

Gary (Roger)
Brooke (Vicki)

SIDE # 9

NOISES OFF

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dines on the table, exactly where she put it.) Oh, no, I haven't — I've remembered the sardines! What a surprise! I must go out to the kitchen and make another plate of sardines to celebrate.

(Exit MRS. CLACKETT to the service quarters.)

PHILIP/TIM. I didn't get this! I'm not here. I'm in Spain. But if I didn't get it I didn't open it.

(Enter FLAVIA from the bedroom. She is holding the dress that VICKI arrived in, and the handle of the linen cupboard.)

FLAVIA. Darling... *(She stares at PHILIP/TIM in surprise, then recovers herself and looks at the dress.)* I never had a handle like this, did I?

PHILIP/TIM. *(Abstracted.)* Didn't you?

FLAVIA. I shouldn't buy anything as brassy as this. *(FLAVIA drops the dress and attempts to replace the handle on the linen cupboard behind her back.)* Oh, it's not something you gave me, is it?

PHILIP/TIM. I should never have touched it.

FLAVIA. No, it's lovely.

PHILIP/TIM. Stick it down. Put it back. Never saw it.

(Exit PHILIP/TIM into study.)

FLAVIA. Well, I'll put it in the attic, if anyone else wants to have a try.

(Exit FLAVIA along the upstairs corridor, taking the handle but leaving the dress on the floor.)

Enter ROGER through the front door, without the bag and box.)

Start
ROGER. All right, all right... Now the study door's open again! What's going on? *(He goes towards the study, and opens and closes the door. He reacts to the sound of urgent knocking overhead.)* Knocking. *(Knocking.)* Upstairs! *(He runs upstairs. Knocking.)* Oh my God, there's something in the... *(He discovers the lack of a han-*

dle.) Oh my God! (*Knocking.*) Listen! I can't, because the handle has, you know. You'll just have to... (*He demonstrates pushing. Knocking.*) Come on! Come on! (*Knocking.*) I mean, whatever it is in there. Can you hear me? Darling! (*Knocking.*) Look, don't just keep banging! There's nothing I can, I mean it won't, there's nowhere to... (*Knocking. He opens the bedroom door.*) Listen! Climb round into the... (*He indicates the bedroom*) Squeeze through the, you know, and shin down the, I mean, there must be *some way!* (*Knocking.*) Oh, for pity's sake!

(Exit ROGER into the bedroom.

Enter PHILIP from the study, holding a tax demand and an envelope. He is now being played by FREDERICK, with a plaster on his head.)

~~PHILIP. '... final notice... steps will be taken... distraint... proceedings in court...'~~

(Enter ROGER from the bedroom, pulling VICKI after him. PHILIP gazes at them, baffled.)

ROGER. Oh, it's you.

VICKI. Of course it's me! You put me in here! In the dark with all black sheets and things.

ROGER. I put you in *there*, but you managed to squeeze through the, you know.

VICKI. Why did *I* lock the door? Why did *you* lock the door!

ROGER. I couldn't, I mean, look, look, it's come off!

VICKI. *Someone* locked the door!

PHILIP. Sorry.

(Exit PHILIP apologetically into study.)

ROGER. Anyway, we can't stand here like this.

VICKI. Like what?

ROGER. I mean, you know, with people going in and out.

VICKI. OK, I'll take it off.

ROGER. In here, in here!

*(He ushers her into the bedroom.
Enter PHILIP cautiously from the study, holding the tax demand and
the envelope.)*

~~PHILIP. '... final notice... steps will be taken... distraint... pro-
ceedings in court...'~~

*(Enter ROGER from the bedroom, holding the first-aid box. He looks
up and down the landing.
Enter VICKI from the bedroom.
PHILIP stares at them.)*

VICKI. Now what?

ROGER. A hot water box! *I* didn't put it there!

VICKI. *I* didn't put it there.

~~PHILIP. Sorry.~~

(Exit PHILIP into the study.)

ROGER. Someone in the bathroom, filling first aid bottles.

(Exit ROGER into the mezzanine bathroom.)

VICKI. *(Anxious.)* You don't think there's something creepy
going on?

*(Exit VICKI into the mezzanine bathroom
Enter FLAVIA along the upstairs corridor.)*

FLAVIA. Darling... Darling? *(Enter PHILIP cautiously from
the study. He raises the income tax demand to speak.)* Darling, are
you coming to bed or aren't you?

*(Exit FLAVIA into the bedroom.
PHILIP raises his income tax demand to speak.*

Enter ROGER and VICKI from the mezzanine bathroom.)

ROGER. What did you say?

VICKI. I didn't say anything.

(Exit PHILIP into the study.)

ROGER. I mean, first there's the door handle. Now there's the first water box.

VICKI. I can feel goose-pimples all over.

ROGER. Yes, quick, get something round you.

VICKI. Get the covers over our heads.

(ROGER is about to open the bedroom door.)

ROGER. Just a moment. What did I do with those sardines?
(He goes downstairs. VICKI makes to follow.) You — wait here.

VICKI. *(Uneasily.)* You hear all sorts of funny things about these old houses.

ROGER. Yes, but this one has been extensively modernized throughout. I can't see how anything creepy would survive oil-fired central heating and ...

VICKI. What? What is it? *(ROGER looks round.)* What's happening?

ROGER. The sardines. They've gone. *(He double-takes on them.)* No, they haven't. They're here. Oh. Well. My God... I mean... my God! *(He turns and starts back upstairs. FLAVIA crawls through the front door. She picks up the sardines and takes them back to the front door.)* You put a plate of sardines down for two minutes, and the last thing you expect to find, I mean, these days, the one thing you don't expect to find when you come back is a plate of, I mean that's really weird!

VICKI. Perhaps there is something funny going on. I'm going to get into bed and put my head under the ...

(She freezes at the sight of the empty table outside the bedroom door.)

ROGER. Because, I mean, there they are! Exactly where I ...

(He realizes that the sardines are not there.)

VICKI. Bag ...

(ROGER goes back downstairs to investigate. VICKI runs after him. FLAVIA, unseen by GARRY, hesitates. She glances up towards the landing, reminded by the mention of the bag that she has failed to set it. She looks back at the table, realizing that ROGER now expects the sardines to be on the table.)

ROGER. No, they're not. I suppose Mrs. Sprockett must have, I mean, what *is* going on?

(He looks at VICKI. FLAVIA hurriedly replaces the sardines.)

VICKI. Bag!

(FLAVIA exits hurriedly through the front door.)

ROGER. Bag?

VICKI. Bag! Bag!

(She drags ROGER back upstairs.)

ROGER. What do you mean, bag, bag?

(ROGER looks over the banisters and sees the sardines.)

ROGER. Sardines!

VICKI. Bag! Bag! Bag!

ROGER. Sardines! Sardines!

VICKI. Bag! Bag! Bag!

ROGER. Sardines! Sardines!

VICKI. Bag! Bag! Bag!

(While ROGER is gazing at the sardines, and VICKI is looking at ROGER, the bedroom door opens, and FLAVIA puts the flight bag on the table outside.)

ROGER. *(Tearing himself away from the sight of the sardines.)*
Bag? What bag?

VICKI. *(Gazing at the bag.)* No bag!

ROGER. No bag?

VICKI. Your bag! Suddenly! Here! Now — gone!

ROGER. It's in the bedroom. *(He sees the bag.)* It was in the bedroom. I put it in the bedroom. I'll put it back in the bedroom.

(As ROGER goes to open the bedroom door it opens in front of him, and FLAVIA begins to come out carrying the box.)

VICKI. Don't go in there!

(ROGER finds himself holding the box, with the door closing his face.)

ROGER. The box!

VICKI. The box?

ROGER. They've *both* not gone!

VICKI. Oh! My files!

ROGER. What on earth is happening? Where's Mrs. Spratchett? *(He starts downstairs with the bag and box. VICKI follows him.)*
You wait in the bedroom.

VICKI. No! No! No!

(She runs downstairs.)

ROGER. At least put your dress on!

VICKI. I'm not going in there!

ROGER. I'll fetch it for you, I'll fetch it for you!

(He puts the bag and box down at the head of the stairs, returns to the bedroom, and sees the dress on the floor.)

Exit ROGER into the bedroom.)

VICKI. Yes, quick — let's get out of here!

(Enter ROGER from the bedroom.)

ROGER. Your dress has gone.

(As he speaks he slides the dress over the edge of the gallery with his foot to get rid of it. It falls on top of VICKI beneath, and makes her jerk her head. She feels blindly around her; her lenses have gone again.)

VICKI. I'm never going to see Basingstoke again!

ROGER. Don't panic! Don't panic! There's some perfectly rational explanation for all this.

end

(He starts downstairs, looking over the banisters, appalled at the sight of VICKI below, and falls headlong over the bag and box at the top of the stairs.)

VICKI searches blindly behind the sofa for her missing lenses.

Enter PHILIP from the study. He is holding the tax demand and the envelope.)

PHILIP. '... final notice... steps will be taken... distraint...'

(His voice dies away at the sight of ROGER lying at the bottom of the stairs.)

Enter FLAVIA along the upstairs corridor, carrying further pieces of bric-a-brac.)

FLAVIA. Darling, if we're not going to bed I'm going to clear out the attic...

PHILIP. *(To ROGER.)* Oh dear. *(He claps a handkerchief to his nose.)*

FLAVIA. Oh great heavens!

(She pushes downstairs.)