

Characters

PERCHIK, a tall and thin young man in his mid-twenties, Scottish.
An Inverness cowboy.

SAUL, a big, energetic man, sixties or older, old-fashioned
Cockney accent. He walks with a stick supporting his right leg.

VANESSA, tired-looking, pretty at one time but this isn't it, thirties
or older. Noticeable scar down one side of her face.

DIXON

JOHN

WINSTON

JOHN JUNIOR JUNIOR

DOCK

JOHN JUNIOR

DETECTIVE PRAWN

DIXON, JOHN, WINSTON and JOHN JUNIOR JUNIOR are to
be played by the same actor; as are DOCK, JOHN JUNIOR and
DETECTIVE PRAWN.

*The play is set in Bradford, Yorkshire, sometime in the twenty-first
century.*

Note on the Text

- (/) indicates the point that the next speaker interrupts
- (-) indicates an abrupt interruption
- (...) indicates a trailing off
- (*) indicates two or more different characters speaking
simultaneously

ACT ONE

'Dry Bones'

*The end of a blazing afternoon. An old-fashioned butcher's shop.
Tiles, marble slabs, a display counter covered with a sheet.
A desiccated feel to the place. A yellowing blind on the window.
Straw on the floor. Three dead pot plants and a thriving cactus.
The sound of police sirens and dogs barking gets louder and
louder. Louder still when the shop door is opened. JOHN enters.
He looks around the empty shop, then calls:*

JOHN. 'Livery!

*He mops his brow. He has a stripe of zinc-oxide sunblock on his
face and a clipboard in his hand.*

Mr Everard? Delivery!

No answer. JOHN sticks his head out of the door.

John Junior! You want to stir yer bleedin' stumps, lad?

*Beat. Then JOHN JUNIOR staggers in, dishevelled, and
lugging a sack. He also wears sunblock. He dumps the sack and
stares accusingly at JOHN.*

(Innocently.) What?

JOHN JUNIOR. You left me!

JOHN. I had to see a man about a dog.

*During the following, JOHN takes out a Cornetto and rolls it
slowly over his face. He then peels off the wrapper, folds it, puts
it in his pocket, and starts to eat.*

JOHN JUNIOR. They were kicking me and you said, 'I'll run
ahead and meet you there.'

JOHN. I thought they were your mates.

JOHN JUNIOR. They were trying to set fire to my shoes! (*Beat.*)
You know why they always go for me, don't you?

JOHN. You've just got one of those faces, I s'pose.

JOHN JUNIOR. No. It's cos it's always me carrying the bleeding sack!

JOHN. We've been through this, JJ. You carry the sack. I carry the clipboard. See?

He holds up the clipboard to demonstrate.

JOHN JUNIOR. S'like trying to carry a sugar cube through a sea of ants out there! Maybe if you had to be the human donkey once in a while, then – What's that?

JOHN (*still eating*). What does it look like?

JOHN JUNIOR. It's an ice cream!

JOHN. To some extent.

JOHN JUNIOR. Where d'you get that from?

JOHN (*primly*). Some of us don't fritter away our dairy rations on cheese omelettes, John Junior. Been saving up for weeks for this.

JOHN JUNIOR. Give us a lick.

JOHN. Not on your nelly.

JOHN JUNIOR. Aw, lemme have a –

JOHN. Get off –

JOHN JUNIOR. Just a quick one –

JOHN. NO!

JOHN JUNIOR. Alright, well, what about your wrapper then?

JOHN. What about it?

JOHN JUNIOR. Give us a little suck on it.

JOHN. Piss off.

JOHN JUNIOR. Alright, just a lick then.

JOHN. No. I'm saving it for my wife.

JOHN JUNIOR. I only want a taste, your wife's fat enough already. You're a feeder, you.

JOHN. John Junior! My wife is not fat. My wife has just –

JOHN JUNIOR. LET ME LICK YOUR WRAPPER!

JOHN. Pull yourself together, boy! What would Mr Womble say if he could see this exhibition, eh? Now come on. We've got four more drop-offs before we can –

JOHN JUNIOR *quickly leans in and takes a big bite of JOHN's ice cream.*

You little – !

JOHN JUNIOR *runs out. JOHN exits after him. Silence once more. A beat. Another beat. Then the sack bursts open and PERCHIK, choking and spluttering, bursts out. He is blood-streaked. Feathers fly. He leans into the sack and pulls out a knapsack. Quietly, he crosses to the door. Opens it. The sound of a riot; angry crowds, sirens, dogs barking, glass smashing. He slams the door shut again. Suddenly, VANESSA comes running, weeping, through the shop from a door out to the back. She stops short as she sees PERCHIK. They both freeze. Beat.*

SAUL (*off*). Vanessa!

VANESSA *runs to the icebox door, heaves it open and slams it behind her. PERCHIK panics, jumps back into the sack. SAUL enters hurriedly. He limps on his right foot and carries a stick. He stops and looks at the sack. PERCHIK's heavy breathing can be heard.*

(*Under his breath.*) Hmm... fresh.

He runs to the icebox door and bangs on it.

Little pig, little pig, let me come in!

He listens. No reply.

You can't hide in the icebox every time Sauly is naughty, Vanessa.

Pause.

Why won't you play with me?

VANESSA. Go away!

SAUL. But Vanessa! I'm having a heart attack!... Ow!

Pause.

OW. (*Beat.*) Really hurts.

Pause. He bangs on the door.

OPEN THIS DOOR!