

SAUL *chucks the spectacles in the pot, then marches on*
 PERCHIK. *He's spoiling to lamp him. At the last moment,*
 SAUL *takes out his hankie and phlegms into it.*

SAUL. Nicely done, baggage.

PERCHIK. Thanks. Listen, sorry about before. I shouldn't / have –

SAUL. Vanessa?

VANESSA. Yes, Saul?

SAUL. Tell Perchik the next time he considers kissing my wife's bottom, he should remember which one of us has papers and which one does not.

SAUL *exits*. VANESSA *turns to* PERCHIK.

VANESSA. My husband said to tell you the next time you consider –

PERCHIK. I heard.

VANESSA *pulls out her workbox. She sits and starts to sew.*
 PERCHIK *watches her intently. The muffled sound of 'Pomp and Circumstance' starts up above them.*

VANESSA. I'm glad you came, Perchik. I think we're going to be good good friends. Only, you must try not to upset Saul. He's an old man, you see. He's a bit stuck in his ways but that's only natural can you stop staring at me please?

PERCHIK (*embarrassed*). Sorry. I just... Sorry. (*Beat.*) What's he doing up there?

VANESSA. Oh, you know. Blueprints. For the revolution.

PERCHIK. For the revolution. Right. If you don't mind me saying, your husband – he's a little bit... (*He taps his head.*) Isn't he? What's it, senile dementia?

VANESSA. No, it's bloody not! He's just... past his prime. Knows a lot of stuff though.

PERCHIK. About bloody what? Lamb chops and mince?

VANESSA. No. Like, history. Culture and that. He gives me classes. You'll probably have to do them too. Frankie did. And Klaus. Only, they never understood much.

'Pomp and Circumstance' *gets louder.*

PERCHIK. Can't stand that racket. Can't we put something else on?

VANESSA. Don't have nothing, do I? Used to. Used to have loads. Tammy Wynette. She was my favourite. And Edith Piaf. I loved them two. Had all the albums. But they got lost during the move. I swear I put them in at Barking... but when we got here... they were gone. Saul says they must've fallen out of the van. Or been stolen by Gypsy DJs. Or something. I miss my records. Don't get nothing but bloody Elgar now. Hold these.

She hands PERCHIK a pair of shears to hold as she rummages in her workbox.

PERCHIK. What you making?

VANESSA. Just some curtains. For the cottage.

PERCHIK. The cottage?

VANESSA takes a scrap of paper out, gives it to PERCHIK, and continues sewing.

VANESSA. S'in the country somewhere. By the sea. I forget where. Up north though. More north than Bradford, I mean. Where it still snows. This is just – what d'you call it – *an artist's impression*. S'not finished yet, see. We're building it slowly. 'Brick by bastard brick,' Saul says. (*Confidentially.*) It's got a room just for boots, Perchik!

PERCHIK. It's nice, in 'it? Pretty.

VANESSA beams at him. She looks beautiful.

VANESSA. It's our dream house! We've waited ten years but it won't be long now. S'taking longer than expected. What with business being so bad. But things'll pick up soon. You could come with us, Perchik! I'm going to paddle in the sea every – ow!

PERCHIK. Are you okay?

VANESSA. Yeah. Just pricked myself.

PERCHIK. Let's see.

VANESSA holds her finger out.

It's bleeding.

VANESSA. Only a bit.

PERCHIK puts her finger in his mouth and sucks the blood from it.

What are you –

PERCHIK. You're a very beautiful woman.

VANESSA. What?

PERCHIK. I said. You're a Very. Beautiful. Woman.

Pause. They stare at each other. Then:

VANESSA. Shut up.

PERCHIK. I've always thought so.

VANESSA. Don't be daft, we've only just met.

PERCHIK. I knew it was you. They say the camera adds ten pounds, but I could spot you a mile off.

VANESSA. You mean – before. When you said. I mean... You've seen *Fellatio Nelson*?

PERCHIK. Seen it?! You made me come like a train twice a day for five years!

VANESSA. You're just saying that.

PERCHIK. No, I'm not! Used to steal me da's mags and films from under his bed, didn't I? Stacks of 'em, he had.

VANESSA. Including those made by the Conservative Party?

PERCHIK. 'Specially those made by the Conservative Party.

VANESSA. I should've thought your father was a Labour man.

PERCHIK. He was blue-curious.

VANESSA. I've never met a fan before.

PERCHIK. You look just the same.

VANESSA. Apart from Saul of course.

PERCHIK. Just as beautiful, / I mean it.

VANESSA. Imagine you sat there / at home.

PERCHIK. Watching you / on the telly.

VANESSA. Watching me / in my powdered wig.

PERCHIK. I can remember it off by heart.

VANESSA. Really?

PERCHIK puts one hand inside his shirt, then gallops up to her.

PERCHIK (*porn voice*). 'Hello, Lady Hamilton. I've come to fix your pianoforte.'

VANESSA. Oh no, Perchik. I can't!

PERCHIK. Aw, go on!

VANESSA. I mean, I shouldn't. That's all in the past, that's – I mean... no.

PERCHIK. Alright then. Suit yeself.

PERCHIK shrugs and walks to the blind. Looks through. VANESSA bites her lip.

VANESSA. Well. I suppose it wouldn't –

PERCHIK (*quickly*). Yes?

VANESSA. If it was just –

PERCHIK. Of course –

VANESSA. And no one has to –

PERCHIK. No!

VANESSA. What was that you said?

PERCHIK. About your pianoforte?

VANESSA. Yes.

PERCHIK (*grins*). I've come to fix it!

VANESSA. 'Oh Lord Nelson! You've caught me tinkling my ivories in my scanties! How shameful!'

PERCHIK. 'Your scanties are divine, Lady Hamilton. Now that I've seen them, I must have you now, here in this very drawing room!'

VANESSA. 'It's not a drawing room, it's a library.'

PERCHIK. 'Nonetheless!'

VANESSA. 'Oh, but I can't! I mustn't! I won't!'

PERCHIK. 'But England expects that you do, Emma!'

VANESSA. 'Then in the name of England and her outlying lands, I demand that you jizz on my tits, Lord Nelson!'

PERCHIK seizes VANESSA and leans her over his knee.