

## **Characters**

- Narrator (M/F)** - Ageless. This actor appears in voice only.
- Catherine (F)** - Nigel's wife. 25-40. Sprightly, active and matter of fact.
- Nigel (M)** - Catherine's husband. 25-40. A worrier. Will wear cat makeup.
- Sheila (F)** - David's wife. 40-60. Easy-going middle-aged housewife.
- David (M)** - Sheila's husband. 40-60. Amiable working man with a short fuse.
- Mum (F)** - Catherine's mum. 60+ A little cuckoo.
- Postman (M/F)** - Ageless. He delivers mail.
- Steven (M)** - David and Sheila's son; RAF fighter pilot. 20-30. A caricature.
- Delivery Man (M/F)** - Ageless. Could be doubled with the postman.
- Billy (M)** - Catherine's brother; Professional carnival clown, bozo style. 25-40.

## Scene 1 – Milton Lounge

**(Time: The present, a Saturday morning in April. Place: The residential suburbs of a coastal fishing town somewhere in Southern England.)**

**Narrator:** Welcome everybody. I am the Narrator, and I should like to tell you a tale. It is an extraordinary story about ordinary people and it takes place not very long ago in a place not very far away. There are two houses in James Crescent, a middle class coastal suburban estate. Actually, there are many more than two houses in James Crescent, but it is two houses in particular, numbers 19 and 21 on which we are focusing today. Number 19: Home of Nigel and Catherine Milton. An unremarkable couple. He is a sales executive for... something or other. She is an IT technician for... I forget whom... It's not important. They have been married for six years. Nigel enjoys table tennis, walks in the park and maintaining a small stamp collection. Catherine enjoys surfing, poetry and collecting quirky old technology. Let's pay them a visit...

**(Curtain up. Lights up on Milton lounge. Catherine discovered on, sitting frozen in the Milton lounge. She is reading a book.)**

**Catherine:** **(Reading and clearly trying to memorise what she is reading)**

There's a one-eyed yellow idol to the north of Khatmandu,  
There's a little marble cross below the town;  
There's a broken-hearted woman tends the grave of Mad Carew,  
And the Yellow God forever gazes down.

He was known as 'Mad Carew by the subs at Khatmandu....

**Nigel:** **(Offstage Right, apprehensively)** Catherine, darling?

**Catherine:** Yes, love?

**Nigel:** You remember that feral cat we met in the park the other day?

**Catherine:** The one that scratched you when you tried to pet it?

**Nigel:** That's the one.

**Catherine:** What about it?

**Nigel:** Well, I'm not entirely convinced it was a normal cat...

**(Nigel enters Upstage Right. Nigel looks like a humanoid cat. Werecat. Catfolk. Think 'Avatar' in casual clothes.)**

**Catherine:** **(After a pause and with less surprise than expected)** Oh!

**Nigel:** 'Oh?' Is that all you can say? 'Oh?'

**Catherine:** What should I say?

**Nigel:** Well. You could scream, or look shocked, or panic, or something.

**Catherine:** Would it help, darling?

**Nigel:** (Thinks) No, I don't think so.

**Catherine:** Then why should I bother?

**Nigel:** You must have something to say!

**Catherine:** (thoughtfully) Well.. it looks to me like you've become a werecat. I thought it was odd when that scratch healed up in ten seconds flat.

**Nigel:** A meerkat?

**Catherine:** No. Meerkats are those funny little fellows who bob up and down in the Savannah and advertise something I've forgotten on TV. I said 'were-cat'. Like a were-wolf, but a cat. A man who turns into a cat under the full moon.

**Nigel:** A man who....?!? I hate to pour cold water on what is, I'm sure, an otherwise exemplary theory, darling, but it's... (looks at watch).. three fifteen in the afternoon and the sun is shining down on us doing a phenomenally bad impersonation of the sodding moon!

**Catherine:** Yes, that is rather odd!

**Nigel:** Really? *That's* the odd part? *That's* what you're taking away from this? Darling, I'm turning into a bloody cat! Just look at meee....ooow! Crap!

**Catherine:** (cheerfully) Well, never mind. We'll be Cat and the cat!

**Nigel:** That is utterly pathetic! And you're just taking the piss.

**Catherine:** Little bit. Now I'm sorry, darling but it's the poetry reading next weekend and I'd really like to be able to do this one from memory. (She returns to her book.) There's a one-eyed yellow idol to the North....

**Nigel:** (on the verge of panic) Never mind about the fucking yellow idol! What are we going to do?

**Catherine:** Do? What should we do? What *can* we do? It's probably not the sort of thing we can pop down to Dr Patel with. 'Got any pills for this one, Doc?' No, I'm no cytogeneticist but I would guess, if it's not a cat-based lycanthropy, the scratch must have caused your recombinant DNA to interact with the unstable alleles of that feral specimen and provoke a spontaneous mutation in your base pairs at a cellular level turning you into a heteromorphic *homo sapiens cum felis catus* life form.

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**Nigel:** You've been reading too much Stephen King!

**Catherine:** Actually, it reminds me more of Red Dwarf. But, I shouldn't worry about it, it might go away again. And if not, well, it might be quite fun.

**Nigel:** Fun? That's a meaning of the word 'fun' of which I was previously unaware!

**Catherine:** **(with sudden realisation)** Hey! Maybe Billy could get you a job at the carnival?

**Nigel:** I've already got a job! Although, admittedly, it's hard to see my clients taking me seriously looking like this! And you know what I think of your brother..!

**Catherine:** He's a bit of a clown, I know.

**Nigel:** No darling, he's not a *bit* of a clown. He *is* a clown. A clown with Miggins' carnival. He travels from town to town in oversized shoes, ginger wig, white face paint and big red nose! He drives a collapsible car for a living, for Christ's sake!

**Catherine:** And if he spoke to Drew Miggins maybe you could moonlight as 'The Amazing Human Cat'?

**(Lights on Milton lounge fade to black throughout the following dialogue.)**

**Nigel:** Bloody Hell! This is just a big joke to you, isn't it. I've a good mind to ask Billy anyway just to get out of here for a while!

**Catherine:** Oh, put your claws away and sit down **(she chuckles)**.

**Nigel:** **(astonished and hurt)** I. Can't. Believe. You just said that...

**(Nigel storms out Upstage Right.)**

**Catherine:** **(sighs, then quietly to herself)** Great! **(loudly after Nigel)** Now, don't be like that, darling. We can work something out...

**(She goes off after Nigel as she is speaking. Blackout.)**

**Narrator:** Oops! Domestic. So, let's leave those two cat-erwauling their cat-alogue of cat-astrophy and move next door to meet some of our other players. **(Lights up on Hayes lounge.)** Number 21: Very recent home of David and Sheila Hayes. Another unremarkable couple. I have no idea of their professions or interests because they haven't been living here long enough for me to find out. In fact, they moved in yesterday. Which is why the house is still in a bit of a mess.

## Scene 2 – Hayes Lounge

**(Sheila enters Upstage Left carrying a few knick-knacks and starts thoughtfully placing them about the room. SFX: front door opening and closing and then a loud crash as of a box of tools being dropped.)**

**David:** (offstage) *Bollocks!*

**Sheila:** David? Are you alright?

**David:** Yeah. Just fell over another of these bloody boxes. For about the fiftieth time. Don't worry, nothing broken. Stubbed my toe, though.

**Sheila:** Take a break, love. We've both done enough for today. Let's have a cup of tea.

**(David enters Upstage Left.)**

**David:** I think just a little sit down will do just as well.

**(He sits. Gets out a pipe or some other business.)**

**David:** Smells a bit like Grimsby out there today.

**Sheila:** Well, we're only a few hundred yards from the docks.

**David:** Don't remember that smell when we viewed the place.

**Sheila:** I expect the wind is blowing in from the sea today. The estate agent did mention it, to be fair. She said we might get a whiff of fish on a delivery day if the wind carries it in.

**David:** (in a bad Geordie accent) Well I think today is when the bo'ot cumms in.

**Sheila:** So wise not to attempt the accent, dear. Does it bother you?

**David:** Well it's not very nice but I'll learn to live with it. Probably why the house was such a good price.

**(Pause. We should get the impression they are very familiar with each other's company, as a long-married couple.)**

**Sheila:** Ooo! I almost forgot. Guess what arrived while you were out?

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**David:** The rest of the furniture?

**Sheila:** That's next week. No. The cart!

**David:** Cart?

**Sheila:** All the way from Oman.

**David:** Blimey! You're kidding. Truth be told, I was half expecting it not to turn up at all.

**Sheila:** Me too, but lo and behold, here it is. The very week the chap said.

**David:** For a back street carpenter, seems like he's got a good business head.

**Sheila:** Go and have a look. It's on the patio.

**(They both go and gaze out of the back window.)**

**Sheila:** There. Isn't it gorgeous? I fell in love with it when I saw it in front of his shack. Look at the craftsmanship. As it's Spring I'll plant some flowers in it and by Summer it'll make a lovely centre piece to the garden.

**David:** I have to say I was sceptical when he said he'd send it to England. Seems like he was a genuine fellow, though. Glad we took the risk. It's a very attractive thing and a nice piece of holiday memorabilia.

**Sheila:** Isn't it?

**(They return to their seats.)**

**David:** Speaking of memorabilia. Have you come across my trophy?

**Sheila:** **(sighing indulgently)** Yes. It's in the blue crate in the hallway. I saw it this morning.

**David:** Ah. That's a relief. Wouldn't want to lose it!

**(David exits Upstage Left and returns shortly with the Crown Plaque.)**

**David:** **(triumphantly)** Found it!

**Sheila:** **(carefully)** About that. I know it means a lot to you but since we've got a chance to start our decoration from scratch can we not have it in the centre of the room?

**David:** What's wrong with it?

**Sheila:** Really? A bit of tin shaped like a crown with 'David Hayes - The Lying King' engraved on it? It is a bit...

**David:** Naff? I know. It's naff and it's tat. Tatty tat, even. But I hardly ever win anything and coming first in the Shaggy Dog competition at the Rotary Club was an achievement for me. Also it reminds me of home...**(a beat as he realises what he's said)**... I.. I mean 'then'. It reminds me of then.

**Sheila:** David, love. You did want to move didn't you?

**David:** **(hesitantly)** Yes. **(then more certainly)** Yes! Yes, of course. It was time to downsize a bit, now that the kids have moved on.

**Sheila:** Good. Because it's a little late now anyway.

**(They both laugh, a little nervously.)**

**Sheila:** Listen! Here's an idea. Why don't you put the trophy up on the wall outside the front door? Beside the bell. At least for now. It's got your name on it so it would sort of act as a name plate for who lives here. And the terrible little joke may act as a talking point for new visitors.

**David:** That's not a bad idea. It can actually be useful, then. I'll go and do that now before I forget. Seen any hammers or nails yet? Ooo wait, actually, as it happens, I think they might have been in that box I just dropped.

**(David exits Upstage Left then during Sheila's following lines emerges through the front door with a hammer and nail and the Crown Plaque. He hangs it on the pre-set hook and silently mimes hammering it in place. Then exits through the door. Sheila wanders back over to the window and looks out.)**

**Sheila:** Yes. It's going to be a lovely garden in Summer. I think I shall enjoy living here. **(Pause)** Even if it does occasionally reek of codfish.

**(Sheila exits Upstage Left. Blackout.)**

**Narrator:** Well. They seem like a nice couple. A bit stressed by moving house but otherwise well grounded. Relaxed. The same cannot currently be said for those at Number 19.

### Scene 3 – Milton Hallway

**(Mum enters Upstage Right into hallway during Blackout.)**

**Narrator:** Speaking of which here's someone we haven't met before.

**(Lights up on Milton Hallway.)**

**Narrator:** Mum. I don't know her name because everyone just calls her 'Mum'. She's Catherine's mother and has been living with Nigel and Catherine ever since her husband died a few years ago.

**(Mum starts sniffing the air in a puzzled manner and looking about herself. Postman enters from auditorium with an Amazon parcel, goes up to the Milton door.)**

**Narrator:** And this fellow? Well he's the postman, obviously. I think his name is Brian, but I'm not absolutely sure.

**(Postman rings the bell. SFX: An absurdly loud 'Bing-Bong' doorbell goes off. Mum gives a little shriek and a start and scowls at the door.)**

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**Mum:** Now who could that be?

**(Postman rings again. SFX: Another absurdly loud 'Bing-Bong'. Mum jumps again. Postman places the parcel on the floor in front of the door frame and exit back into the auditorium.)**

**Mum:** Alright. Alright I'm coming. Nearly had a heart attack.

**(Mum goes to the door frame, mimes opening the door and retrieves the parcel.)**

**Mum:** Might have known. The postman always rings twice. Humph! Amazon parcel. Not for me, of course...

**(She flings the box over her shoulder, not caring where it lands.)**

**Mum:** Now. Mister Doorbell, You've scared the willies out of me for the last time. I'll fix you.

**(Mum fiddles with the doorbell fitting and removes a couple of AA batteries that she waves triumphantly. These can either be set with the doorbell or she can simply palm them and pretend to remove them.)**

**Mum:** Hah! Try bing-bonging me to death now!

**(Mum puts the batteries in her pocket with a smug little smile, then she starts again to sniff around. After a short while she stops and gazes in surprise at something just out of sight on the floor.)**

**Mum:** (calling) Catherine?

**Catherine:** (offstage right) Yes, Mum?

**Mum:** Do we have a dog?

**Catherine:** No Mum, we don't have a dog. You've lived with us for four years. I think you'd have noticed by now if we had a dog.

**Mum:** (after a beat) Well it looks like we have a dog. (Peers closely at object out of sight) Quite a big dog.

(Catherine enters Upstage Right.)

**Catherine:** Mum, what on earth are you talking about..

(She stops dead when she sees what Mum is looking at.)

**Catherine:** Oh, my God! Where the hell did that come from?

**Mum:** From the dog.

**Catherine:** (snappily) We don't have a dog, Mum! (calling) Nigel!

(Nigel enters Upstage Right.)

**Nigel:** What on earth is all this shouting about...

(He sees what they're looking at and appears more embarrassed than shocked.)

**Nigel:** Ah! I see.

**Mum:** Hello Nigel. The dog did it, love.

**Nigel:** Dog?

**Catherine:** Ignore her. Do you have any idea how this can have happened?

**Nigel:** Er.. Mum. I don't think you need to worry yourself about this. Why don't you go and take it easy in front of your telly? I think there's a new bottle of gin in the sideboard.

**Mum:** Oh. Alright. Don't mind if I do...

(She starts to leave then returns as an afterthought.)

**Mum:** Nigel. are you wearing makeup?

**Nigel:** (sotto voce) Oh God. (brightly) Yes. Mum. That's right. I'm wearing makeup.

**Mum:** For work is it?

**Nigel:** Er..er.. Yes. That'll do. It's for a catfood sales campaign.

**Mum:** Oh, that's nice. You are a clever boy! Catherine, isn't he a clever boy?

**(Nigel face palms. During the following dialogue Mum goes into the lounge, happily retrieves the bottle of gin from the sideboard and exits Upstage Right, looking very pleased with herself.)**

**Catherine:** **(Once Mum is believably out of earshot)** Nice one, darling. I do love her but I was getting ready to clock her one, all the same. So... Where did this come from, do you think?

**Nigel:** Wee..ee..!! I think it's mine, actually.

**Catherine:** I'm sorry?

**Nigel:** Mine.

**Catherine:** Yours? What do you mean 'yours'?

**Nigel:** What do you think I mean? I bought it in a shop? I mean I did it.

**(There is a pause as Catherine processes this information.)**

**Catherine:** But... How....? Why....? Nigel. We have two bathrooms!

**Nigel:** Yes but see, it's like this. I'm think I'm starting to grow a tail and my legs don't always quite bend quite the way they used to, so I don't really get on well with... you know...the way it's designed.

**Catherine:** I...see. So the hall carpet is the next best option!?

**Nigel:** Here's the thing. We were having a bit of a row and I got cross with you so I think I wanted to punish you.. **(hastily)** Not consciously, of course. Kind of subliminally... Then I think I just forgot about it.

**Catherine:** You. Forgot? We'll get back to the whole 'punishing' thing later but... You did this on the carpet and then just...forgot? What the fuck, Nigel? Anyone would think you were...

**(She pauses.)**

**Nigel:** A cat?

**Catherine:** Ah. I think I'm just beginning to see a drawback to your new condition.

**Nigel:** Only just?

**Catherine:** So. How far does this go, darling? Because I give you fair warning, right now, that if you start bringing me dead rodents it's going to put quite a strain on our marriage. Come on, let's flush this.

**Nigel:** I don't think you're supposed to put cat whatsit down the loo. There's regulations.

**Catherine:** **(frustrated)** Whatever! Get a shovel and take it down the bottom of the garden, then. I'll get some carpet shampoo.

**(Nigel and Catherine exit Upstage Right. Blackout.)**

**Narrator:** Sounds like the 'Sham' poo is not the problem there. **(chuckles)** Do you see what I did there? Anyway. Nigel and Catherine are going to be busy it seems and I don't think we need to watch that particular bit of housework. So let's go back to Number 21 for a while.

## Scene 4 – Hayes Lounge

**(Lights up on Hayes' lounge. Sheila enters Upstage Left with her handicraft and sits in a chair. David enters Upstage Left and is passing the back window when he does a sudden double take and returns to stare out of the window.)**

**David:** Sheila, dear?

**Sheila:** Mmmm?

**David:** Did the estate agent mention anything about there being any particularly common instances of what they used to call 'care in the community' around here?

**Sheila:** No. But she wouldn't, would she? Why do you ask?

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**David:** Well. You know next door's apple tree that grows close to our fence?

**Sheila:** Yes.

**David:** This is going to sound odd, but a fellow in a fur coat has just aped his way up it like some Olympic gymnast and he's carrying a shovel of something.

**(The following SFX section is optional depending on what you think is funnier but will probably need to be recorded as a continuous piece, so Sheila and David will need to talk over it and time their dialogue to fit appropriately. It is given in broken down form for clarification. SFX: Distant rustling of trees, magpie squawking. SFX: Clang of distant shovel hitting patio.)**

**David:** Good Lord. He's just hurled the shovel over onto our patio. And I can't see exactly - he's among the leaves - but there seems to be some kind of struggle.

**(SFX: More distant rustling and mewling.)**

**Sheila:** Is this one of your silly jokes?

**David:** No. As God's my witness...

**(SFX: Distant mewling.)**

**David:** Oh. It's stopped now and he's making some sort of wailing sound.

**(SFX: A cry. A thump.)**

**David:** Aaand.. now he's fallen out of the tree!

**Sheila:** How odd. You better go and see what he's dropped. He might want it back.

**(David exits Upstage Left as Sheila moves to watch through the window. A few seconds pass then David re-enters Upstage Right carrying a hand shovel containing something unpleasant.)**

**David:** (peevied) Well! I very much doubt he's going to want *this* back. What a bloody cheek! Why couldn't he dispose of it in his own garden?

**(They both react accordingly.)**

**Sheila:** Oh David! Don't bring that into the house! Oh it's disgusting. Take it away! Throw it into the bushes!

**David:** Not on your life! This is evidence, this is! Where are those plastic boxes from last night's Chinese? I'm going to leave it out in the sun to dry off a bit and then put this into one and take it right back next door and ask him face to face whether he'd like it back! And what on earth he thinks he's doing. I'll bet he didn't know we'd arrived yet.

**Sheila:** Oh David. What a disgusting thing to do! But don't make a fuss. We don't want to get off on the wrong foot with our new neighbours.

**David:** They apparently don't have any such reservations.

**(SFX: A Kazoo is heard in the distance. This should best be done live offstage.)**

**David:** Oh no! It's Steven. What he doing here? That's all I need. Let's pretend we're not here.

**Sheila:** You want to hide from your own son?

**David:** No. I'm hiding from his fucking kazoo!

**Sheila:** Language, dear!

**David:** Sorry. But I really wish I'd never bought it him.

**Sheila:** Well, yes, so do I. But he means well.

**David:** He means to drive us all insane, that's what!

**(SFX: Doorbell - different from the previous one. Much less invasive. Sheila exits Upstage Left as David makes a show of steeling himself. As he does so he absent mindedly puts the shovel on a chair. SFX: Door opening and closing. Sheila re-enters Upstage Left with Steven close behind. He is carrying a kazoo.)**

**Steven:** What ho, chaps. How's tricks?

**Sheila:** Oh we're fine, son. And I hear you got a promotion. Well done.

**Steven:** Yes. I'm now a flight lieutenant, and what's more.... I say.... Why is there a shovel of soil on the chair?

**Sheila:** *On the chair!* Oh David, really! Take it out into the sun, like you said.

**(David collects the shovel and exits Upstage Left. As he passes Steven, Steven apparently gets a whiff.)**

**Steven:** Oh, I say. That's not soil is it?

**Sheila:** No.

**Steven:** Well, well. Don't you two lead interesting lives. What's all that about then?

**Sheila:** It's...not important right now. Tell us how you came to be in the area.

**(David re-enters Upstage Left during Steven's next line.)**

**Steven:** Well I just got back to Blighty for a few days leave from the old flying about lark, what? Hadn't been back more than a few hours when good old Janet Pips tells me she needs to suddenly visit her sick mother in Edinburgh.

**David:** Had you been playing your kazoo?

**Steven:** As a matter of fact, yes. I was serenading her! How did you know?

**David:** Just a wild guess.

**Steven:** Anyway. Since she was off doing the good Samaritan thing, I thought I'd pop in on old Mater and Pater and help out with some of the heavy lifting.

**Sheila:** That's very sweet of you darling, but you didn't need to bring your... music.

**Steven:** What? Leave old Zooey behind? Certainly not. Gotta keep practising. I'm trying to talk them into letting her into the RAF band.

**David:** **(dryly)** Good luck with that.

**Steven:** **(missing the point)** Thanks Popsicle. I'm getting quite good at it. I've pretty much mastered 'When the Saints..' Listen!

**David:** **(Together)** *No!*

**Sheila:** **(Together)** *No!*

**(Steven plays probably the worst ever rendition of 'When the Saints Go Marching In' only recognisable because we've been told what it is supposed to be. Eventually David cuts in.)**

**David:** Enough!

**(Steven finishes with a sad little gliss.)**

**David:** Steven, please cast your mind back to what I said to you the last time you played that in our house. Can you remember?

**Steven:** I believe it was something about me playing it with my other mouth if I carried on.

**David:** Correct! Well remembered. Now, guess what. Nothing has changed. **(softer)** We are delighted to see you, son, but ‘zooey’ is not included in our enthusiasm.

**Steven:** Oh. What a shame. Never mind. Can I help with anything? Open some boxes or what?

**Sheila:** Not really, darling. The heavy stuff doesn’t arrive until next week. That’s when we’ll really be snowed under. There’s just a few boxes of old bits and bobs by the front door. We can manage those.

**Steven:** Right-o. I’ll see if I can pop round again next week, then. Meanwhile I might as well practise anyway. Can I play it in the garden?

**(David and Sheila sigh.)**

**David:** If you must. But don’t annoy the neighbours. No! On second thoughts, *do* annoy the neighbours. But be advised if anybody shoots you, it’s nothing to do with us.

**Steven:** Copy that, Pater.

**(Steven moves over to the window.)**

**Steven:** Oh. The garden chairs haven’t arrived! There’s only that dinky little cart. I’ll borrow a couple of cushions and sit there, then. Looks quite comfortable actually.

**Sheila:** You’re going to go and sit in my flower cart?

**David:** I wouldn’t bother to think too hard about it, Sheila, if I were you. At least he’ll be out there and not in here! And, Steven, be a good lad and move the cart off the patio, first, eh? I mean *right* off the patio. In fact, way down the bottom of the garden would be best!

**Steven:** Right-o! Call me if you need anything doing won’t you? Pip pip for now.

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**(Steven exits Upstage Left. SFX: More atrocious kazoo backstage, gradually getting quieter during David’s next line.)**

**David:** Well, we dodged that bullet for now. Come on, let’s go and have a cup of tea.

**(David and Sheila exit Upstage Left. Blackout.)**

**Narrator:** So they have their problems too, it seems. Now, I don’t know about you, but the whole incident with the shovel sounds quite strange. So let’s move back to Number 19 and see if we can find out what it’s all about.

## Scene 5 – Milton Lounge

**(Lights up on Milton lounge. Catherine and Nigel enter Upstage Right and into the lounge during their opening dialogue. Catherine eventually takes a seat but Nigel remains standing, agitated.)**

**Catherine:** So you threw it onto the neighbours' patio?

**Nigel:** No. Well, yes, but I didn't *throw* it, as such. See, there was that magpie.

**Catherine:** **(non-plussed)** There was a magpie?

**Nigel:** Not just A magpie. *That* magpie! The evil little bastard who wakes us up every morning at five o'clock with his raucous chattering. I was heading down the garden with the shovel and there he was sitting in the apple tree, bold as brass, squawking at me and really giving me the eye. Daring me to have a go. I couldn't let that lie, now could I?

**Catherine:** **(dryly)** Of course not.

**Nigel:** **(oblivious to her tone)** So I hared up the tree - I can do that now, you know - ready to punch him out for his cheek. Of course, he wasn't that easy to find. Pretty much vanished among the leaves and as I was searching, somewhere along the line my attention wandered from the shovel and I suppose I just sort of ditched it.

**Catherine:** So you threw your poo into the neighbours' garden while you were trying to punch an invisible magpie? Now there's a sentence I didn't expect to say anytime soon!

**Nigel:** Exactly! Then the magpie flew off and I overstretched a bit and fell out of the tree. I winded myself for a minute or two and by the time I recovered and remembered the shovel, somebody from next door had already come out and nabbed it. Otherwise I'd have been over the fence and retrieved it.

**Catherine:** Some people do think it's customary to give new neighbours a gift of some kind. Usually it's a pie or a casserole or something like that...

**Nigel:** Maybe they won't know where it came from?

**Catherine:** Yes. Perhaps they'll think it fell out of an aeroplane.

**Nigel:** **(hopefully)** You think?

**Catherine:** No! Of course they'll know where it came from.

**Nigel:** What'll we do? It's not a great way to introduce yourself to new people. 'Excuse me can we have our shovel-full of poo back, please?'

**Catherine:** We can't *do* anything. We just hope they overlook it long enough for us to get to know them. Then we can eventually explain and all have a good laugh about it.

**(Mum enters Upstage Right and comes through to stand in the entrance to the lounge.)**

**Mum:** Beep. Beep. Beep.

**Catherine:** I beg your pardon, Mum?

**Mum:** Beep. Beep. Beep. That's the noise the box on the hall table just made. I think it said something too.

**Catherine:** Just now?

**Mum:** I think so.

**Catherine:** Thanks Mum. We'll listen to it shortly.

**Mum:** I think it was the police.

**Catherine:** What?!

**Mum:** It's not easy to hear because it squirbles quite a lot. But I'm sure I heard the word 'police' in there.

**Nigel:** Oh bollocks! They've reported us already!

**(Lights up on Milton hallway. Nigel hurries into the hallway to the answerphone table. Catherine hurries after him. Mum follows more leisurely. All during the next few lines of dialogue.)**

**Nigel:** Let's see if this senile old thing has got it right this time.

**Mum:** What's that?

**Nigel:** Not you, Mum. The answerphone. Here we go.

**(Nigel activates the answerphone. The answerphone can be an SFX but could also be voiced live by one of the cast using the Narrator's sound feed. It is vaguely recognisable as a distorted man's voice in the lucid bits. The rest is a garbled incoherence of peeps, squawks and whistles.)**

**Answerphone:** Message 1. Thursday 14th December.

**(The date is hopelessly wrong and Nigel reacts.)**

**Answerphone:** **(Incoherent - 4 seconds)** - received your gift....**(Incoherent - 5 seconds)**.... visit from the police....**(Incoherent 2 seconds)**.... coming round later....**(Incoherent for another 4 seconds ending in an electronic raspberry)** You have no new messages.

**Nigel:** Well, that's clear as day! Why do we still keep this piece of junk? It must be thirty years old. We don't even really need a landline anymore, let alone the world's least helpful answerphone.

**Catherine:** It's a modern antique! Do you know how long it took me to get it working properly? You can't get the parts nowadays.

**Nigel:** Working properly? Uh-huh? Well, on the plus side it doesn't sound like it's actually the police, but it's almost certainly next door responding to our 'gift'.

**Catherine:** Wait a minute. How would they have our number?

**Mum:** Oh, that's easy, Catherine. I popped a note under their door a few days ago with our names and number.

**Nigel:** What? Why would you do that?

**Mum:** Just being good neighbours. In case they needed anything doing. I was only trying to be helpful!

**Catherine:** Yes. Mum, I'm sure you were. That's fine. So. Yes. It could be them, but it's a little circumstantial, so let's not jump to conclusions.

**Nigel:** Well, the only ones who'll know for sure is next door. We should ask them.

**Catherine:** Don't you think it's a bit soon? What if they get confrontational?

**Nigel:** Well. They have a right to be cross, I warrant. But leaving a threatening message for us to hear is also not very neighbourly. We should record it as best we can and take it round with us. Then if they get bolshy we can play it to them.

**Catherine:** Oh..kay. That might work. It's going to be a bit obvious if we turn up on the doorstep with an answerphone the size of a suitcase though. And I seriously doubt they have anything available to play this vintage mini-cassette. I know. I'll transfer it to a USB stick.

**Nigel:** How?

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**Catherine:** Worry not, love. We have the technology.

**Nigel:** Okay, great. And then when you take it round you can say....

**Catherine:** Woah, woah, woah! When *I* take it round? You're the salesman - the one with the people skills. It's your business! Come to think of it this whole thing is about your 'business'. You take it round!

**Nigel:** **(indicating his cat face)** Really? Just how insane do you want them to think we are?

**Catherine:** Oh. Very well. I'll transfer the message now. You are *so* going to owe me an apology once this is over, and I have a feeling the apology might involve truly insane amounts of chocolate.

**(Catherine exits Upstage Right.)**

**Mum:** Are we all going round to visit the new neighbours, then?

**Nigel:** No Mum. Go back to your gin.

**(Nigel exits Upstage Right with Mum close behind. Blackout.)**

**Narrator:** Hmm. I'm not sure that's quite the way I'd handle it. But folks are folks. And catfolks are catfolks. And I'm certainly curious to see how this pans out.

## Scene 6

**(Lights up on entire stage. Catherine and Nigel enter Upstage Right carrying phones. If his makeup is appropriate when using his phone Nigel should remember where his cat ears are. During the next bit of dialogue they move toward the front door.)**

**Catherine:** Right, now no shouting otherwise they might overhear me, okay? This is just to stay in contact.

**Nigel:** I never shout.

**Catherine:** Is that so?

**(Catherine mimes opening and going through the front door and creeps furtively across the stage to the Hayes door. Nigel moves into the lounge. The next conversation is by phone.)**

**Catherine:** Right. I'm outside their door. His name is David Hayes according to this weird little plaque. It's shaped like a crown and says 'David Hayes - the Lying King'. How odd. It looks like it's an award. 'The Lying King'. I see what they did there. Ha! That's quite good..

**Nigel:** Don't get distracted. Ring the bell.

**Catherine:** Yeah right. I'll ring the bell.

**Nigel:** Go on then.

**Catherine:** Yup. Gonna ring it now.... Right now.... Gonna ring it. **(after a beat)** I'm not going to ring it.

**Nigel:** You can't chicken out now. Just ring it. The rest will follow.

**Catherine:** Yes, right. Lemme just check I've got the USB stick. I put it in this pocket.

**(She makes a show of reaching into the opposite pocket with her free hand, fumbles it and drops the USB stick. It should land somewhere around but not in the boxes, in such a place that she would not immediately spot it.)**

**Catherine:** Shit! I've dropped it.

**Nigel:** Well pick it up then. Quick!

**Catherine:** I didn't see where it went. Damn! I bet it fell into one of these cardboard boxes full of...whatever. Loads of odds and sods I think.

**Nigel:** Search for it! If they find it later it'll look like a taunt.

**Catherine:** I'm not standing on the doorstep rummaging through our new neighbours' belongings. What if the Wilsons at number 24 are watching? It'll be all round the district in no time at all.

**Nigel:** So what are you going to do?

**Catherine:** Would it be alright by you if I just panic for a minute or two?

**(SFX: Sound of a van arriving.)**

**Catherine:** Now there's a DPD van pulling up.

**Nigel:** Outside which house?

**Catherine:** Have a guess.

**Nigel:** Crap! Why are they getting deliveries? They haven't even moved in properly yet.

**Catherine:** I don't know! But that's really not the issue is it? The man's coming. I'll hide in this bush until he's gone. Oh God! It's vicious - covered in massive thorns!

**(Catherine hides in the bush.)**

**Catherine:** Ouch..shit...yow.

**(Delivery Man enters through auditorium and heads toward the Hayes door.)**

**Catherine:** He hasn't seen me.

**(Delivery Man puts the box down outside the door, making a show of it being a little heavy, pauses, notices the USB stick.)**

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**Catherine:** Hang on he's stopped and put his parcel down.

**(Delivery Man picks up the USB stick.)**

**Catherine:** He's picking something up...the USB. It fell between the boxes.

**(Delivery Man looks around and, with a shrug, places the USB stick on the ledge under the Crown Plaque.)**

**Catherine:** He's put it underneath that crown thing.

**(Delivery Man rings the bell.)**

**Catherine:** Now he's ringing the bell.

**Nigel:** That's fine. Delivery men do that.

**Catherine:** You don't get it! The delivery man can't see me but if anyone answers the door they've got a direct line of sight to me. If I get spotted we're going to graduate from common or garden lunatics to dangerous lunatics.

**(Catherine shuffles about in the bush. David appears at the Hayes door carrying a Chinese restaurant takeaway box with something brown inside. He hastily hides it behind his back.)**

**Catherine:** The husband's answered and he seems to be trying to hide something from the delivery man for some reason. Looks like a tupperware box or something.

**(There is a mumbled conversation between David and the Delivery Man. Then David picks up the box and goes inside with it.)**

**Catherine:** He's taken his package and the delivery guy is leaving.

**(Delivery Man heads toward auditorium to leave and notices Catherine hiding in the bush. Catherine attempts to look nonchalant and natural. Delivery Man appears to be about to say something then just shakes his head in puzzlement.)**

**Delivery Man:** Never mind...

**(Delivery Man exits through auditorium. David enters through Hayes front door. He is carrying his phone. SFX: Sound of a van departing. Now all four characters are on their phones.)**

**David:** Right Sheila, I'm going round now. I'll keep you updated but I'll have to talk quietly.

**(Sheila enters Upstage Left.)**

**Sheila:** Right. I can hear you.

**Catherine:** He waited until Mr DPD had gone. Now he's coming out with his little box.

**(David creeps furtively across the stage using the front part of the auditorium to skirt the bush. As he does so he glances toward Catherine, at which point he crouches down as he moves.)**

**Catherine:** Ooops. He just looked my way. I don't think he saw me, though. He's gone all furtive. He's trying to sneak, keeping below the hedge. He's heading for our place!

**David:** Sheila? You there?

**Sheila:** Yes.

**David:** Don't come out and look but the lady from next door is hiding in our pyrocanthus. I ducked below the hedge, though, so I don't think she saw me.

**Sheila:** Why is she doing that? It sounds quite painful.

**David:** I don't know. **(sarcastically)** I'll go and ask her, shall I?

**Catherine:** Yes he's definitely gone over to our house. You could come out and meet him. No! Don't do that. You look too ridiculous.

**Nigel:** Well remembered! Go back and get the stick!

**Catherine:** Sod the stick. That's the least of my worries. I'm sitting here feeling very much like a bloody pin-cushion. And I can't go to either house in case I'm spotted.

**Nigel:** Well, it'll be dark soon. Then you can sneak back.

**Catherine:** Well that's such a relief. Only an hour or two more being poked full of holes! Remember that chocolate? It's just been upgraded to diamonds.

**(Lights up on Milton hallway and Hayes lounge. Nigel and Catherine will be in the dark and will do a partial freeze. David moves over to Milton front door and rings the bell.)**

**David:** Made it! Oh, I missed my vocation. I could have been a spy.

**Sheila:** You could have asked the lady in the bush about the...you know.

**David:** I could. But somehow, complaining about...you know...to a lady hiding in a bush in our front garden feels like it devalues the situation somehow. This needs to be done with some dignity.

**Sheila:** **(to herself away from phone)** Dignity? A box of poo? **(into phone)** Are you going to ring the bell, then?

**David:** I just did.

**(David looks over to the wicker chair.)**

**David:** I say, they might be clinically insane according to all evidence to date, but they've got good taste. There's a lovely porch over there. It's one of those mid-west American style affairs with a covered, fenced boardwalk. There's a little occasional table and a very comfortable looking chair. And the clematis growing up the far side is beautiful.

**Sheila:** Admire later. Let's just get this awful business over with.

**David:** There's no answer. I know there's a man in residence so perhaps he's ignoring me.

**Sheila:** Or the bell doesn't work?

**David:** Well, I'll try once more. But they're not getting away with it that easily. I know they're around. Mrs. Crazypants is hiding in the bush.

**(He tries the bell again. Pause.)**

**David:** Nope. Nothing. Right. I'm just going to sit in that chair until she comes back then. I could do with a sit down anyway. Tiring day.

**(David sits in the wicker chair which immediately gives under him adopting a crooked but still stable position. SFX: May need a crack sound effect.)**

**David:** Oh botheration. The chair's broken. Must be in worse nick than it looked.

**Sheila:** Oh dear! Come on back then. Can't we call it even now. They soil our patio. We break their chair.

**David:** Sheila dear, we're not Laurel and Hardy. I'm not trying to start a tit-for-tat war. Anyway the chair has only given way a little bit. One of the struts has snapped but it still feels reasonably sturdy. And quite comfortable. Bit crooked, but it'll do. I'll wait here and call you if anything changes.

**(David needs to be comfortable because he stays here until the end. He can pretend to fall asleep with the evidence box in his lap.)**

**Sheila:** Oh dear. I hope he knows what he's doing.

**(Sheila exits Upstage Left. Blackout.)**

**Narrator:** Well, they all seem to be getting into a bit of a mess, don't they? Poor Catherine. But don't worry, I think she's about to be rescued, because here comes our final player in this little drama.

## Scene 7 – Milton Lounge

**(Lights up on Milton lounge and central bush.)**

**Nigel:** How are you doing, darling?

**Catherine:** Hurting.

**Nigel:** I'm so sorry. I'd come out if I thought....

**Catherine:** Wait! Someone's coming.

**(Billy enters from the back of the auditorium and does a Honk Honk on his horn. SFX: Snatch of Fucik's 'Entry of the Gladiators' as Billy enters. Billy comes down to the stage possibly interacting with the audience as he does so, if he feels brave. It would be absurd for Billy to be in full clown gear when visiting his sister, but, nevertheless, this is the case. The red nose is crucial.)**

**Catherine:** Good Lord, it's Billy.

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**Nigel:** Your brother Billy?

**Catherine:** Yes. Nobody makes an entrance quite like him! Let me go to him...ow..ow.

**(She emerges from the bush just as Billy reaches it.)**

**Catherine:** Billy boy!

**Billy:** Sis? Heavens! Why are you hiding in the neighbours' bush?

**Catherine:** Not important. Long story.

**Billy:** Oh good. I do like a long one!

**(Billy does a Honk Honk.)**

**Catherine:** Don't start all that now, Billy. You know how it irritates Nigel. And...well...you know...*me*. Incidentally, speaking of Nigel, there's something you ought to know about him. Come on let's go indoors.

**(Lights up on Milton lounge and hallway. Nigel unfreezes and Catherine and Billy go in and join him. Lights down on central bush as they go inside.)**

**Nigel:** **(nervously steeling himself for the inevitable)** Hello Billy.

**Billy:** Ooo. Sis was right. You have changed. What a cat-astrophy!

**(Billy does a Honk Honk.)**

**Billy:** Sorry.

**Narrator:** I've already done that gag,

**Catherine:** Lovely to see you Billy, but what brings you here today? Aren't you on the midway at the moment?

**Billy:** **(slightly taken aback)** Oh. Didn't you get my message? I'm here to stay for a couple of days.

**Catherine:** What message? Oooh! *Your* message?

**Billy:** Yes. Sorry it's such short notice. I assumed it would be alright. It was all a bit sudden. Old man Miggins is being questioned by the police - there's been a bit of a drug problem at the carnival and we've been shut down for a week. We're all on leave but have been told to stay in the area. Luckily we were due to set up at Brown's Patch just down the road so I thought I'd land on my lovely sis and bro-in-law for a spell and thank you both for my birthday gift.

**Nigel:** How appropriate. It's been a bit of a circus here today.

**(Billy does a Honk Honk.)**

**Nigel:** That wasn't a joke, Billy.

**Billy:** Sorry. Force of habit.

**Nigel:** Somebody take that horn off him.

**(Mum enters Upstage Right and comes into the lounge.)**

**Mum:** Hello, William. What a lovely surprise. I didn't know you were coming round. Are you wearing makeup?

**Billy:** Yes, Mum.

**Mum:** Is it for work?

**Billy:** Yes Mum, I'm a clown.

**Mum:** Nigel wears makeup now, too. It's made out of cat food.

**Nigel:** No Mum, that's not what I said. I... Oh never mind.

**Mum:** Both my favourite boys wearing makeup. I'm so glad you're taking an interest in your appearance.

**Billy:** An adherence to appearance.

**Catherine:** Be quiet, Billy.

**Billy:** Sorry.

**Catherine:** You can take the spare room. Dump your stuff now if you like.

**Billy:** Actually I think I'll take a step into the garden first and catch some of that sea air. I do love visiting you two. It's such a lovely place you have.

**Catherine:** You might be a little disappointed today, I'm afraid. It's fisherman day. There's a distinct coddly tang to the air, blowing in from the docks.

**(Billy goes over and opens the window a fraction.)**

**Billy:** **(inhaling through his red nose)** I can't smell anything.

**Nigel:** That's because you're still wearing that absurd nose. When you take it off you'll notice the smell.

**Billy:** When I do what?

**Nigel:** When you take off your red nose.

**Billy:** **(after a beat)** Sorry Nigel, not quite sure what you're getting at.

**Nigel:** What? You never.... Oh for heaven's sake... **(sigh)** I don't know why I'm surprised, really.

**Billy:** I could happily live here. Wouldn't bother me.

**Nigel:** **(aside)** Cath, we need to nip that in the bud.

**Billy:** I'll just take a few minutes to unwind then.

**(Billy makes to exit Upstage Right. SFX: Distant kazoo playing. Very badly.)**

**Billy:** **(Pausing)** I say. What's that noise?

**(He returns to the window.)**

**Billy:** I think it's coming from next door.

**Catherine:** I think there's some chap in the garden blowing on his instrument.

**(Billy does a Honk Honk.)**

**Catherine:** **(Together)** Billy!

**Nigel:** **(Together)** Billy!

**Nigel:** Enough with the sodding horn!

**Billy:** Oh come on. Gimme a break. I couldn't let that one go!

**(SFX: More hideous distant kazoo.)**

**Billy:** I think it's a kazoo. Jesus it's awful. How can anyone play a kazoo badly? Isn't it just basically humming? I don't mind the smell, but that could certainly get on my nerves.

**(Billy exits Upstage Right.)**

**Nigel:** And this from Captain Honk...

**Catherine:** Putting the kazoos, red noses and fish aside for a moment, thinking about it... if that message was from Billy, even if next door get to hear it they will have absolutely no idea what it's all about, and can't possibly think it's anything to do with us. So we've slipped through that net.

**Nigel:** You're right. Oh, thank God for that. Now we just have to think about how to explain the shovel of....

**Catherine:** One problem at a time, love. One problem at a time. Billy! Let me come and find you some bed linen and towels.

**(She exits Upstage Right as she speaks. Nigel follows her. Blackout.)**

**Narrator:** Well. I hope you're following all this. I'm just about hanging in there. Everybody seems to be congregating at Number 19. Even if David is still out on the veranda. Let's see what's going on at Number 21.

## Scene 8 – Hayes Lounge

**(Lights up on Hayes lounge, Milton hallway and Milton lounge. During the following dialogue Catherine, Nigel, Billy and Mum enter the Milton lounge and mime a small gathering, retrieving the wine and glasses from the sideboard. Catherine pours some wine.)**

**Sheila:** (offstage left) David! Are you back yet?

**(Sheila enters Upstage Left. She has her handicraft with her.)**

**Sheila:** David?

**(Receiving no answer she checks her phone for messages.)**

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**Sheila:** Oh dear. How long is it now? It's starting to get dark. I hope it didn't get violent. **(trying to convince herself)** Oh! I'm sure he's alright, really.

**(She sits and returns to her craft for a few moments then puts it down with determination.)**

**Sheila:** No. It's no good. I'm going to have to find out what's going on.

**(Sheila exits Upstage Left and emerges through the front door. She heads across the stage and pauses at the bush.)**

**Sheila:** Ooo. Must get David to look at our pyrocanthus. It's getting a bit tatty. Looks like an elephant has tromped through it. **(She moves over to the Milton side.)** Well now. Will you look at that. There he is asleep on their porch in that cronky old chair with what he calls the 'box of evidence'. Good. That means the balloon hasn't gone up yet. I'll let him sleep, he can do less damage that way. I'll see if I can sort this out amicably. And quietly, so I don't wake him....

**(Billy does a Honk Honk.)**

**Nigel:** Will you please knock it off?

**Billy:** Sorry.

**Catherine:** Take it easy Nigel. Have another glass of wine.

**Sheila:** Sounds like they're having a party. I hope they won't mind if I interrupt them.

**(Sheila mimes tapping on the front lounge window. SFX: Sound of tapping on window.)**

**Catherine:** Did you hear that?

**Billy:** Hear what?  
**(Sheila taps again. SFX: Sound of tapping on window.)**

**Catherine:** That!  
**(Mum enters Upstage Right and comes into the lounge.)**

**Mum:** There's somebody at the window.  
**(Nigel, Catherine and Billy enter Upstage Right and join Mum.)**

**Nigel:** It's the woman from next door! Oh God, she's brought the police round.

**Catherine:** Don't be absurd, darling. Why would the police be tapping on the window?

**Nigel:** What does she want then?

**Catherine:** There's one way to find out.  
**(Catherine goes round to the front door and mimes opening it.)**

**Catherine:** Good evening... Mrs Hayes, isn't it? Please come in. What can we do for you? Would you like a drink?  
**(Sheila follows Catherine inside and into the lounge during her next line.)**

**Sheila:** That's very kind, dear, thank you, but no. I'll not be stopping. I just wanted to come and have a word about what is clearly some misunderstanding.  
**(She sees Billy and Nigel.)**

**Sheila:** Oh, I see you're having a fancy-dress party.

**Nigel:** Best excuse yet!

**Sheila:** I just wondered whether my husband has been here?

**Catherine:** Not to my knowledge.

**Sheila:** Ah. That's good then. There's been some very odd things going on here today and I think we need to put our heads together and find out what it's all about. I'm sure there's a perfectly reasonable explanation.

**Nigel:** Well, there's *an* explanation.

**Catherine:** I imagine you're referring to the..ah..shovel?

**Sheila:** Well. Yes. And the business in the tree.

**Billy:** And who's playing that kazoo?

**Sheila:** And for some reason our front garden has taken a bit of a beating. But I'm sure that's not your concern.

**Catherine:** Mrs Hayes...

**Sheila:** Please, call me Sheila.

**Catherine:** Thank you. I'm Catherine Milton and this is Nigel, my husband, my brother Billy...and Mum. Sheila, I'm very grateful for you coming round and giving us the chance to sort this out. Let's see. Where do we start?

**Mum:** Doggy-doo on the carpet?

**Catherine:** **(offhandedly)** No dog, Mum. No let's start with the fact that Nigel here is turning into a cat, and he accidentally soiled the carpet. Then when he tried to clear it up a magpie made him throw it into your garden and then....(a beat).....actually this is starting to sound a bit ridiculous, isn't it?

**Sheila:** A little bit, dear, yes.

**Nigel:** Well, acutely embarrassing as this is for me, I don't see a better way to tell her what's going on.

**Mum:** Why don't we ask the voicey man?

**Billy:** Sorry Sheila, Mum gets a bit surreal sometimes.

**Catherine:** No wait. I think she's actually come up with something, this time.

**Nigel:** By Jove. I think I know what you mean.

**(Nigel delivers his next line to the general atmosphere.)**

**Nigel:** You there. Mister Know-it-all. How about you help us out here?

**(There is a pause and everyone looks generally up and around.)**

**Catherine:** Come on. You know who we mean. You there, commenting on everything we do.

**Narrator:** **(nervously, completely discombobulated)** Er.. Do you mean me?

**Nigel:** Yes you. Chatting away there to yourself all day.

**Narrator:** You... you can hear me?

**Nigel:** Of course we can bloody hear you. We're not deaf.

© 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 [www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/](http://www.scriptsforstage.co.uk/wp/product/hound-performance/)*

**Narrator:** But...I thought...convention.... **(sigh)** Oh well. Never mind. What was it you wanted me to do?

**Catherine:** You've been around us all day watching everything.

**Narrator:** **(cautiously)** Yees...

**Nigel:** And I bet you've been doing the same next door, haven't you?

**(Embarrassed pause.)**

**Narrator:** Might have....

**Catherine:** Right. So who's in a better position than you to explain to Sheila?

**Narrator:** Oooh-kay. So you want a summary of the situation.

**Sheila:** Yes please.

**Narrator:** You sure?

**Nigel:** **(Together)**Yes!

**Catherine:** **(Together)**Yes!

**Billy:** **(Together)**Yes!

**Mum:** **(Together)**Yes!

**Sheila:** **(Together)**Yes!

**Narrator:** You're not going to like it.

**Nigel:** Alright, Deep Thought, never mind the oracular pomposity, get on with it.

**Narrator:** **(with a sigh)** Ok. Here's the thing...

**(During the following speech all lights gradually fade to Blackout. If you are using curtains it can gently close at the same time. The following speech is *very* important. It's the punchline of the whole piece. The Narrator's actor must take it as slowly and clearly as necessary, allowing for possible laughter at the end of each line while still maintaining the metre of the original poem where possible.)**

**Narrator:** There's a cockeyed fellow, idle, on the porch with cat-man poo,  
There's a stick of garbled dross below the crown.  
There's a bloke in a cart from Oman blends a brave but bad kazoo  
And the smell of cod will never faze the clown.

**(Billy does a Honk Honk in the darkness or behind the tabs.)**

**End of play**