lad,
The best centre forward Newcastle ever had,
If he doesn't score a goal then wu'll put him on the dole,
and wu'll send him back to Scotland where he came from."*

(Part way through the song, Adams realises he's not going to get any sense out of Darby and Geordie so he exits stage left checking his camera.)

Frank: **(Nudging Jim)** Look Jim, down there.

(Frank points towards Darby and Geordie. Jim cranes his neck enthusiastically until he realises who Frank is pointing at.)

Jim: **(Stage Whisper)** Great, that's all I need.

Frank: What's that lad?

Jim: **(Indignantly)** Nothing Dad, nothing.

Frank: Look, it's that Danny and George from the yard.

Jim: **(Grimacing)** Yes, so it is.

(They all sit and stare out into the audience as if watching the football match. They make gestures from time to time to imply exciting and tense moments on the pitch.)

Frank: What are they doing in the press box?

(Jim shrugs, his face is painted with anger.)

Geordie: **(Yelling)** Ha'way the lads!

Darby: Shush Geordie, man. You'll get us thrown out!

Geordie: I can't help it. It's Newcastle-Sunderland isn't it?

(Darby shrugs in agreement then turns to inspect the stadium behind him. He notices Jim and Frank.)

Darby: **(Nudging Geordie)** Geordie.

(Geordie ignores Darby, fixated on events on the pitch)

Geordie: **(Yelling)** Cross it!! Cross it!! Shoot!! **(In disappointment)** Argh!!

Darby: **(Elbowing Geordie)** Geordie.

Geordie: What? Did you see that? Inches wide that was.

Darby: Don't look now but Jim and Frank Johnson are right behind us.

Geordie: **(Turning round immediately)** Where?

Darby: **(Grabbing Geordie's lapel)** I said don't look.

Geordie: Well they're both Newcastle fans. They were bound to be here.

Darby: Now's our chance.

Geordie: What do you mean? **(Yelling)** Shoot!! Yes!!

(SFX. Crowd cheering. They all stand up and cheer, waving their scarves and twirling their rattles.)

Geordie: Hughie! One nil! Get in!

(They all calm down and return to their seats)

Darby: Never mind that, Frank Johnson's here. I bumped into him at the Hoppings fair but we were just on strike at the time. I didn't want to bother him with the beer allowance thing. Didn't think he'd understand.

Geordie: What you getting at?

Darby: Well it's out of hand now isn't it? I'll bet you Jim hasn't told him what's happening at the yard. He'll be livid.

Geordie: Aye, probably. You going to have a word with him?

Darby: I'll have to wait 'til he's on his own. I can't have Jim butting in, questioning our story.

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

(SFX. A referee's whistle blows. They all stand up and applaud.)

Frank: That's it. Half time, the title's as good as ours now lad.

Jim: It's only one nil you know.

Frank: Have a bit of faith lad. You getting the *Bovrils* in then?

Jim: Eh?

Frank: Go on, two *Bovrils* and two pies. There's a good lad.

(Jim nods in agreement and exits.)

Darby: **(Watching Jim leave)** Now's my chance.

(Darby makes his way up to where Frank is sitting. They talk silently. Adams enters.)

Adams: Got some good photographs there.

Geordie: Did you get one of the goal going in?

Adams: Of course. Never miss a Newcastle goal me. **(Looking around)** Where's your mate gone?

Geordie: He's gone to have a word with old man Johnson **(he points down stage)**, reckon he needs to know what's happening. If he wasn't in a public place I reckon he'd explode.

(Darby makes his way back down towards Geordie and Adams. They chat

silently. Jim enters carrying two cups and two pies. He sits next to Frank, handing him a cup and a pie. Adams waves to Geordie and Darby then exits, back off to photograph the game. Geordie and Darby take their seats and stare out into the audience as if watching the game, reacting to events on the pitch and talking silently.)

Frank: Everything alright at the ship yard then?

Jim: **(Suspiciously)** Yeah. You asked me that earlier.

Frank: No **(pauses)** strikes or anything I should know about?

Jim: No.

Frank: There is isn't there?

Jim: Everything's fine. The lads are all turning up for work as usual. All the orders are being met -

Frank: **(Interrupting)** What would happen Jim, if – say – you were cycling to work one morning and the wheels fell off your bike.

Jim: **(Looks confused)** I'd fall off and probably smash my teeth on the road. What's your point.

Frank: - and you wouldn't get to where you were going would you?

Jim: Obviously.

Frank: If the shipyard was a bicycle, which part would be the wheels do you think?

Jim: Eh?

Frank: Just play along son, I'm making a point.

Jim: What was the question?

Frank: If the shipyard was a bicycle, which part of it would be the wheels?

Jim: **(Shrugging)** The cranes?

Frank: The work force Jim. The part that keeps the yard ticking over, producing day after day. Have you any idea how to keep a workforce happy?

Jim: Happy? They're at work, what the bloody hell do they need to be happy for?

Frank: By paying them what they're worth and slipping them the odd bonus to keep their spirits up. So simple, you'd probably never thought of it.

Jim: What are you getting at Dad?

Frank: Look at the lads out here on the football field. Do you think the bloke in charge stands over them at half-time, pointing a laughing at them or do you think they all work together; in it together to get the job done? Don't you think Hughie deserves his ten bob goal bonus if we win today? Do you think anyone begrudges him that for

putting a shift in and being the difference between winning and losing?

Jim: He's just doing his job. What's he want a bloody bonus for – he's getting paid isn't he?

Frank: On Monday morning, the shipyard that I spent most of my life building from scratch is going to be dragged through the mud by that bloke down there.

(Jim strains to see who Frank is pointing at)

Frank: They're calling it a work-in.

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Jim: **(Defiant)** They'll all come crawling back to their jobs. As soon as their stupid game, whatever it is, is over.

Frank: They're working for nothing because they've got pride in their work, they're proud of who they are, they have a duty to provide for their families. Just like I did when I was young. *We* used to live in Sandhills Jim; *we* came from nothing. Your Mother, now she was a real grafter - earned her own way; knows the true value of money. She left school and worked at the woodbine laundry collection and delivery service scrubbing collars before going to work at Jackson's lemonade factory.

Jim: **(Humbly)** I never knew that.

Frank: Do you know those blind-back houses along the Ouseburn?

Jim: You mean the terraced hovels with the rubbish heap behind them?

Frank: Why do you think people live there? With rubbish and rats as neighbours?

Jim: The same reason that rats live by the river. It's their natural habitat.

Frank: Most of your men live down there Jim.

Jim: **(Pointing at Geordie and Darby)** Those two both live down there.

Frank: None of those houses have back windows or doors. Do you know why?

Jim: To keep the smell inside?

Frank: To save them the indignity of looking out onto a towering industrial waste heap! The planners thought it better to let people live in filthy conditions, depriving the tenants of back windows and a back yard rather than move the waste heap somewhere else.

Jim: Aye, but you were better than them. You got out of there. You made something of yourself.

Frank: No, I'm exactly the same as them. I was always one of them and always will be. Once their lodge fund runs out they'll have nothing, no pay, no job, no future; because of you.

Jim: It'll all work out –

Frank: Once that story's printed in that newspaper, how many people are going to be placing new contracts with you, eh? Who would place a contract with a shipyard that doesn't pay its staff? With an employer who thinks he's too bloody high and mighty to eat humble pie and listen to the working man for once.

Jim: Look, you signed the shipyard over to me - it's mine. I'll run it the way I know it should be run. Me at the top and the plebs running about down there with their stinking clothes and filthy faces. Anyway, I can't just give them their jobs back; they've lost all respect for me as it is. They'll just use that and walk all over me, they'll think I'm a push over.

(Jim pats his pockets looking for something)

Frank: What are you looking for?

Jim: **(Beating a fist on his leg)** Damn!

Frank: What is it?

Jim: I forgot, they took my cigars didn't they?

Frank: Thought you said you'd given up?

Jim: **(Realising)** Oh – no, they took my cigars and whiskey. I haven't been able to function this week without them.

Frank: Getting their own back eh?

Jim: How do you mean?

Frank: You took away their beer allowance and you've spent the last half an hour bleating about how they should be grateful to have jobs and how the allowance is a luxury, a benefit they're not entitled to. I bet you like to pour yourself a glass of bourbon at about 11am and stare out of the office window with a self satisfied grin?

Jim: **(Tentatively)** Yes, gets me through the day. That and my 2pm cigar. It's stressful my job you know.

Frank: I *do* know – I did it for thirty years lad and never once did I have any of the lads knocking on my door with an angry fist, stealing from my office. I don't doubt you work hard son but you also allow yourself a little luxury to get by – just like those men down there, and you went took it away from them. Don't you get why they're annoyed? Don't you get why they've done what they've done?

(Jim thinks for a moment with an expression which suggests he agrees with Frank. However, he defiantly gets to his feet and grabs his coat.)

Jim: You don't understand.

(Jim exits indignantly. Frank shakes his head disappointedly. SFX. Crowd cheering at the end of the match. Frank, Darby and Geordie stand up and applaud. Adams enters and starts stage whispering to Darby and Geordie. Frank notices them talking and makes his way from his seat to where they're

standing upstage.)

Frank: **(Extending a hand)** Frank Johnson.

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Adams: **(Tentative)** Adams, Gary Adams.

Frank: **(In admiration)** Gary Adams? You're the one who stirred up all that stuff about the boilermakers strike?

Adams: Yes, that's me.

Frank: Good man. It's good to see a paper like yours, telling it how it is and making a stand for the working man.

(Darby and Geordie look at one another cautiously)

Frank: **(Gesturing towards Darby)** Dudley here told me you're writing a piece about the troubles at the shipyard?

Adams: I am. It's terrible the way those men have been treated.

Frank: I completely agree.

Adams: You do?

Frank: I absolutely agree. Now Mr. Adams, I need you to do me a favour.

Adams: A favour?

Frank: If I told you it would ensure these men got their jobs back and Johnson's shipyard remained open and operational – the very heart beat of the Sandhills area – would you help?

(Adams looks to Darby and Geordie who widen their eyes and nod, desperately.)

Adams: Of course, if I can.

Frank: Good man. Let me buy you a drink in *The Strawberry* pub and I'll tell you what I've got in mind.

Scene 5 – The Back Steps

(Joan enters through the curtains and stands front of tabs. She addresses the audience as if a neighbour over the back wall.)

Joan: Morning, your George's measles have cleared up I see – off to school this morning is he? **(Shouting off stage)** Billy, hurry up – you'll be late for school!

(Billy enters through the curtains, pulling a grey jumper over his head. Joan pats the hair down on Billy's head.)

Joan: Would it hurt to drag a brush across this once in a while? **(To audience)** I don't know, kids eh? **(To Billy)** Go on, you can walk to school with George this morning.

Billy: **(Sadly)** Yes mam.

Joan: Where's your books and your bag?

Billy: **(Showing her his satchel which is on his back)** Here mam.

Joan: Right, off you go then; see you at lunch time.

(Billy trudges off stage, waving languidly at Joan as he exits.)

Joan: **(To audience)** He'll be a Scientist that one. Bright for his age he is. **(Listens)** What's that? Ok, when I'll let you get on, see you later.

(Darby enters through the tabs.)

Darby: Right, I'm off to work then.

Joan: You're late aren't you? Doesn't your shift start at eight on a Monday?

Darby: Ah, I've been meaning to tell you about that actually.

Joan: Tell me about what – actually?

Darby: Well, you know how we had that 'bit of a strike' a few weeks ago and then we all went back to work?

Joan: **(Suspiciously)** Yes?

Darby: Well, we didn't *actually* go back to work.

Joan: What do you mean?

Darby: Well, we went back but **(hesitantly)** we haven't been getting paid as such.

Joan: I don't understand.

Darby: We've been doing a work-in – it's like a strike but the other way round and we've been getting paid from the lodge fund.

Joan: The lodge - ? **(Panics)** That's for our trip to Scarborough in the summer!

Darby: (Confused) Erm – yeah, but the main issue I think is that we’re not getting paid.

Joan: (Composing herself) Right, yes.

Darby: Thing is, the work-in hasn’t really worked like we thought it would. Jim Johnson is as stubborn as ever and there’s no way he’ll offer us our jobs back now – he’s too proud.

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Joan: What are we going to do if there’s no money coming in?

Darby: Well, we saw Old Man Johnson at the match on Saturday and he’s come up with a plan which will not only get us our jobs back but it’ll teach Jim Johnson a lesson he’ll never forget.

Joan: Well what *is* this plan?

Darby: I can’t tell you right now but if it works, I could make foreman and you won’t have to worry about a lodge fund for our trip to Scarborough this year!

Joan: Really? Well, it better work – you know I’ve already picked my outfit for that trip?

Darby: Eh? We’re not due to go for three months.

Joan: (Pushing at the rollers in her hair in a preening manner) You have to plan these things. Now get going, you’ll be late.

(Darby pecks Joan on the cheek and waves his goodbyes.)

Darby: See you tonight love.

(Darby exits.)

Joan: Foreman! I can’t *wait* to see her face next door!

(Joan exits excitedly through the tabs. Lights off.)

Scene 6 – Management office

(Tabs open to Jim pacing back and forth in his office, grumbling to himself desperately.)

Jim: (Blasé) Their money will run out and they'll have no choice. They'll *have* to plead for their jobs back and I'll tell them they can only come back if they take a cut in pay. (Pauses to think) I'll have to wait for them to make the first move though – I can't just *give* them their jobs back – I can't. That would give them the power. Next time they want something they'll just walk out again. (Pauses to think, losing his air of self-confidence) I should ring my Dad, he'll know what to do.

(Jim picks up the receiver of the telephone on his desk, puts it to his ear and dials the first number. He pauses and then replaces the receiver.)

Jim: No, I can work this out on my own. I just need to think. I need to wait – and think.

(There is a knock at the door. Porter enters without being invited.)

Porter: Sir, there's a man here to see you.

Jim: (Irritated and distracted) Who is it? I'm busy thinking.

(Adams enters, dressed as an Admiral with a large false moustache.)

Adams: (Boisterously) Stand tall man!

(Jim stands up straight with fright.)

Adams: Admiral Ferdinand, Royal Navy (he salutes).

Jim: (Taken aback) Erm – Jim Johnson – Johnson's... erm... shipyard – manager.

(Jim half salutes, unsure of the etiquette. Adams shakes Jim's hand exuberantly.)

Adams: (Pacing authoritatively) As you know, you submitted a tender to build the HMS Newcastle here at Johnson's shipyard.

Jim: (Excited) Oh yes! (He grabs four long tubes of rolled up paper from a desk downstage) We've drawn up the lines plan, the hydrostatic curve plan, the capacity plan and the docking plan. (He places the rolled up tubes of paper onto his desk frantically.)

Adams: And the Budgets?

Jim: (Confused) As in the tender.

Adams: (Unsure) Yes, I knew that. Just testing. Well, I'm here to tell you that we will (pauses for effect and leans slowly towards Jim) *not* be offering you the contract.

Jim: What? Why not? The plans are excellent. You'll not get a better build anywhere else, the budgets are watertight.

Adams: Because, Mr Johnson, you are an absolute disaster of a man.

(Porter sniggers. Jim glares at Porter menacingly.)

Jim: I don't understand –

(Adams takes a newspaper out of his blazer, unfolds it and holds it up, slapping the front cover with the back of his hand. The headline is 'Shipyard owner ignores welfare protest'.)

Adams: You treat your workforce like zoo animals Sir.

Jim: **(Stuttering)** I don't – ?

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blue-performance

Adams: I've been having a turn about your yard this morning. There's very little in the way of safety measures. A man burnt himself on a hot rivet – does that sound normal to you? **(He does not wait for an answer)** Some of the men told me they work all day with just a half-hour lunch break. On top of that, you don't care Mr. Johnson and according to this newspaper report they're not even getting paid. Hmm?

(Adams leans in towards Jim once more, wagging his moustache side to side and glaring at him.)

Jim: But – they're still working. **(Pointing off stage as if out of the window)** Imagine how much better that tender will look when I subtract the wages from the estimate.

Adams: You're a mess of a human being Mr. Johnson. Not fit to run a bath. I feel ashamed to know you. This wouldn't have happened under Queen Victoria. Unless you sort this mess out I'd wager you'll be out of business in a week. Nobody will be placing their ship orders with a yard that is run by a madman with no contracted staff; I'll see to it that they don't. Hmm?

(Adams again leans towards Jim, narrowing his eyes and scowling for a moment before Jim attempts to counter his argument.)

Jim: I –

Adams: **(Interrupting)** Good day!

(Adams throws the newspaper onto the desk and exits grumpily, doffing his cap to Porter as he leaves.)

Jim: **(To Porter)** What are you looking at?

Porter: Now that the navy order is lost, everything will have to be sold off and they'll probably use the yard for something else.

(Jim, looking told off, picks up the newspaper and stares at the front page.)

Porter: You've lost your father's business *and* your livelihood, not to mention those of the hundreds of men out there. The lodge fund is almost gone too. I'll see you down the

employment exchange tomorrow with the rest of the lads Mr. Johnson.

(Porter leaves. Jim sits at his desk looking deflated.)

Jim: **(Ruefully)** That's it. I've lost everything. Nobody will order with us again. I've been so pig-headed; so stupid. He's right – I'm a disaster of a man.

(There is a knock on the door. Frank enters.)

Frank: Talking to yourself already I see?

Jim: **(Jumping from his seat. Happily)** Dad! Am I pleased to see you.

Frank: Really? I didn't think you'd be speaking to me after that conversation we had at the match the other day.

Jim: **(Desperately)** You were right – you were completely right about everything.

Frank: **(Suspiciously)** Why the sudden turn around?

Jim: There was a man from the Navy here this morning and he's rejected our tender to build HMS Newcastle. That would have set us up for the next few years at least – and there's this. **(Jim shows Frank the newspaper)** You warned me about this.

(Frank takes the newspaper from Jim.)

Frank: That's it then. You've managed to bring the product of thirty years hard work to an end in two months.

Jim: **(Desperate)** No. You can fix it. Can't you?

Frank: Me?

Jim: Yes. You can do something, can't you?

Frank: **(Thinks for a while)** Probably. It seems to me that you've learned some kind of lesson here at least.

Jim: I have. I really have.

Frank: Ok then, I'll bail you out; but to do so, the shipyard will have to be seen to be under new management – at least, management that has traditionally done a good job.

Jim: What do you propose to do?

Frank: I'll buy the shipyard off you.

Jim: Buy it?

(Frank nods and smiles)

Jim: **(Hesitantly)** Ok, but I'll still work for you, yes?

Frank: Of course, you're my son. I wouldn't just throw you out on the street you know, even

if you have just about destroyed the business I spent most of my life building from scratch. Of course I'll still employ you.

(Frank smiles again, Jim attempts to smile back, managing only a grimace.)

Jim: How much for the yard then?

Frank: **(Coldly)** A penny.

Jim: A penny? It's worth much more –

Frank: **(Angrily)** A shipyard with no workforce and no orders?

Jim: Alright, but I'll definitely still work for you won't I?

Frank: Son, I'll make sure you've still got a job here. You have my word. Deal?

(Frank holds out his hand. Jim gazes at it, considering his options and realising there is just the one option. Jim shakes Frank's hand reluctantly.)

Frank: Excellent. Well, I'll go and sort out the paperwork and I'll be back this afternoon to finalise the deal.

(Jim smiles gingerly. Frank exits, smiling broadly. Jim sits at his desk and flops back in the chair, reading the front of the newspaper once more. Tabs close. Geordie, Darby, Ed and Adams, still dressed as the Admiral, enter front of tabs, stage left. Frank enters stage right.)

Darby: Well? Did it work?

Frank: Like a dream my man.

(Geordie, Darby and Ed celebrate mutedly)

Frank: Back to work now lads until it's announced officially. Then we can get things back to normal.

(Adams removes his hat and moustache. Frank shakes his hand.)

Frank: Thanks for your help Mr. Adams; and that mocked up newspaper was brilliant, very convincing. You've made a huge difference to these men's lives.

Adams: Glad to help Mr. Johnson. If you need me again, you know where I am.

(Adams leaves, waving his goodbyes to the men.)

Darby: Come on lads, back to work.

(They all exit. Lights off.)

Scene 7 - Shipyard

(Tabs remain closed and lights off as the introduction to the song 'Build a ship' plays. The painting 'Launch Day' is projected onto a screen. Lights rise; Darby enters stage right as he sings his line and then takes a position stage left.)

(Song 6. Build a Ship)

Darby: We'll build the ship

(Geordie enters as he sings his line and stands left of centre.)

Geordie: Back to the yard

(Ed enters as he delivers his line and stands right of centre.)

Ed: With sweat and tears

(Porter enters as he delivers his line and stands stage right.)

Porter: With firm regard

Darby: Our moral code remains unharmed

Geordie: The autocrat now stands unarmed

All: We'll build the ship, to launch from plan
The ballad of the working man

Ed: Our pride returned
Agreements met

© *Scripts for Stage*

This script must not be copied, printed or performed without the permission of Scripts for Stage. Copying and performance licences can be obtained from scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/blood-performance

Porter: Reform will come
Lest we forget

All: We saved the future of
Three thousand men
Through solidarity
We stand again

(Tabs open and the men pick up their tools. They begin to use them as they sing.)

We'll build the ships
To launch from plan
The ballad of
The working man

We'll build the ships
To launch from plan

The ballad of
The working man

(Frank enters wearing a fine suit, a stately hat on his head and large unlit cigar in his mouth. He stands upstage centre.)

Frank: They'll build the ships
For just reward
No more concerns
Their pride restored

All: We'll build the ships
To launch from plan
The ballad of
The working man

We'll build the ships
To launch from plan
The ballad of
The working man

(End of song. Frank shakes the men by the hand exuberantly one by one. Jim enters dressed similarly to Frank.)

Jim: **(Genuinely)** I'm pleased to see everything back to normal. **(Waving coyly, almost embarrassedly at Darby)** Hello.

Darby: **(With disdain)** Alright?

Jim: Right, well I'll go and sort out the account books.

(Jim motions to leave.)

Frank: Er – Jim.

Jim: Yes?

Frank: Where are you going?

Jim: **(Meekly)** Just off up the office – sort out that paperwork.

Frank: That won't be necessary.

Jim: No?

Frank: No. I promised you'd still have a job here. I didn't say it would be one in a cosy office.

Jim: **(Submissively)** Right – so what will I be doing then? Loftsmen?

Frank: **(Fetching a large coat, flat cap and hammer from downstage)** Labourer; put these on.

Jim: But I'm too –

Frank: Too what? Clever?

Jim: No actually. If I've learned anything from this it's that these men know a lot more about real life than I ever will. I was going to say I'm too unfit. Look at me **(sticking his rotund stomach out)** I'll be flat on my back in ten minutes.

(Jim takes the coat and puts it on. He then dons the flat cap and takes the hammer. Geordie, Ed and Darby chuckle as Jim struggles to lift the hammer.)

Frank: Porter,

Porter: Yes sir?

Frank: You'll be doing Jim's old job. Darby –

Darby: Sir?

Frank: Come and spend the day with Porter here – he'll help you settle into your new job as Foreman.

(Ed and Geordie shake Darby's hand and slap him on the back.)

Darby: **(Doffing his cap)** Thank you sir.

Jim: **(Ruefully)** I know you men work hard and I *deserve* to be laboring with you after what I did. I was wrong to treat you with such contempt. I'm one of *you* now – I'll *try* to work as hard as you do – I'll be happy to earn my wage; the way you do.

(Jim struggles with the hammer and eventually manages to swing it above his head and bring it down on an anvil with a clang. Ed taps Jim on the shoulder. Jim turns round looking scared. Ed glowers at him for a moment before offering his hand to shake.)

Ed: Welcome to the team.

(Jim shakes Ed's hand gratefully.)

Jim: I understand the importance of the beer allowance now. I wouldn't mind getting my hands on a bit of that actually, Dad.

Frank: Everyone who puts in a shift and exceeds their quota gets the beer allowance son. It's up to you.

Jim: Well lads, what are we waiting for?

(Jim swings the hammer down on the anvil once more with a struggle. He sings acapella whilst hammering, struggling for breath and without really knowing the words or tune to the song 'lewanche of beer'.)

Jim: The 'lewanche of beer
The 'lewanche of beer
We all want our 'lewanche of beer

(Jim stops, takes his cap off and wipes his brow with the back of his hand. Ed

takes the hammer from him and swings it down on the anvil with ease.)

Ed: (Singing loudly and powerfully, without music)
Our tonsils they yearn, through our hard work we earn
To cash in our 'lewance of beer

(Song 7 – 'Lewance of beer (reprise) begins as Ed sings his last note.)

All: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
Darby: The end of the month getting near
All: Our tonsils they yearn, through our hard work we earn
To cash-in our 'lewance of beer

Geordie: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
The landlord will give out a cheer
All: Us workers will fill the Norries bar till
With our entire 'lewance of beer

Ed: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
Let no other man interfere
All: We stand at the bar then we say 'au revoir'
To our entire 'lewance of beer

Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
We know it will soon disappear
Still in heavy coats we will throw down our throats
Our entire 'lewance of beer

All: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
Jim: The end of the month getting near
All: Our tonsils they yearn, through our hard work we earn
To cash-in our 'lewance of beer

Geordie: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
The landlord will give out a cheer
All: Us workers will fill the Norries bar till
With our entire 'lewance of beer

Ed: Our 'lewance of beer, Our 'lewance of beer
Let no other man interfere
All: We stand at the bar then we say 'au revoir'
To our entire 'lewance of beer

(The cast stand in a triumphant pose until the music ends. Tabs Close. Walk down to the instrumental of Song 6, 'Build a ship'. Everyone exits one by one and the last two to leave are Darby and Joan. Lights off.)

THE END