

PERCHIK. Vanessa...

SAUL. You're not playing *nice*.

There's more banging on the door.

PERCHIK. Vanessa, he was gonny cut your hands off!

DIXON (*off*). We have here a warrant for the arrest of a Mr Saul Everard –

DOCK (*off*). – regarding the disappearances of Detective Derek Prawn, John Grimmup, Francesco Mancini, and various other charges of a serious nature.

SAUL. They're going to arrest me? But this is my Empire. They can't arrest me.

VANESSA. I think they can, my love. Help him, Perchik!

PERCHIK. You've got to be kidding!

VANESSA. Please? *Please?*

PERCHIK *sighs*.

PERCHIK (*gesturing to the sack*). Hide in here, Saul.

SAUL. No!

PERCHIK. Get in the sack. Quickly, or do you want to go to prison?

SAUL. I can't! It's full of maggots. You'll tell 'em, won't you, Nessa, tell them it was lies and I never did none of those things? You'll tell them, sweetheart, won't you?

VANESSA. Course I will, I'll tell them it was all lies.

PERCHIK. Won't matter if she does. They all heard her. They had a little tape recorder.

VANESSA. Oh, what have I done? I'm sorry, my love. I didn't mean –

DIXON (*off*). Mr Everard? If you don't open this door we shall break it down.

SAUL. Pigs!

PERCHIK. Get in the sack, Saul.

SAUL. Can't. Sick.

PERCHIK. I'm sorry?

SAUL. I'll be sick.

PERCHIK. So be sick. Get in the sack.

SAUL. I see your game! You want to pack me off to France! Well, I won't go! I won't!

PERCHIK *tries to guide SAUL to the sack*. SAUL *sobs helplessly*. All defences down.

Please... please don't make me... I can't. I'm frightened.

PERCHIK. Of what?

SAUL... I don't know.

VANESSA (*softly*). It's for your own safety, Saul.

DIXON (*off*). I'm going to give you from the count of ten...

VANESSA. Come on, Saul. Quick!

DOCK (*off*). This is your last warning. Get ready, Dixon. / Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one...

PERCHIK. Get in, Saul.

As DOCK counts down, PERCHIK manhandles SAUL in. SAUL is dazed. He grabs hold of PERCHIK's hand desperately.

SAUL (*faintly*). Your fingers, Perchik... or the pies?

PERCHIK pushes SAUL's head in and closes the sack. SAUL's stick clatters to the floor. DOCK reaches 'one' and the POLICEMEN burst in.

PERCHIK. Hello, gentlemen.

DIXON. Is this the residence of Saul Everard?

DOCK. That's my line, Dixon.

DIXON. Does it matter?

DOCK. No, it doesn't matter, it's just, you know, you have your lines and I have my lines, but whatever. You've said it now.

DIXON. Well, you can say it again.

DOCK. I'm not going to say it aga –

DIXON. Fine. Is this the resi –

DOCK (*very fast, to get it out first*). Is this the residence of Saul Everard?

PERCHIK. I've never heard of a Mr Everard. Have you, Tammy?
(*Beat.*) Tammy?

VANESSA. No. I've never heard of nobody.

DIXON. Excuse me, ma'am, but you *were* the lady down at the station this morning?

PERCHIK. What an idea! Imagine, my wife – common-law, mind – in a police station! Sat amongst a load of junkies and gigolos! She's been here with me all day. Building a coal shed. For our coal. I'm afraid you've had a wasted trip, but while you're here, this is a sack of black-market offal. I'd take it away and incinerate it if I was you.

VANESSA. Perchik, no.

PERCHIK. Crawling with maggots. It's a public-health disturbance.

VANESSA. I said *no*, Perchik.

DOCK. Well, that's quite an order, sir, but it begs some questions, don't it.

DIXON. It certainly does beg some questions.

VANESSA. Please, Perchik. *Please.*

DOCK. Such as, how did you come by this *offal*, if I may ask?

DIXON. And he may.

PERCHIK. Don't threaten me. It was got –

VANESSA. Don't say anything.

PERCHIK. It was procured on the request of your Chief, but he failed to collect it. If you take us down we'll take half the West Yorkshire police force with us and you won't be very popular at the Christmas party. Think of the media frenzy, Officer. A very black picture it would paint of the boys in blue. I can see it now. 'Maggotgate.'

VANESSA. Perchik –

DOCK. 'Maggot – '?

PERCHIK. Gate.

DIXON. Are you attempting to blackmail us, sir?

DOCK. Be quiet, Dixon. 'Maggotgate.' Dear me. Not a pretty picture. Our apologies, sir, we'll be getting along now. Dixon.

DIXON. Dock!

DOCK. *Dixon.*

They face each other off. DIXON breaks first.

DIXON. Right. If you say so. My apologies.

The POLICEMEN start to move the sack. Coming to, SAUL starts to shout.

SAUL. Put me down! I'm not going to France! You hear me, I won't go!

The two POLICEMEN freeze and exchange a look.

DIXON. The offal appears to be – talking. Sir.

PERCHIK. Well, they are very highly evolved maggots, Officer.

Pause.

DIXON. Very good, sir.

He tries to proceed, but DOCK stays rooted to the spot.

DOCK. Big?

DIXON. Come on, Dock.

PERCHIK. Sorry, pal?

DIXON. He's not your pal.

DOCK. I'm not your pal. These maggots. Are they big?

PERCHIK. Big? Oh yeah. They'll have your arm off.

DOCK. Hmmm.

Beat. Then DOCK thoughtfully pulls out his gun and shoots the sack. It goes quiet.

There's a long silence, finally broken by DOCK.

As you were, Dixon.

DIXON. What's all this, 'as you were'?! You're not in the army, how many times?

DOCK. Could be in the army. Just don't want to.

DIXON. Oh yeah. I forgot. They were just playing hard-to-get when they turned you down. Twice. Your feet are flatter than your sister's chest and you can't shoot for shit.

DOCK. I shot that alright, didn't I?

DIXON. That's the other thing, always shooting everything, bang bang bang. You've got to hold your *fire*, mate.

DOCK. I'm not your mate.

DIXON. All I'm saying is, you didn't have to shoot a sack of meat what's already dead.

DOCK. Did you want to listen to that racket all the way to the municipal dump? It was giving me gip, Dixon. Much like you are now. Can we go?

PERCHIK *holds the door open, and DOCK and DIXON exit with the sack.*

DIXON (*exiting*). You're trigger-happy, that's what you are.

PERCHIK *slams the door after them. He hobbles excitedly to VANESSA.*

PERCHIK. Did you see me? Did you see that, Vanessa!

VANESSA. Perchik –

PERCHIK. They were all, 'Are you trying to bribe us, sir?'

VANESSA. Perchik –

PERCHIK. And I was all, 'Take that, pigs!' And – And – Vanessa?

VANESSA *starts to bawl.*

Hey hey hey, what's this? Come on darlin' – shhh.

He puts his arms round her and kisses her on the head.

It's alright. Don't cry, pet. It's all over. He'll not hurt you any more.

VANESSA. You put him in a sack!

PERCHIK. I was just trying to help him. You asked me to –

VANESSA. Do you think they'll – I mean, they can't. They won't –

PERCHIK. Oh, I think they will, darlin'. They will. This country is lucky to be served by the most efficient police force in the world.

VANESSA. If I go after them, it might not be too late.

PERCHIK. Say what you like about them but they *get the job done*.

VANESSA. He should have a proper burial.

PERCHIK. It's too late, darlin'.

VANESSA. Decent. In the ground. With flowers.

PERCHIK. They'll be miles away by now.

VANESSA. Singing 'Jerusalem'.

PERCHIK. And it's not safe out there.

VANESSA. I'd like to mourn him properly. In a traditional fashion.

VANESSA *goes to exit by the front door.*

PERCHIK. Vanessa...

VANESSA. It's not right.

PERCHIK. I said *no*, sweetheart.

He slams the door. VANESSA runs to the icebox.

Come on, darlin'. I know you're upset but – Aw, *Jesus*.

VANESSA *stops, closes the door. PERCHIK flinches in acute pain as he stands on his bad foot. He spots SAUL's stick on the floor. He picks it up and tries it. He likes it.*

VANESSA. You should see a doctor about that foot.

PERCHIK. Yeah, yeah. I know. Jus' – give us a minute to think, okay, love? Would you like a banana?

VANESSA. What?

PERCHIK. *Would you like a banana?*

VANESSA. Oh. Yeah. Ta.

He gets two bananas from his bag and they eat quietly.

You know, I never wanted to marry a butcher. I hate this shop.

PERCHIK. I know what you mean.

VANESSA. Really?

PERCHIK. I'm a vegetarian.

They look at each other. A beat. Then they laugh. Another pause.