

**David Henry Wilson**

**DEATH OF A GIANT**

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## **THE CHARACTERS:**

Jim Cooper, aged 30, paralysed from the waist down  
Harry Langman, aged 30, a brain-damaged colossus  
Hilda Roberts, aged 68  
Rebecca Sharp, aged 22, a reporter  
Richard Robert Carter, a TV chat-show host

## **THE SET:**

A large room containing two single beds up left (one with a pulley), a table and chairs approx. centre, a wardrobe up right, a TV set down left, and Jim's wheelchair. There is a kitchen recess down right. The door to the hall is approx. back centre, and the door to the bathroom right centre. All scenes that do not take place in this room are played on an apron in front of the closed curtain.

DEATH OF A GIANT was first produced at the New End Theatre, Hampstead, on April 13 1993. The cast was as follows:

Jim Cooper	Zach Vanderfelt
Harry Langman	Bruce Barnden
Hilda Roberts	Elizabeth Ross
Rebecca Sharp	Kate Redshaw
R.R.Carter	Michael McNulty

Directed by Linda Woodacre  
Assistant Director: Catherine Bird  
Designers: Victoria Nelson, Claire McCormack  
Lighting: Michael E Hall  
Sound: Paul Bull  
Stage Manager: Jennifer Chadney  
Assistant Stage Manager: Giles Williams

## ACT ONE

### Scene One

*JIM and HARRY are both in bed, with Harry snoring. Jim pulls himself up by his pulley.*

JIM: Goodbye night, and hello day. Goodbye bright, and hello grey. Ah well, it could be worse. It could be better.

*He feels his bladder, and looks across at Harry, who snores extra loud.*

Jesus! Sorry about this, Harry.

*He does a Tarzan yodel. Harry snorts, grunts, and wakes.*

HARRY: Wha'?

JIM: Morning, Harry.

HARRY (*annoyed*): S...s...sleep!

JIM: No, I was awake.

HARRY: Me!

JIM: Ah, you were asleep. I know, I heard the music.

HARRY: Le...le...let me sleep!

JIM: Sorry, mate. I need a slash.

HARRY: Huh!

*Harry gets out of bed on the side furthest from Jim, then walks round to Jim's bed.*

JIM: Good job this isn't a fire alarm.

*Harry lifts him bodily.*

Oof! (*Falsetto*:) Help! Help!

*He pretends to beat Harry's back with his fists, as he is carried off right.*

Murder! Murder! (*Small voice*:) Rape? (*Off*:) Now put me down, you brute. (*Short pause*.)

Aaaaaah! (*Singing*:) Just in time, we made it just in time.

*Sound of flushing.*

One moment, Harry. A quick wash of the handies, eh? We may be bastards, but we don't have to be dirty bastards. Right, back to base.

*They re-enter.*

Now where are you taking me?

*Harry drops him on the bed.*

Bed! Good idea. No need for us to rise or shine, is there? Just put my legs in, will you?

*Harry helps him back into bed, then sits on his own bed, head in hands.*

It's not so bad, Harry, is it? I mean, we're free.

*No response.*

Harry? It's better than the bin. We can do what we like, when we like... as we like... Oh Jesus, you're not going to go silent on me, are you? (*Pause*.) When we're settled in, we'll invite some of the nurses round. You can make the tea, and I'll make the conversation. You might even make something else, if you put your mind to it. Oh come on, Harry, put me in my chair and I'll get breakfast. Harry!

HARRY: End.

JIM: What?

HARRY (*raising head*): End. END!

JIM: Don't be a bloody misery. We're beginning.

HARRY: Time...wa...waste.

JIM: That's life, unless you make something of it. We've got a chance now. Take our bearings, find out what we can do. Between us we're a man. Something can be made out of that.

*Harry holds two fingers to his head.*

You mean you're off your head, or you want to shoot yourself?

*Harry nods vigorously.*

Both. Diagnosis and cure in one go. Oh come on, Harry, let's make the effort. I mean, how am I going to get to the loo if you're not around?

*Harry points his fingers at Jim's head.*

Christ! Anyway, knowing our luck, you'd end up like me, and I'd end up like you. And we'll be back in the bloody hospital for good. Come on, you great ape, get me to the stove. We'll have breakfast, get dressed, and go and see the big wide world. Eh? How about that?

HARRY: Hu...hungry.  
 JIM: Aha! Signs of life, then. Come on.  
*Harry lifts him into his wheelchair.*  
 Legs.  
*Harry arranges his legs.*  
 Ready, steady, mind the beddy, go.  
*Harry pushes him to the stove.*  
 Now we'll test our organization, eh? Into battle, lad. Fridge. Eggs, bacon, fat. (*Sergeant-Major voice:*) Come on, come on, you 'orrible tortoise, move it, move it!  
*Harry opens the fridge and stands uncertainly.*  
 Eggs. Bacon. Fat.  
*Harry collects them and brings them to Jim, who prepares to cook breakfast. He has taken hold of the frying pan and a knife.*  
 I like mine frazzled. You?  
 HARRY: No.  
 JIM: What?  
 HARRY: F...f...fried! (*He laughs.*)  
 JIM: Bloody pansy. You'll have it frazzled, like a man. Good Danish bacon - England's greatest invention. You want fried bread?  
*Harry nods vigorously, and grins.*  
 Then bring the bread.  
*Harry brings the bread.*  
 HARRY: Crun...Crun...  
 JIM: Crunchy bread?  
 HARRY: Crun...  
 JIM: Crunchy bacon?  
 HARRY: Crunchicorn!  
 JIM: Oh, I'd forgotten.  
 HARRY: La la la!  
 JIM (*singing*): "Crunchicorn, Crunchicorn, lasts the whole day long.  
 Crunchicorn, Crunchicorn, to make you big and strong."  
 And sick. In the cupboard, Harry. How you can stomach that stuff, I don't know.  
*Harry fetches the Crunchicorn and a bowl.*  
 HARRY: Bi...big an'...s...strong.  
 JIM: You must be, to digest that. Milk in the fridge.  
*Harry fetches the milk, and sits at the table while Jim does the cooking.*  
 Now for the eggs. One, two...  
 HARRY: Two!  
 JIM: I did two.  
 HARRY: Me.  
 JIM: Two for you? Bloody hog! Go on like that and they'll be slicing your bum for breakfast.  
*He cracks a third egg.*  
 Oh, listen to that sizzle! Not even Beethoven could write a sound like that. If I were a composer, Harry, I'd write a concerto for bacon and orchestra. And on the rostrum I'd have a glass of water. You know why?  
*Harry looks as he munches.*  
 'Cos water's a good conductor.  
*Harry grins.*  
 And what a smell, eh? Life-enhancing, that is. But we must think ahead, Harry. Planning, tactics, timing. As for the battlefield, so for the table. Are we to have toast?  
*Harry nods.*  
 Then we must arm the toaster. Are we to have coffee?  
*Harry nods.*  
 Then prepare to take the plunge. Finish your Crunchirubbish, and bring us the goodies. And God said, Let there be fried bread, and there was fried bread.  
*Harry finishes and hurries across to fetch the coffee.*

Steady! Cupboard, Harry. That's it. And now I'll let you into one of Britain's best-kept secrets. For a cup of coffee you can really drink, you need...water.

*Harry laughs and fills a kettle.*

That's the way, Langman. You're learning, you're learning.

*He dishes out Harry's eggs and bacon, in exchange for the kettle.*

Get yourself outside that.

*Harry lets out an enthusiastic grunt, and goes to the table. Jim puts on the kettle and the toaster, then dishes out his own eggs and bacon.*

So you going to leave me over here, you selfish sod?

*Harry, grunting with mouth full, hurries across and wheels Jim to the table.*

How's my cooking, darling?

HARRY: Mm, mm.

JIM: Good. Glad you like it. It's the only thing I can cook. When we've finished, we'll go and do some shopping. Lay in a stock of lip-smacking, finger-licking goodies, and a few crates of booze... We're going to be all right, eh? Better than being shot at. Eggs O.K.?

*Harry nods.*

Bacon crispy, fried bread crunchy, not even mother could make it so munchy.

*Harry finishes with a clatter.*

Bloody wolf it down, though, don't you? No savouring of the morsels with you around. Bite, crunch, swallow, gone. And thanks for the memory. Go and get some toast, then. Butter in the fridge, marmalade on the shelf.

*Harry goes to the toaster, takes out a slice, and yelps.*

What's the matter?

HARRY: Bloody...hot!

JIM: Course it's hot, you great block - it's just been toasted.

*He wheels himself across, and takes out the toast. Harry looks on mistrustfully.*

JIM (contd.): Get the rest, Harry. Fridge for the butter, shelf for the marmalade.

*He puts the toast on a plate, puts the plate on his lap, and wheels himself back to the table.*

*Harry brings the butter and marmalade.*

Plates. Knives. I'll do the coffee.

*He wheels himself back to the kettle and makes the coffee, not looking at Harry.*

Cups and saucers. Milk and sugar.

*Harry is confused. He starts opening and shutting cupboard doors with a bang. He is crying.*

Bloody hell! Hold it, Harry, hold it!

*Now he sees that Harry is crying.*

Oh Christ! I'm sorry, Harry, I'm sorry! I'll do it. Sit down and have your toast.

*He wheels right up to him.*

I'm sorry.

HARRY: No good.

*He goes to his bed, and sits down, head in hands. Jim watches him for a moment, then quietly gets on with the coffee. When it's ready, he holds the pot.*

JIM: Give us a hand, will you? I can't manage this on my own. Harry! Please. I don't want hot coffee over my balls.

HARRY (despairing): Jim!

JIM: Come on, Harry. We'll adjust. It all takes time. It took my Mum and Dad six years to make me. And then another twenty to get used to me. And by the time they got used to me, I'd gone. So they had to get used to being without me. You need time to adjust, Harry.

*A pause. Harry comes across and wheels Jim to the table.*

Thanks.

*He puts the coffee pot on the table, then wheels himself back to fetch milk and sugar.*

HARRY: Better...dead.

JIM: No! Dead means finished, and we're not finished. Any man who can eat his bacon and eggs in ten seconds without a burp is not finished.

*Harry burps.*

You sod.

*He holds up the milk and sugar, which Harry collects and takes to the table.*

Well, any man who can belch like you must have a future.

HARRY: What...fu...fu...

JIM: As a pig farmer. Or a pig. The mugs are in the cupboard. Apart from the one sitting here.

*Harry fetches the mugs, and they both go back to the table.*

We'll get ourselves settled, then we'll hit the high spots.

HARRY: Opti...opti...

JIM: Optical illusion?

HARRY: Opti...

JIM: Dopti sat on a wall?

HARRY: ...mist!

JIM: Then you should take better aim.

HARRY: No! You! Opti...

JIM: I know. Me optimist. You Jane. You've got to keep faith, Harry. I can talk and you can walk, so between us...

*The doorbell rings.*

Now who the hell can that be? You expecting anyone?

*Harry shakes his head.*

Better see who it is.

*Harry points at himself.*

Easier for you than for me.\_

*Harry shakes his head.*

We'll both go.

*Harry gets up and wheels Jim out. The front door is opened, and the following dialogue is spoken off stage:*

HILDA: Hello. I'm from upstairs. Thought I'd introduce meself. I'm Hilda.

JIM: Ah. Well, we've only just moved in...

HILDA: Yes, I know. I was watchin' you yesterday...That's why I come down this mornin'.

JIM: Um. ..would you like to come in?

HILDA: Yes, all right. Thanks. I won't stay long.

*They all come in.*

JIM: We were just having coffee. Will you join us?

HILDA: That's nice. Yes. Thank you.

JIM: Get a cup, Harry. In the cupboard.

*Harry goes across, but is uncertain.*

HILDA: I don't wanner put you out.

JIM: No trouble. In the cupboard, Harry. Just open it.

*Harry fetches a mug.*

You take milk and sugar?

HILDA: Just a drop o' milk. No sugar. Got to watch me figure.

JIM: Here, we're not decent, are we? Harry, can you...oh God...um...You couldn't just get us our dressing-gowns, could you?

HILDA: Yes, where are they?

JIM: In the wardrobe.

*She goes to the wardrobe.*

Mine's red and his is green.

HILDA: Ah!

*She takes the green one across to Harry.*

More like a tent than a dressin'-gown. *(To Jim:)* He's big, inne? Shall I 'elp you on with yours?

JIM: Thanks.

*She does. Harry stands near the table, unsure.*

Just put it on, Harry.

*Harry does.*

This is our first party, so Harry's a bit shy. I'm Jim Cooper, and he's Harry Langman.

HILDA: Pleased to meet you. I'm Hilda Roberts.

JIM: Sorry I can't stand up for a lady.

HILDA: Well, I'm not much of a lady.

*They have shaken hands. Hilda is not sure whether to shake hands with Harry or not, but decides against it.*

JIM: Sit down, Harry.

*They all sit round the table.*

HILDA: Yes, I seen you arrive, 'cos I live on top there, an' I'm always lookin' out the window. Then I thought I'd come an' say 'allo.

JIM: We're both fresh out of hospital.

HILDA (*with exaggerated interest*): Oh?

JIM: I expect you'd noticed we're a bit...odd.

HILDA: No. Well, yes, I had. But you don't like to say, do you?

JIM: I'm a physical wreck, and he's a mental wreck.

HILDA: Well you don't look like wrecks. A bit damaged, maybe. Accident, was it?

JIM: Not really. We were both army officers. The glory of war. I got hit in the spine, and he got hit in the head.

HILDA: Nasty.

JIM: How about you?

HILDA: No, I'm normal. Oh. sorry...

JIM: Are you married?

HILDA: No, I'm a widow. I just live on me own up there.

JIM: So you've had your losses, too.

HILDA: Oh yes. Not that my Ron was much of a loss. I'd lost 'im to the pub before I lost 'im to the other world.

JIM: Any children?

HILDA: Two boys. Two middle-aged boys. One's in New Zealand, and one's in Scotland. The New Zealand one comes over once in a blue moon, and the Scotland one might as well be in New Zealand for all I see of 'im. The New Zealand one's married. I got three grandchildren. 'Ere...

*She produces a photo.*

JIM: Oh yes, very nice.

HILDA (*to Harry*): Would you...?

*Harry is busy with coffee and toast. Jim gestures to Hilda not to bother.*

He ain't violent, is 'e?

JIM: Wouldn't hurt a fly.

HILDA: I've never seen anyone so big.

*They all concentrate on their coffee.*

JIM: ) Toast?

HILDA: ) Either of you married?

HILDA: Sorry.

JIM: Like some toast?

HILDA: No, thanks.

JIM: Same answer: no, thanks. I was engaged, but we broke it off when this happened. As for Harry there, he was married to his weights. Army weight-lifting champion, he was. Only he doesn't remember that.

*Harry has jerked his head at the mention of weights.*

HARRY: Hm! Yeah! Weights!

JIM: Sorry, he does remember. You never know with Harry what he does remember and what he doesn't.

*Harry points at Jim.*

HARRY: You!

JIM: What? All right, I never know what he remembers.

HARRY (*negative*): Mmhm. You...weight!

JIM: What for?

HARRY: Weight! Ca...carry!

JIM: Ah! I'm the weight he lifts now. He humps me around like a rag doll.

HILDA: Did you know each other before...well, before?

JIM: Just by sight. You couldn't not know Harry by sight. But of course he was different then. Had quite a lively mind.

HARRY: I'm...here.

JIM: Oh Jesus! Sorry, Harry.

HILDA: What's wrong?

JIM: He's here. I was talking about him as if he wasn't.

HILDA: Oh! (*To Harry:*) Sorry.

JIM: Trouble is, Harry, we never know when you're here and when you're not here. Or what's in that head of yours.

HARRY: Bu...bu...bullet!

JIM: Apart from the bullet. More coffee, Hilda?

HILDA: Well, since you're offerin'.

*Jim looks in the pot.*

JIM: Harry, while you're here with us, could you put the kettle on?

HILDA: Oh, let me do that.

JIM: Thanks.

*Harry is uncertain.*

It's all right, Harry, you've been relieved.

*Hilda goes to make the coffee.*

HILDA: So they give you this flat, then?

JIM: Yes. Our little bid for freedom.

HILDA: Haven't you got a fam'ly?

JIM: My parents are still alive. But at their age they don't want to be changing nappies, and I'd rather be on my own anyway. With Harry, that is.

HILDA: And Harry?

JIM: He's got a married sister, who doesn't want to know.

HILDA: People are like that. Only wanner know you if they c'n get somethin' out of you.

HARRY: You... what... you...? Us?

HILDA: Sorry, I didn't quite...

JIM: He's asking what you hope to get out of us.

HILDA (*surprised*): Oh! Well, nothing. I was only bein' nosy. At my age that's all the action I get. Mind you, I used to be a bit of a tearaway. I wasn't always an old hag.

JIM: You're not an old hag.

HILDA: Pardon?

JIM: You're not an old hag.

HILDA: And once more for luck.

JIM (*laughing*): You're not. ..that old, and you're not a hag.

HILDA: Forty years ago I'd 'ave give you a run for yer money.

JIM: I wish you could give me a run for my money now.

HILDA: Well there you are, we're the same really. You're a runner 'oo can't run, 'e's a thinker 'oo can't think, and I'm a tearaway 'oo can't tear.

HARRY: I...think.

HILDA: All right, then you're a talker 'oo can't talk.

*He is satisfied. She has made the coffee and brings it to the table.*

JIM: What did you use to do when you were a tearaway?

HILDA: There weren't much I didn't do.

JIM: Tore it all away, did you?

HILDA: Most of it.

*She is pouring the coffee.*

I was in show business. What they called an artiste. Or what we called an artiste. They called it chorus girl.

JIM: Not the sort that never closed.

HILDA: Some o' the girls never closed, I c'n tell you. We 'ad some good times, though. Then I got married - that put a stop to the good times.

*Harry gets up and goes off right. They watch him go.*

JIM: It's all right. Nature's call. What did your husband do?

HILDA: Apart from booze? He was in the book business.

JIM: Publishing?

HILDA: Bettin'. 'E was a professional gambler. It's true. Used to travel round to all the race meetin's. If 'e won, 'e'd celebrate, an' if 'e lost, 'e'd drown 'is sorrows, so 'e ended up pissed either way.

JIM: Gave you a hard time, did he?

HILDA: No, not really. Except when 'e was 'ome, o' course. But that wasn't often.

*The lavatory flushes off stage.*

JIM: What do your sons do?

HILDA: The older one, in New Zealand, 'e's a teacher. An' the last I 'eard of the younger one, 'e was teaching the Scots 'ow to drink whisky. Is that toast goin' beggin'?

JIM: Help yourself. What do you live on, then, Hilda?

HILDA: Just me pension. D'you think 'e's all right in there?

JIM: He's washing.

HILDA: Oh, that's nice. Funny thing, the brain. Alcorol, bullets, arteries - they all change yer character, don't they? I once asked a vicar about that. I asked 'im: "What character do we 'ave when we're dead and we 'aven't got a brain?"

JIM: What did he say?

HILDA: "Wait an' see." Who's goin' to do your housework an' cooking?

JIM: Someone'll come in once a week, but I'll do the cooking and I'll train Harry to do some of the chores.

HILDA: He's more sensitive than 'e looks, inne?

JIM: There's a lot goes on underneath. He gets very depressed. HILDA: And you?

JIM: I cope.

*Harry comes in, stripped to the waist.*

And here's our little rose garden.

*Harry sees them, and is confused. He looks wildly round the room.*

It's only us, Harry.

HARRY: Hos...hos...

JIM: We've left the hospital.

*Harry subsides, but stares at Hilda.*

It's Hilda, from upstairs. She was here before.

HARRY: Can't rem...remem...

JIM: It's all right, Harry, it doesn't matter.

HARRY (*striking his own head*): Me!...Matter!

*Jim wheels himself across to Harry.*

JIM: Calm down, Harry. It'll come back to you.

*Harry sinks to his knees and clasps Jim's legs.*

HARRY: Help me!

JIM: That's what I'm here for, Harry. That's what we're all here for, in this beautifully organized world. Now get up before I knight you.

*Harry gets up.*

And put some clothes on.

*Harry goes to his bed to get dressed.*

(*To Hilda:*) Wouldn't he look great on page three? (*To Harry:*) Not here, Harry. There's a lady pres...

HILDA: 'S all right. Leave 'im. I seen plenty sights worse 'n that.

*Jim returns to the table.*

JIM: You get used to baring your all in hospital.

HILDA: Same in the chorus.

*Jim laughs.*

He needs to be doing things You've got to do things to keep yer mind off yer mind.

JIM: They had him making baskets at the hospital. Eh, Harry?

*Harry listens.*

You were making baskets at the hospital.

*Harry jerks his head.*

HARRY: Waste... bloody... time.

JIM: Harry wasn't too keen on basket-making.

HILDA: Why don't 'e do 'is weight-lifin'?

*Harry shrugs.*

JIM: He doesn't know. Or doesn't remember. Or doesn't care. What we really need is something we can do together.

HILDA: You mean like Laurel and Hardy.

JIM: Or Pozzo and Lucky. How do you fill the void?

HILDA: Gossip. I love gossip. Then I look after meself. And when I've looked after meself and there's no-one to gossip to, I go to bed.

JIM: No telly?  
HILDA: Went bust. Couldn't afford a new one.  
JIM: Are things that bad, then?  
HILDA: Well, unfortunately, I 'ad a diff'rence of opinion with the Prime Minister.  
JIM: How come?  
HILDA: I thought I needed money to live on, an' the Prime Minister disagreed.  
JIM: You're welcome to watch our telly any time.  
HILDA: Thanks.  
*Harry is dressed, and comes across to Jim.*  
HARRY (*holding nose*): You...phew!  
JIM: Yep, quite right. (*To Hilda:*) Will you excuse me?  
HILDA: Yes. Shall I do the dishes?  
JIM: Well, if you don't mind...  
HILDA: Something to do, innit?  
JIM: Thanks. You can bring my clothes in after, Harry.  
*Harry wheels Jim off, and Hilda clears the table. She sings a TV jingle as she works. Harry re-enters.*  
HILDA: Seein' to hisself, is 'e?  
*Harry nods.*  
He's a character, your friend.  
*Harry nods.*  
Yes, a real character.  
*She hums another jingle.*  
I find it a bit hard to make conversation with you.  
*Harry grins.*  
You'd noticed.  
HARRY (*pointing to himself*): Di...di...difficult.  
HILDA: But you understand all right, don't you?  
*Harry nods.*  
Your friend, will 'e ever walk again?  
*Harry shakes his head.*  
He's a very brave man.  
*Harry nods.*  
I think 'e's worried about you.  
HARRY: Worry...him worry...me.  
HILDA: No, I didn't quite follow that.  
HARRY: (*pointing to himself*): Worry!  
HILDA: You're worried.  
*Harry nods.*  
HARRY (*pointing off*): Him worry...me!  
*She thinks about it.*  
HILDA: You're worried because 'e's worried?  
*Harry nods.*  
HARRY: Him. ..him...  
*He makes a great effort, but fails. He screws up his face.*  
HILDA: Go on. Don't give up.  
*He gathers his forces again.*  
HARRY: Him...be...be...better...  
*He points to himself and gestures with his hand.*  
...No.  
HILDA: Better without you?  
*Harry nods.*  
Oh no 'e wouldn't. He needs you.  
*Harry points to his head and makes a negative gesture.*  
No, 'e was sayin' it just now. You're partners, like Laurel and Hardy.  
*Harry shakes his head.*  
HARRY: Better...no.  
HILDA: Who'd lift him up if you wasn't there? I bet 'e can't even sit on the potty without you.

*He is looking at her.*

You lift him up, an' 'e lifts you up. True? I'll tell you somethin', 'arry... Can you understand me?

*He nods.*

I got two sons. When they was little, I done everythin' for 'em - washed 'em, fed 'em, wiped their bums. And I waited for the day they could do it all themselves. And they did. But I still 'ad to cook for 'em, wash for 'em, clean, iron, shop. An' I looked forward to finishin' all that, 'cos it was 'ard work. And the time come...you followin'?

*He nods.*

The time come when I didn't 'ave to do it. 'Cos they grew up an' left 'ome. An' then I found out that what I'd been lookin' forward to all that time was bugger all. You see what I mean?

*He is looking at her.*

People need to be needed, that's all.

JIM (*off*): Harry, I'm ready.

HILDA: He needs you, see?

*Harry goes off right.*

'Ere, don't forget 'is clothes. 'Arry! Ts!

*She picks up Jim's clothes and follows Harry off right.*

(*Off*): 'Ere, you'll need these.

JIM (*off*): Hey!

HILDA (*off*): Oops, sorry! Forgot you'd be naked without 'em!

*She comes back into the room, grinning broadly.*

So sorry. Accidents will 'appen. (*To herself*;) Not very often at my age. (*Calling off*;) How often do you 'ave a bath, then?

JIM (*off*): Every day.

HILDA: Ugh, I only 'ave one a week. I thought soldiers never bathed anyway. Thought you spent all your time in muddy trenches. What d'you bath every day for?

JIM (*off*): To wash the mud off.

HILDA: Silly. Fancy bathin' every day. No wonder your legs've gone weak.

*She wanders round the room.*

Must be weird not feelin' your legs.

*She sits down on a chair.*

And now you can't stand up. 'Ere! How d'you wipe your bum?

JIM (*off*): Mind your own business!

*She gets off the chair and lowers herself onto the floor.*

HILDA: Now what?

*She tries to push herself forward.*

Or backwards?

*She tries it.*

Better. Only you can't see where you're goin'.

*She has not seen Harry wheel Jim in. Jim is now dressed.*

JIM: Having fun?

HILDA: Oh! I was just seein' 'ow you'd move without yer chair.

JIM: Ah, I thought you were Hoovering the carpet.

HILDA: No. Backwards is best.

JIM: Legs is best.

*She gets up.*

HILDA: You look different dressed. Can you do it yourself?

JIM: It's easier if Harry helps.

HILDA: You don't mind me askin', do yer? Only I might get paralysed meself one day.

JIM: Ask away.

HILDA: That's all for the moment.

JIM: Will you do something for me, then?

HILDA: After what I seen in there, I'll do anythin' for you.

JIM: Could you climb on Harry's shoulders?

HILDA: Eh?

JIM: I just want to see something.

HILDA: I could show you what you want to see without goin' up there.

JIM: No, you couldn't, honestly.  
HILDA: Highest kick in the chorus.  
JIM: That's not what I want to see.  
HILDA (*to Harry*): 'E's not kinky, h'e?  
JIM: I'll explain in a minute.  
HILDA: How do I get up there?  
JIM: Harry'll lift you.  
HILDA: No thanks. My dumb-bell days are over. 'Ere, give us a 'and.  
*She gets Harry to help her climb onto a chair, and then onto the table.*  
You'd better 'ave a good reason for this. And a clean one. Turn round, 'Arry. Now lower yerself. (*Meaningfully to Jim:*) Like I'm doin'.

*She climbs onto Harry's shoulders, and he straightens up.*  
Ouf! Like sittin' on a 'overcraft.  
*Jim studies them, wheeling himself round.*  
Well, you like my legs?  
JIM: The legs are all right. I'm not sure about the arms.  
HILDA: There's nothin' wrong with my arms!  
JIM: Could you put them by your side?  
*She does.*  
Harry, put your arms down.  
*He does.*  
HILDA: Careful!  
JIM: That might be a problem. All right, hold her legs again.  
HILDA: Which of you two is s'posed to be off 'is 'ead?  
JIM: Walk round a bit, Harry.  
*He does.*  
Do you feel safe up there?  
HILDA: The way you're behavin', I'm safer up 'ere than I am down there.  
JIM: Is it steady?  
HILDA: Sort of.  
JIM: Hang on.  
*He wheels to Harry's bed and strips off a sheet, which he takes back to them.*  
Just drape this over your shoulders, will you, Hilda? Pass it up, Harry.  
*She takes it and drapes it.*  
HILDA: Ghost rider in the sky?  
JIM: Cover Harry, too.  
*She takes it and drapes the sheet round both of them.*  
HILDA: Closin' time, 'Arry.  
HARRY: All...go...gone...dark.  
JIM: Your head's too small.  
HILDA: There's nothin' wrong with my 'ead! It's your 'ead you wanner worry about.  
JIM: Well, yes, it is my head.  
HILDA: What's this all about?  
JIM: Head and arms, those are the problems. Right, you'd better take it off before he goes to sleep.  
*Hilda takes the sheet off, crumples it up, and throws it down on Jim.*  
HILDA: There's your sheet. And I wouldn't spell it with a double e. Can I get down?  
JIM: Yep.  
HILDA: Ground floor, please.  
*Harry lowers her onto the table, and helps her down.*  
Well?  
JIM: A giant.  
HILDA: What?  
JIM: My head, his body, and we make a giant.  
HILDA: What d'you wanner be a giant for?  
JIM: Look at us, Hilda. When we go out, what do people see? An idiot pushing a paraplegic.  
HARRY: Not... idiot!

JIM: That's what people take you for. But as a giant, we won't be Harry's head and my legs - we'll be my head and his legs. Which makes up a whole man.  
HILDA: It's daft. Everyone'll stare at you.  
JIM: They stare anyway. Let them stare up instead of down.  
HILDA: They'd know you wasn't real.  
JIM: It doesn't matter. It's only a game.  
HILDA: What would you wear?  
JIM: A cloak.  
HILDA: Oh, that was the sheet!  
HARRY: Me...? See...?  
JIM: Slits at eye level.  
HILDA: Why's the arms a problem?  
JIM: Because they start at your shouldetr, s.  
HILDA: That's the usual place.  
JIM: So my arms would finish at the giant's chest.  
HILDA: What about 'is arms?  
JIM: They'd start at the chest - and finish at the knees. We'd be a mixture of Quasimodo and King Kong. We'll have to make some arms, and the giant keeps his hands in his pockets. Then we pad out the face with a wig and beard.  
HILDA: I still don't see the point.  
JIM: It's something to do.  
HARRY: Fa...famous!  
JIM: That's right, Harry. We might make a name for ourselves.  
HILDA: Well, I s'pose there's couples earn a livin' as pantomime donkeys. You'd just go up instead of along. What will you call yerselves?  
JIM: Give us a giant name.  
HILDA: Size.  
JIM: Eh?  
HILDA: Giant size.  
*Jim groans.*  
HARRY: Pa...pa...  
JIM: Giant size packet. All right, let's stop sparkling, shall we, and come up with a name. What can you make out of Jim and Harry?  
HILDA: Jimarry. Jimarry Cricket.  
JIM: Some giant. Try Cooper and Langman.  
HILDA: Coolang.  
JIM: Kulan, with a K. K-U-L-A-N. What do you think, Harry?  
HARRY: Ku...Ku...Kulan!  
JIM: Cuckoo we are, and Kulan we shall be. That's settled then. Congratulations, Hilda.  
HILDA: What for?  
JIM: You've just given birth to a giant.

## **CURTAIN**

## **END OF SCENE ONE**

## **SCENE TWO**

*A few days later. The curtain rises on the flat, in darkness. We hear voices off stage, including gales of laughter from Hilda.*

JIM: Quick! Get the bloody thing off! Here, hold these, Hilda.  
HARRY: Off! Off! Off!  
HILDA: Oh dear, oh dear!  
JIM: Don't panic, Harry! Christ!  
HILDA: That's it. I'll take it.  
*She opens the living-room door and turns on the light.*

JIM: Put me down, Harry!

*Harry, with Jim over his shoulder, charges through the doorway, across the room, and towards the bathroom. They are both in their underclothes.*

Jesus!

*They go off. Hilda shuts the door behind her. She is carrying Kulan's wig, beard and cloak.*

HILDA: Oh, what a laugh! You c'n keep yer Laurel an' 'Ardy!

*She stands in front of the mirror, and puts the robe on the floor. Then she tries on the wig and beard.*

(Deep voice:) I am Kulan. The giant...wig.

*She drapes the robe round her, with a struggle.*

Five minutes in this, I'd go bow-legged.

*She takes it off, and carries it to Jim's bed.*

Shall I put the kettle on?

JIM (off): Yes, please.

*She removes the wig and beard, which she also places on the bed, then goes to make the tea.*

*Jim and Harry re-enter.*

HILDA: Well, Kulan 'ad a successful first night, eh?

JIM: I think we opened a few eyes.

HILDA: That reporter nearly 'ad you, though.

JIM: Offering her card, you mean?

HILDA: Like most men, Kulan should learn to keep 'is 'ands to 'isself. You know she was followin' us.

JIM: Was she? Chair, Harry.

*Harry puts him in the wheelchair.*

Can you get me my dressing-gown?

*Harry does so, and during the ensuing dialogue helps him to put it on. He then puts on his own.*

How did you get rid of her?

HILDA: Told 'er she wouldn't get 'er interview if she followed us.

JIM: Well done.

HILDA: We're goin' to be spotted, though, comin' in here. They manage all right on telly, don't they, all these Supermen an' Wonderwomen. There's always a nice tree they can change be'ind, or a fence or a pillar in the middle o' the road. What you need's a portable dressin'-room.

HARRY: Ler...loo!

JIM: He wants a portable loo.

HILDA: It's a wonder 'e can portable anythin' in that cloak. Nearly ruptured meself with it. How does 'e know when to stop an' go?

JIM: Two taps.

HILDA: Two taps for what?

JIM: To stop or go.

HILDA: How does 'e know which one to do?

JIM: If he's going he stops, and if he's stopped he goes.

HILDA: Oh! That's clever.

JIM: And a tap on the right means...

HILDA: Right, an' a tap on the left...I've got you.

*Harry grins and pulls his ears.*

JIM: Oh yes, if I pull Harry's ears...?

HILDA: His 'ead falls off. I dunno.

JIM: Good-looking bird.

HILDA: Ah! You must've done a Dumbo when you seen that reporter, then.

JIM: Mhm, she was all right.

HARRY: Mmm!

HILDA: You seen 'er, did you, 'Arry?

*Harry nods and makes a shapely gesture with his hands.*

That's a good description.

JIM: Who is she, anyway?

*Hilda rummages for the card.*

HILDA: Here we are. Becky Sharp. Daily Review.

JIM: Becky Sharp?  
HILDA: You know 'er, do yer?  
JIM: Becky Sharp's in Vanity Fair.  
HILDA: She must have moved on.  
JIM: It's a novel by Thackeray.  
HILDA: Oh! I knew a man called Thackeray once. 'E was a boxer. Whackery Thackeray we used to call 'im. Got so punch-drunk we ended up callin' 'im 'Ickery Thickeray.  
*She brings the tea across to the table.*  
Where'd you get all this learnin' from anyway? I thought you was a soldier.  
JIM; Soldiers are allowed to read. Bring the cups, Harry. Harry does.  
HILDA: What was all that stuff you was spoutin' outside the theatre? I couldn't understand a word.  
JIM: Omar Khayyam.  
HILDA: Who?  
JIM: The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.  
HILDA: No wonder I couldn't understand it.  
JIM: It's a poem.  
HILDA: Oh well, I s'pose you 'ad to say somethin'. When you goin' to give Becky Sharp 'er interview?  
JIM: What am I to tell her? We need some answers - where we're from, what we're here for...  
HILDA: She's only a reporter. She's not the Archbish o' Canterbury.  
JIM: But I can't just go round reciting poetry and telling everyone I'm Kulan.  
HILDA: Sounds like you're advertisin' refrigerators.  
JIM: Exactly.  
*Harry grunts and points to the TV.*  
JIM: What do you mean, Harry?  
HARRY: Te...telly! Us!  
JIM: Doing what?  
HARRY: Ad...ad...  
HILDA: 'E means advertisin'. Why not? It's a way o' gettin' known. Then you become a TV personality. Go round openin' shops an' fetes and visitin' 'ospitals. You'd be like the royals.  
JIM: But we're not a real giant.  
HILDA: Santa Claus don't come from the North Pole, but 'e gets invited to places.  
JIM: How do we get on telly?  
HILDA: See this Becky Sharp. Contacts, that's what you need in this business.  
JIM: What am I going to tell her?  
HILDA: Tell 'er whatever you like. Tell 'er you come from a black 'ole.  
JIM: That's not a nice thing to say about Orpington.  
HILDA: That where you're from? I 'ad a cousin lived in Orpin'ton. Nympho she was. They named Petts Wood after 'er. Anyway, you can tell 'er you're from Orpin'ton - it's not a crime.  
JIM: And what else do I tell her? That I'm paralysed from the waist down?  
*Harry smashes his fist down on the table. He is looking at Jim with an expression of anguish and reproach.*  
HILDA: Oh my Gawd!  
HARRY: I...I!  
JIM: What do you mean, Harry?  
HARRY: I!  
*He points at Jim.*  
JIM: I don't understand.  
HARRY: You!...I!  
HILDA: I understand. 'E means you're only thinkin' of yerself. Right, 'Arry?  
*Harry nods.*  
JIM: Jesus Christ!  
HILDA: What's got into you all of a sudden? It all worked perfect, didn't it? I 'aven't 'ad so much fun since the night I spent on an aircraft carrier. You ought to be thrilled. *(To Harry:)* Do you know what's the matter with 'im?  
HARRY: Be...Be...Becky.

*Hilda looks at Jim, who does not look at her.*

HILDA: Why?

JIM: You're right, I'm a bloody fool. We can tell her whatever we like, so long as she gets a story. O.K., ring her, Hilda. Better make it night time, so she can't look too closely.

HILDA: Midnight in the park.

JIM: That'll do.

HILDA: You goin' to walk me to the phonebox, 'Arry?

*Harry grunts and stands.*

Not like that, though, or you'll be famous for the wrong reasons.

*He looks at what he's wearing, grunts again, and puts on some clothes.*

'Bout time you got a phone in 'ere, innit?

JIM: It's been promised.

HILDA: I s'pose they'll ring you when it's ready. Like when my 'usband asked for a loan once. They told 'im 'e could only 'ave it if 'e could pay it back. 'E said if 'e could pay it back, 'e wouldn't need it in the first place.

JIM: Did he get it?

HILDA: No. What shall I say if the girl won't come out at night?

JIM: Why shouldn't she?

HILDA: Well I wouldn't. Not with people like you around.

JIM: Tell her it's that or nothing.

HILDA: I'd be inclined to choose nothin'. Come on, 'Arry, we're only ringin' her, not takin' 'er out.

JIM: Thanks, Hilda. I don't know what we'd do without you.

HILDA: I'm enjoyin' meself. Somethin' to do, you see? Ready, 'Arry?

*She and Harry go out. There is a pause. Jim sits very still, slightly slumped. The lights go out, and the curtain falls.*

## END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

### Scene One

*The curtain is closed. In the darkness someone lights a cigarette, and in the dim light that now illuminates the apron, we see BECKY. She walks up and down a couple of times, puffing at her cigarette. KULAN enters left.*

BECKY: Kulan?

KULAN *(deep voice)*: Becky Sharp?

*She throws down her cigarette and stamps it out.*

BECKY: I was afraid you weren't coming.

KULAN: There were still people about.

BECKY: I appreciate you giving me this chance. The editor's really interested, and we might even make the front page if you give me a good story.

KULAN: Once upon a time...

BECKY: Not that sort of story. Can I ask you some facts?

KULAN: Certainly.

BECKY: Where are you from?

KULAN: Kent.

BECKY: A Kentish giant. How old are you?

KULAN: Thirty.

BECKY: And how tall?

KULAN: Eight foot eight inches.

BECKY: If you were real, you'd be the second tallest man in history.

KULAN: Who was the tallest?

BECKY: Robert Pershing Wadlow - eight foot eleven.

KULAN: A plague upon your Guinness Book of Records!

BECKY: What do you weigh?

KULAN: 33 stone, 6 pounds.

BECKY: Chest?

KULAN: 61 inches.

BECKY: What do you eat?

KULAN: Crunchicorn.

BECKY: What else?

KULAN: Little girls.

*She laughs.*

BECKY: It's all a joke, isn't it? But what's it in aid of?

KULAN: It's not a joke.

BECKY: All right. Tell me about your background.

KULAN: Trees, bushes, and dog-shit.

BECKY: No, your family!

KULAN: My family. Mother was a three-foot-six-inch dwarf from New Guinea, and my father was a pygmy. After I was born, he never trusted my mother again.

*She laughs.*

BECKY: You realize I'm recording all this.

KULAN: Ah!

BECKY: Why did you agree to meet me? Oh God, you're not a nutter, are you?

KULAN: No.

BECKY: Even if you were, you wouldn't say you were.

KULAN: I am not a nutter

BECKY: Then what's it about? Who are you really?

*No response.*

I'm supposed to write a story about you, so what do you want me to say?

KULAN: That is the problem.

BECKY: You caused a real stir, and people want to know about you. I can't give them a load of shit. Tell me something I can print.

KULAN: I'm thirty years old, and was born in Kent.

BECKY: Scoop of the year. Tell me who you really are.

KULAN: I can't do that.

BECKY: Why not?

KULAN: I can't tell you why without telling you who I am.

BECKY: You obviously want publicity or you wouldn't have come tonight. So why do you want publicity?

KULAN: Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise. ..That last infirmity of noble mind.

BECKY: You are a nutter.

KULAN: That was Milton.

BECKY: I know. And only a nutter would quote Lycidas for the Daily Review.

KULAN: You're very literate for a reporter.

BECKY: I studied Eng. Lit. You're very literate for a giant.

KULAN: I studied the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.

*She laughs.*

BECKY: Oh, I wish you'd stop messing about and give me a story.

KULAN (*in Jim's normal voice*): Look, I'm sorry, this is all very embarrassing.

BECKY: Oh! Well, thanks for the real voice. So it is just a joke.

KULAN: No! We do need the publicity...

BECKY: We. You said 'we'.

KULAN: I presumed you'd guessed that much.

BECKY: So who are you?

KULAN: I can't tell you - not yet. Just write that Kulan's a mystery. People like mysteries, don't they?

BECKY: But I've got to get something out of the interview. Why do you need the publicity?

KULAN: Kulan wants to break into show business. I wanna be de biggest star on de screen. In every respect.

BECKY: Ah! Now that makes sense. You're a couple of unemployed actors.

KULAN: No. I'm the mysterious Kulan, eight foot eight inches tall, and about to take the showbiz world by storm.

BECKY: All right. I'll plug the mystery and the statistics.

KULAN: Now tell me something. Is Becky Sharp your real name?

BECKY: Yes. It's Rebecca, but I've always been called Becky. You're not going to make a joke about vanity, are you?

KULAN: Not unless you insist. You married?

BECKY: No. You?

KULAN: No. How long have you been a reporter?

BECKY: A year.

KULAN: You told Hilda it was your first assignment!

BECKY: I lied. Sometimes people are more cooperative if they feel sorry for you.

KULAN: I'd noticed.

BECKY: Only I haven't got very far.

KULAN: You're aiming high?

BECKY: Right to the top of the Big Wheel. That's why I need the front page.

KULAN (*deep voice*): Well, Becky Sharp, climb to the top, then stop the wheel from turning. Look down upon the earth below, and watch the fairground burning. (*Normal voice*;) Let's go home. You have a car?

BECKY: Yes.

KULAN: I'll walk you to it.

BECKY: Can I see you again?

KULAN: Why?

BECKY: I'm interested.

KULAN: Hilda'll keep in touch.

BECKY: Can I ask you one more question?

KULAN: Just one.

BECKY (*pointing at Kulan's chest*): What's his name? (*Pause*.) You said I could ask one more question.

KULAN: I didn't say I'd answer it.

BECKY: I'm going to find out who you are. I will somehow. Why don't you save me the trouble and just tell me? I'll keep it quiet, I promise.

KULAN: Let's go.

BECKY: Why won't you tell me?

KULAN: Curiosity kills cats. And giants.

*They go off. Complete blackout. A phone rings.*

VOICE: Daily Review.

HILDA: I'd like to speak to Becky Sharp, please.

VOICE: Hold on.

*Lights up on Hilda at one side of the stage and Becky at the other. The curtain is still down.*

BECKY: Becky Sharp.

HILDA: It's Hilda.

BECKY: Ah, I've been waiting for you.

HILDA: Nice little write-up, but page nine weren't quite what we was expectin'.

BECKY: It would have been a nice big write-up if I'd had some more information. But listen, we've had several inquiries.

HILDA: Ah!

BECKY: The BBC, and a circus...

HILDA: Did you get on to Crunchicorn?

BECKY: Yes, and they're interested, too.

HILDA: Good!

BECKY: Look, tell me where you live and I'll bring you the list.

HILDA: I can't do that, dear. Give us the numbers, and I'll let you know where 'e's goin'. Right?

BECKY: You promise?

HILDA: You fasten my zip and I'll fasten yours. Give us Crunchicorn first.

*Lights out. The curtain rises and lights go up on the flat. Jim and Harry are sitting at the table. The doorbell rings.*

JIM: That's her. Go on, Harry.

*Harry goes out.*

HILDA (*singing, off*): "Crunchicorn, Crunchicorn, lasts the whole day long..."

*She comes in, followed by Harry.*

"Crunchicorn, Crunchicorn, to make you big and strong."

JIM: They want us?

HILDA: They want Kulan!

*Joyful whoops. Hilda kisses Harry, and goes to Jim for a kiss.*

HARRY: Crun...Crunchicorn!

*Hilda takes off her coat, and they all sit at the table.*

HILDA: Any tea left? I'm gaspin'.

JIM: Get Hilda a cup, Harry.

*Harry goes to the cupboard.*

What happened, then?

HILDA: Well, I went to this great plush office, all glitz 'n' gloss, an' saw this Mr Dapont, advertisin' director. Talks more like a Daponce, but still...'E says 'e's been lookin' for a new slant – an' 'e needs one, too, from the look of 'im. Anyway, they'll pay for you to make a video, an' if they like it, they'll build a campaign round Kulan.

*With the cup, Harry brings a packet of Crunchicorn, which he holds up with a triumphant yell:*

HARRY: Crun...Crun...Crunchicorn!

*He drops the cup, which breaks into two pieces. Silence. He picks up the pieces and stares at them.*

HILDA: It's all right, 'Arry. I'll just 'ave half a cup.

*A momentary pause, then the tension breaks and they all laugh.*

Go on, get us another one.

*Harry goes.*

'E's settin' it all up for next week.

JIM: How much does he know about us?

HILDA: 'E's read the article.

JIM: But he doesn't know who we are.

HILDA; No.

*Harry returns with a cup.*

HARRY: Who. ...whole cup!

HILDA: Thanks, 'Arry.

HARRY (*pointing to himself*): Ha...half a he...head.

HILDA: Half a 'ead and a great big everythin' else, that's you, 'Arry.

*He sits down, and she helps herself to tea.*

JIM: What did you tell him?

HILDA: About what?

JIM: Us. Kulan.

HILDA: Nothin', except you're friends o' mine, and you don't want anyone to know 'oo you are.

HARRY: Pa...pay?

JIM: Yes, what about the business side?

HILDA: You can leave that to your official representative.

JIM: Who's that?

HILDA: Me! Who d'you think? Oh, an' 'e's agreed to let Becky in on it.

JIM: Becky?

HILDA: To give us press coverage.

JIM: I don't want Becky there.

HILDA: Why not?

JIM: I don't want her there, that's all.

HILDA: We've got to 'ave 'er there. That's part o' the deal. She got the Crunchy people for us in the first place, an' I promised.

JIM: Promised what?

HILDA: To let 'er in on whatever we was doin'.

JIM: I don't want her around.

HILDA: She'll be around whether you want 'er or not. I give my word, and I'm not breakin' it.

*A slightly tense pause.*

JIM: Hilda Roberts, do you know what I'd do if you weren't our official representative?

HILDA: What?

JIM: I'd make you our official representative.

*They grin.*

HILDA: I dunno which o' you two's the nuttier.

*Harry points at Jim.*

You're right. Maybe 'e don't eat enough Crunchicorn.

HARRY: Crun...Crun...Crunchicorn!

*Lights out.*

**Curtain.**

**End of Scene One.**

## **Scene Two**

*A few weeks later. When the curtain rises, Jim and Harry are in bed, as at the start of Act One, except that Harry is not snoring.*

HARRY (*singing tunelessly*): Crunchicorn ... Crunchicorn...

*He sits up.*

Crunchicorn ... Crunchicorn...

*He looks across at Jim, who does not stir. Harry gets out of bed, stands over Jim. and sings very loudly:*

Crunchicorn ... Crunchicorn...

*Still no response. Harry is confused for a moment, but gathers himself and goes to fetch his Crunchicorn, bowl, spoon and milk. Then he sits at the table and begins to eat noisily.*

JIM: You and your bloody Crunchicorn.

*Harry grins.*

Like a regiment marching on gravel.

HARRY: Bi...big and s...strong. Up?

JIM: No hurry. Finish your gravel.

*He hauls himself up by his pulley, and sits watching Harry.*

Don't know which is worse, your singing or your eating.

HARRY: Ku...Kulan...fa...fa...

JIM: Fake?

HARRY: Famous!

*Jim shrugs his shoulders. Harry pours out some more Crunchicorn.*

JIM: If you go on eating that stuff, you'll have ears growing out of your ears.

*Harry goes on scoffing.*

You like being Kulan?

*Harry nods.*

Thought you did.

HARRY (*with mouth full*): No...think.

JIM: What?

*Harry points to his head, then gestures negatively.*

Ah, you don't have to think. Thinking hurts, does it, Harry?

*Harry looks at him.*

Yes, of course it does. Sorry.

HARRY: You like...Be...Be...

JIM: Do I like being Kulan?

HARRY: No! You...Be...Becky.

JIM: Do I like Becky?

*Harry grunts.*

Now what the hell made you ask that?

HARRY: Be...Becky...  
*He makes his curvy gesture.*

JIM (*rather short*): I know. You've said that before. Very funny.  
*Harry is put out by the tone. He repeats the gesture more agitatedly.*

HARRY: Be...Becky.

JIM: I don't want to talk about Becky. I want to talk about Kulan.

HARRY: No...joke!

JIM: All right, all right. Joke. Ha ha. Becky is very...  
*He makes the curvy gesture.*

Satisfied?

*Harry looks directly at him.*

HARRY: No...joke.  
*They stare at each other for a moment, then Jim breaks the contact.*

JIM: I want to talk about Kulan.  
*Harry has finished his Crunchicorn.*

I don't know how long we can keep this thing going...

HARRY: Egg! Egg and...

JIM: In a minute, Harry. I'm saying that it's getting difficult...

HARRY: Egg!

JIM: Jesus Christ! Can't you wait?

HARRY: Ba...bacon!

JIM: I'm trying to talk about our future!

HARRY: No!  
*He gets up and strides to the bed.*

JIM: What are you doing?  
*Harry picks him up bodily and puts him in the wheelchair.*

For Christ's sake, Harry! I'll cook your bloody eggs and bacon!  
*Harry starts to wheel him.*

LEGS!  
*Harry stops and arranges Jim's legs.*

You bloody maniac! Now I need a slash, so you'll still have to wait.  
*Harry starts to wheel him again.*

I can manage. You get the things out.  
*He wheels himself off, speaking as he goes:*

Anyway, it's about time you learnt to cook for yourself.  
*Harry stares after him. He is very troubled. He fetches bacon and eggs from the fridge and lays them ready, grunting all the time. The lavatory is flushed off stage, and Jim returns.*

The trouble with Kulan, Harry, is what happens when we're exposed.  
*Harry's face crumples. He picks up an egg and smashes it on his head.*

HARRY: HEAD!  
*Jim is shocked and moved.*

JIM: Oh God! What's that for, Harry?

HARRY (*very disturbed*): You...you...

JIM: What have I done? Come here and let's wipe off that mess. Come on, Harry.  
*Harry does not move. Jim wheels himself to the sink, picks up a towel, and heads towards Harry.*

I can't reach. You'll have to kneel down.  
*Harry turns, walks away, and sits on his bed. Jim follows, and eventually wipes the egg off Harry's face and pyjama jacket.*

What the hell's this all about, anyway?  
*Harry sits impassive.*

What's going on in that head of yours?

HARRY: Be...Becky.

JIM: What about Becky?

HARRY: You...you...

JIM: I what?

HARRY: You - like...like Becky.

JIM: Yes, all right. I like Becky. Oh Christ! You like Becky, too, is that it?

*Harry stares straight at Jim.*

No, that's not it. (*With real concern:*) Then what is the matter, Harry?

HARRY: A...a...lone.

JIM: Alone?

HARRY (*with a great effort*): No...Ku...Kulan...You...Be...Becky.

JIM (*gently*): No, Harry, never. Becky doesn't even know me - she only knows Kulan. Jesus! You're my legs, Harry. I can't live without my legs.

HARRY: Wheel!

JIM: How do I get in and out? If anybody leaves, it'll be you leaving me.

HARRY: Becky.

JIM: No. It's not even worth talking about. Let's have our eggs and bacon.

*He wheels himself away to the kitchen. Harry stays on the bed.*

Kulan's the problem. Every time we do it, I'm scared something'll go wrong - I'll fall off, you'll fall over, or we'll make a mistake. Are you listening, Harry? Maybe Kulan should just disappear.

HARRY: No! Ku...Kulan b...b...bright.

JIM: Bright?

HARRY: Us...

*He waves his hands, trying to explain, then makes a gesture of finality.*

Da...da...dark.

JIM: Darker still if we give ourselves away.

HARRY (*pointing at Jim*): Be...Becky.

JIM: Don't go on about Becky!

HARRY: You!

*There is a ring at the door.*

JIM: That'll be Hilda. Let her in, Harry.

*Harry stands.*

HARRY: You! Not me.

*Harry goes off. Jim stares after him.*

JIM: Jesus!

*He turns his attention to the cooking. Harry comes in with Hilda.*

HILDA (*off*): Mornin', 'Arry. (*On:*) Mornin', Jim.

JIM: Hello, Hilda.

HILDA: How's Laurel an' 'Ardy this mornin', then? An' why aren't you watchin' telly? What's the good of a telly if it ain't bein' watched?

*She switches it on. Harry immediately goes to watch it.*

HARRY: Crun. . .Crun...

HILDA: Might be. I wish the papers would advertise the adverts. They're a lot better than the programmes anyway.

JIM: You had breakfast, Hilda?

HILDA: Yes, thanks. 'Ad it at breakfast time. Unlike some.

*The dialogue continues over the commercials.*

But I won't say no if yer makin' coffee.

JIM: Right.

HILDA: I wonder if God watches the commercials. 'E could learn a thing or two.

JIM: Bacon and eggs, Harry.

*Harry grunts, and points to the TV, which he continues to watch.*

HILDA: I'll get it.

*She collects both plates, and puts them on the table. Jim wheels himself across.*

How many times you seen it?

JIM: Six or seven.

HILDA: Why don't you record it? Could watch it all day then. You eat up, and I'll do the coffee.

JIM: Thanks.

*She returns to the stove.*

HILDA: I've been 'avin' a few ideas. I think I can solve our biggest problem.

*The Crunchicorn advert comes on.*

HARRY: Ah!

JIM: That's it.  
*They all watch. Hilda and Jim are calm, but Harry hugs himself with pleasure.*

BOY'S VOICE: Breakfast! Yuck!  
I hate this muck!

MOTHER'S VOICE: I'm worried, dear, about our Paul.  
He never eats, and he's so small.

FATHER'S VOICE: I guess it's time that we stopped foolin'  
And sent for Crunchicorn and Kulan!

*Burst of music.*

ALL: It's Kulan!

KULAN'S VOICE: This worry you need not endure,  
For Giant Kulan has the cure.  
One bowl of Crunchicorn a day  
Will chase your troubles far away.  
With Crunchicorn you can't go wrong,  
For it will make you big and strong.

*More music.*

ALL: Crunchicorn!

BOY'S VOICE: Gosh, thank you, Kulan, and yippee!  
From now on, Crunchicorn for me!

ALL (*singing*): Crunchicorn, Crunchicorn, lasts the whole day long.  
Crunchicorn, Crunchicorn, to make you big and strong.

*A final burst of music. Hilda then switches off the set.*

HARRY: (*singing tunelessly*): Crunchicorn ... Crunchicorn...

*He stands in giant's pose, as if holding Jim on his shoulders. Hilda returns to coffee-making.*

JIM: Come and eat your eggs, Harry, before they hatch.

*Harry roars hungrily, and sits down to devour his plateful.*

HILDA: It's a good advert. There's some you can't see more'n once, but that one's got  
repeatability. The way 'e comes through the wall! Like a bomb in a balloon.

JIM: You were saying you'd solved a problem, Hilda.

HILDA: Right. Transport.

JIM: Ah!

HILDA: What d'you want first, long-term or short-term?

JIM: Long-term.

HILDA: A lorry.

JIM: Where do we get a lorry from?

HILDA: That's why it's long-term.

JIM: So what's the short-term?

HILDA: You'll laugh when I tell you. A 'orse an' cart.

JIM: Horse and cart?

HILDA: All right, you won't laugh.

*She comes across with the coffee and joins them.*

A covered waggon, to be precise.

JIM: John Wayne left you his, did he?

HILDA: No, but I know a man oo's got one. Used to be a jockey. You might've 'eard of 'im -  
Steve Laurence.

*Jim shakes his head.*

Bit before your time, maybe. 'Is only claim to fame was his last race. 'E was in a steeplechase,  
ridin' a 'orse called 'Ard Times. An' 'e fell on 'Ard Times. It's true! 'E's a rag an' bone man  
now, though he calls hisself a clearance specialist. 'E'd drive you round till you got a lorry.

JIM: That's assuming we're going anywhere.

HILDA: What d'you mean?

JIM: We were discussing it just now. I'm not sure that I want to go on being Kulan.

*Harry grunts and shakes his fist at Jim.*

HILDA: Oh! I thought there was a bit of elastic in the air. So what's caused the miseries this  
time?

JIM: Sooner or later someone's going to find out who we are.

HARRY: Be...Becky!  
 JIM: It's not Becky!  
 HILDA: What about Becky?  
 HARRY: Hi...him!  
*He points at himself, then makes a gesture of dismissal.*  
 HILDA: What's 'e mean?  
 JIM: He's got Becky on the brain.  
*Harry grunts loudly in protest, and points vehemently at Jim.*  
 HARRY: YOU!  
 JIM: I'm not the one who keeps talking about Becky! Dammit!  
*Harry's face begins to crumple.*  
 HILDA: 'Ere, 'ere, 'ere, 'ere, 'ere! What's all this? World War Three? Stop it, the pair of you!  
 Now then, 'Arry, explain it to me.  
 HARRY: Him...Be...Becky.  
*Again he points at himself with a gesture of dismissal.*  
 Me.  
 JIM: He thinks I'm going to go off with Becky and leave him.  
 HILDA: Oh?  
 JIM: I've told him it's crazy. Becky doesn't even know me.  
 HILDA: Are you keen?  
 JIM: On what?  
 HILDA: Rice puddin'. What d'you think? Becky.  
*Harry gets up and goes off to the bathroom. They watch him go.*  
 Well?  
 JIM: What?  
 HILDA: Are you keen or aren't you?  
 JIM: Hilda, Becky only knows Kulan, and I'm not Kulan.  
 HILDA: Who d'you think you are, the Prime Minister?  
 JIM: What do you mean?  
 HILDA: I asked a straight question. Why don't you give me a straight answer?  
*Pause.*  
 JIM: Jesus!  
*He covers his face with his hands.*  
 HILDA: Let it out, son. Say it!  
*Pause.*  
 Say it, Jim.  
 JIM: I'm keen.  
 HILDA: Thought you were.  
*He raises his head.*  
 JIM: I still feel things, Hilda.  
 HILDA: Course you do. You'd be dead if you didn't. It's the same when yer old - you only dry up outside. Don't see why you 'ave to kill off Kulan, though.  
 JIM: Maybe there are certain things I don't want to feel.  
 HILDA: So you'd rather go back to the void.  
 JIM: You don't get hurt in a void.  
 HILDA: You don't get nothin' in a void. What about 'Arry? Bit 'ard on him – givin' 'im a 'ouse, then knockin' it down.  
 JIM: It would be even harder if someone else knocked it down.  
 HILDA: Nobody else wants to knock it down.  
 JIM: People want to know who we are.  
 HILDA: Does it matter?  
 JIM: Yes.  
 HILDA: So yer'd rather quit. No Kulan, no Becky, no telly, no nothin'. You've got a lot in common with my 'usband.  
 JIM: In what way?  
 HILDA: You like to bet on a sure loser.  
*There is a ring at the door.*  
 JIM: Who could that be?

HILDA: Shall I go?

JIM: Yes, please.

*She goes out. Jim gathers the plates.*

HILDA (*off*): Oh, it's you!

BECKY (*off*): Hello, Hilda.

HILDA: You...you can't come in, dear, it's...

BECKY: I think I ought to come in.

HILDA: No.

JIM: My God!

BECKY: I know who Kulan is.

HILDA: Wait a minute.

*She comes back in.*

It's 'er.

JIM: I don't want to see her!

HILDA: What shall I do?

JIM: Tell her to...

*Becky enters. At the same time Harry comes in from the bathroom, dressed in trousers and vest. The scene freezes for a moment.*

BECKY: Mr Kulan, I presume.

HILDA: No, these are two friends of mine - Jim an' 'Arry...

JIM: It's all right, Hilda, she knows.

BECKY: You've no idea the trouble I've had finding you. I've been to all the Hilda Robertses in London. And then I nearly missed you. I was just leaving when your neighbour popped her head out and said you'd be with...well...

JIM: The cripple and the nutcase.

BECKY: Something like that. I've been standing outside for ten minutes, plucking up the courage to ring.

HILDA: You shouldn't 'ave done.

BECKY: Oh come on, I'd have found out in the end. Or somebody else would. I'm glad it's me. (To Jim:) How disabled are you?

JIM: I can't walk.

BECKY: I see! He's the legs and you're the head. (*To Hilda:*) I thought one was a strong man and the other an actor.

JIM: No, he's not an actor.

BECKY: I was right about the other one, though, wasn't I? (*To Harry:*) You are a strong man, aren't you?

HARRY: Bi...big and s...strong!

BECKY (*to Hilda*): What's wrong with him?

HILDA: There's nothin' wrong with 'im.

JIM: He got shot in the head.

*Becky turns to Jim.*

And this one got shot in the back. Harry, help me get dressed, will you?

*He starts to wheel himself towards the bathroom.*

BECKY: No, let me give you the news first!

JIM: What news?

BECKY: Richard Robert Carter wants you on his show! You know, Person to Person.

HILDA: Oooh, we are getting' famous!

BECKY: It's a terrific break.

JIM: Come on, Harry.

HARRY: Ku.. .Kulan. . .s. . .star!

BECKY: That's right. This can make you!

JIM: Harry!

*He wheels off, and Harry follows.*

BECKY: What's the matter with him? I'd have thought he'd be pleased.

HILDA: Coffee?

BECKY: Yes, please.

*They go to the table.*

HILDA: Are those real?

BECKY: What?

*Hilda points at Becky's breasts. Becky puts her hand on one breast, and Hilda nods.*

Yes, of course they are.

HILDA: Well, if they wasn't, 'ow would you feel if the paddin' fell out in front of a feller?

BECKY: But I knew he wasn't a real giant!

HILDA: You knew what 'e wasn't, but you didn't know what 'e was.

BECKY: Someone would have found out in the end.

HILDA: You're the last person 'e wanted to do it.

BECKY: Why?

HILDA: Well, if you don't know, I'm not goin' to tell you.

BECKY: Oh no, you're not saying he fancies me, are you? That's ridiculous.

HILDA: Why's it ridiculous? It's only 'is legs 'as stopped workin'. You mean to tell me you never swung your 'ips in front of 'im?

BECKY: I've just been doing my job, honestly. There was never anything personal.

HILDA: I never said there was. People can fall in love with the television screen. I'm just tellin' you why 'e isn't pleased to see you. 'E was thinkin' o' killin' Kulan off even before you come, so I don't know what 'e'll do now.

BECKY: Oh, he mustn't. Kulan's getting famous!

HILDA: So you goin' to say oo they are?

BECKY: I don't know. We must think what effect it would have.

HILDA: On 'oo?

BECKY: On the Kulan story.

HILDA: It's just a story, is it?

BECKY: The question is whether it'll make people more interested or less.

HILDA: I wasn't thinking of people.

BECKY: Sorry?

HILDA: I was thinkin' o' Jim an' 'Arry.

BECKY: So am I. Would it be good for them or bad?

*Becky lights up a cigarette.*

HILDA: They don't smoke.

BECKY: What?

HILDA: Some people don't like the smell.

*Becky stubs the cigarette out.*

BECKY: Oh! Sorry.

HILDA: I expect you mean well, but you could tip those two off balance.

BECKY: It's a tremendous story, though, Hilda, don't you see? Two disabled people overcoming their problems. Everyone'll be moved by that.

HILDA: I'm not so sure Jim wants 'em to be moved.

BECKY: Look, if I don't tell the story, someone else will.

*Jim re-enters, wheeled by Harry. They are both dressed.*

JIM: Well, have you decided our future?

HILDA: Becky thinks your story could be good for Kulan.

BECKY: It's got everything. It's unusual, it's human, it's warm. I mean, Kulan could become a symbol for all disabled people.

HILDA: She's got a point, Jim. You c'd do a lot o' good.

*Harry sits at the table. Jim wheels himself to the front of the stage, and gazes ahead with an expressionless face.*

BECKY: You could mount a one-man crusade for the disabled.

HILDA: Two-man.

BECKY: The Review would back you. Think of all the charity work you could do.

HILDA: Would the Review 'elp with transport?

BECKY: What transport?

HILDA: We need a lorry.

BECKY: I'm sure they would. The Review would sponsor you, if you gave us the rights.

HILDA: What rights?

BECKY: To the story. Their lives up to the shooting, and everything that happened afterwards. This could be great for all of us, Hilda.

HILDA: Well, yes, there's spondulicks in it for everybody. I c'n see that. But it's not up to me.

*She motions towards Jim. Becky goes to him.*

BECKY: What do you say?

JIM: What about?

BECKY: Coming in with the Review. You give us the exclusive, and we'll give you everything you want.

JIM: What do you get out of it?

BECKY: Me? I get the story! It's my assignment! And we'll hit the front page, I know we will!

JIM: Is the front page so important?

BECKY: Yes! Yes, yes, yes!

JIM: You want to be on the front page, Harry?

HARRY: New... new...

JIM: Front page of the Review.

HARRY: Ku...Kulan"

JIM: Not Kulan. You.

*Harry does not understand. Jim wheels round to him.*

HARRY: Ku...Kulan...fa...

JIM: Not Kulan. The fact that you and I are Kulan. You and me on the front page, Harry.

HARRY: No! End ...Kulan...

JIM (*to Becky*): There's your answer.

BECKY: Harry, listen. When we tell them who you are, it won't be the end of Kulan. Kulan will go on just the same. People will admire you for what you're doing.

HARRY: Ad...admire Ku...Kulan.

BECKY: No, admire you.

*Harry is troubled. He shakes his head and looks towards Jim. Becky looks from one to the other, then kneels in front of Jim and takes his hand.*

It's a big chance for all of us, Jim! The Carter show'll make you hot news. Then we'll come in straight afterwards with the story - it'll be a sensation!

JIM: Kiss me.

*She lets go of his hand and stands, looking at him all the time. There is a tense pause, then she bends over him and kisses him. Harry watches, fascinated.*

BECKY: You, too?

*She kisses Harry.*

Well, are we in business?

JIM: Hilda?

HILDA: Go for it. It's like you was sayin' - they'll know sooner or later. Do it Becky's way an' make the most of it.

JIM: That's your advice as our official representative?

HILDA: As your official representative, I'd kick you all the way there.

*Pause.*

JIM: All right.

BECKY: Great!

HARRY: What?

JIM: Person to Person, Harry. We're going to do a chat show.

HARRY: Ku...Kulan?

JIM: Yes, Kulan. All right?

*Harry nods.*

HARRY: Fa...famous?

JIM: Very famous, Harry. Bigger than Crunchicorn.

BECKY: I'll make all the arrangements, then.

JIM: You do that, Becky.

BECKY: You won't regret it, I promise.

HILDA: If there's arrangements to be made, I think the official representative should be there. As we used to say in the chorus: no commitments till we see the fitments.

BECKY: Then we'll do it together.

**Lights out**

**Curtain**

VOICE: Ladies and gentlemen, live from the BBC Television Centre, we present: Person to Person.

*Music.*

And here is your host: Richard Robert Carter.

*Applause. Lights up on apron. Enter Richard Robert Carter.*

CARTER: Thank you, and good evening. Tonight, ladies and gentlemen, my guest is a man we can really look up to - in fact he's a man we have to look up to. He's eight foot eight inches tall. You all know him as the Crunchicorn Giant, but whether he feeds on Crunchicorn or Crunchicorn feeds on him, we shall have to find out. We shall be breaking new ground tonight - in more senses than one if this stage isn't reinforced. Ladies and gentlemen, weighing in at 33 stone and six pounds, and undoubtedly the biggest star ever to appear on this show, please welcome Kulan.

*Applause. Music. Enter Kulan.*

CARTER: Welcome to the show, Kulan.

KULAN (*deep voice*): Thank you.

CARTER: After this I shall be changing my name to Dislocarter! How do you tie your shoelaces?

KULAN: In a bow.

CARTER: Ask a silly question...Tell us, Kulan, what are the main hazards for a giant these days?

KULAN: Low doors, low ceilings, and short-sighted dogs.

CARTER: They go barking up the wrong tree, do they?

KULAN: It's not the barking that worries me.

CARTER: What are the advantages of being eight foot eight inches tall?

KULAN: It's useful for putting earrings on giraffes.

CARTER: Ah! Do you get many orders for that?

KULAN: No, but we'll be rich if it ever comes into fashion.

CARTER: Any interested giraffes should ring the BBC at once. What about embarrassing moments, Kulan?

KULAN: This programme.

CARTER: Ha ha! Well, enough of this merry banter, as they say. Let's see if we can probe a little beneath the hairy exterior, and discover the man...or men...behind the mask. Like the labourer's cottage, Kulan, you are clearly one up and one down, and what our viewers would like to know is who you are, and how you came to be Kulan.

KULAN: Kulan is or are the giant that eats Crunchicorn.

CARTER: That's what you do.

KULAN: That's who I am.

CARTER: That's Kulan. But who is or are underneath Kulan?

KULAN: I don't have to answer that question.

CARTER: Of course not. But nobody will blame me for asking it. (*To Kulan 's chest:*) You don't blame me, do you?

KULAN: My chest is sealed.

CARTER: So it appears. Well, Kulan, if you won't tell us who you are, perhaps you'll tell us where you're going. After Crunchicorn will it be films, the circus, the wrestling ring? Mixed doubles at Wimbledon?

KULAN: I don't know where I'm going. We all float upon a wild and violent sea each way and move.

CARTER: Yes, of course we do. You take the words right out of my mouth. But did Crunchicorn create Kulan, or does Kulan have an existence of his own? How did Kulan come into being?

KULAN: Kulan was begotten by despair upon impossibility.

CARTER: Ugh! Tell us more.

KULAN: There's nothing more to tell.

CARTER: A most mysterious giant. You won't tell us where you're from or where you're going or who you are or what you want. Perhaps you'll tell us why you agreed to appear on this show?

KULAN: I'll tell you a story.

CARTER: Ah! (*Pause.*) Go on, then.

KULAN: There was once a little boy, and this little boy was always crying: "Look at me!" and "Listen to me!" But no-one took any notice. So one day he painted himself all colours - red, green, yellow, purple. He painted his face, his body, his hair, and he went out into the street crying: "Look at me!" and "Listen to me!" And people crowded round him, because he really was an extraordinary sight, and they did look, and they did listen, waiting for him to do or say something. But he did nothing, and said nothing. Because he had nothing to do or say. So people went away again, and he washed off the paint, climbed the nearest tree, and hanged himself.

*Silence.*

CARTER: A grim tale. Well, you don't have to hang yourself, Kulan. The people are crowding round - several million of them - and all you have to do is tell them who you are. It can't be that difficult.

KULAN: Lift up the robe.

*Carter stares at him.*

It's what you want, isn't it? What everyone wants. Lift up the robe.

*Carter takes the bottom of the robe.*

Go on.

*As Carter lifts, Jim begins to pull the robe over his head, progressively revealing Harry and himself. They are both in their underclothes. When the robe is finally off, Jim removes his wig and beard, and Harry stands blinking in the bright light. He is confused, but eventually realizes what has happened. Carter stands spellbound.*

KULAN: We are Kulan.

HARRY: No! No! No!

*He lifts Jim off him, and holds him for a moment as if he is going to hurl him away.*

JIM: Put me on the ground, Harry.

*Harry hesitates, then puts Jim down.*

HARRY: Jim! Jim!

JIM: Kulan can't sit down, but as you see, I can't stand up.

CARTER: My God!

JIM: Is that entertaining enough for you, Mr Carter?

*With a cry of anguish, Harry picks Jim up bodily and rushes off stage.*

CARTER: Ladies and gentlemen, on a live show you must expect the unexpected, and we certainly didn't expect anything as unexpected as that. I'm afraid we've cut the giant Kulan in half, and two very peculiar halves they were. I don't suppose they'll be coming back, and so...  
*He breaks off as Hilda comes on stage. She is in tears.*

What the devil...

HILDA: They're not peculiar! They're Jim an' 'Arry!

*She slaps his face, takes the robe, and goes off. Lights out.*

*After a short pause the curtain rises on the flat. Harry is at the table, staring into space, and Jim is also at the table, in his wheelchair. Both men are in their dressing-gowns. Hilda brings them tea.*

HILDA: All I'm sayin' is you should 'ave warned us.

JIM: I didn't know it was going to happen.

HILDA: At least you could've kept yer trousers on. I dunno what people are goin' to think. (Kindly:) 'Ave a cup o' tea, 'Arry. (No response.) 'Arry! Ts! The shock alone could've killed 'im.

JIM: I had to do something, Hilda. It was unbearable.

HILDA: You didn't 'ave to expose yerselves. You should just have walked off. With dignity. Instead of showin' everyone yer underpants.

JIM: What happened afterwards?

HILDA: I dunno. Yes I do. 'E said somethin' about live shows, an' 'e 'adn't expected you two to be so peculiar. Then somebody come on stage and slapped 'is face.

JIM: Who?

HILDA: Me.

JIM: You didn't, did you?

HILDA: Yes I did.

JIM: What for?

HILDA: 'Cos there was nobody else's face I could slap. Then there was a great kerfuffle, and everybody got very upset.

JIM: That's meat and drink to them. Sensation on the Carter show - they'll live on it for months. Did you see Becky?

HILDA: I was next to 'er, but she stayed be'ind. I went chasin' after you, and thank you very much for seein' me 'ome.

JIM: I'm sorry, but Harry bolted.

HILDA: If I'd been wearin' those underpants, I'd 'ave bolted too.

JIM: How did you get home?

HILDA: I walked. All on me own. And what would you 'ave felt if I'd been raped?

JIM: Surprised.

HILDA: Don't be cheeky. Anyway, you can kiss yer contract goodbye. It was a scoop they wanted.

JIM (*with a shrug*): They'll still have their story.

HILDA: You done it because of 'er, didn't yer? (*No reaction.*) Well?

JIM: Maybe.

HILDA (*indicating Harry*): You should 'ave thought of 'im first. Lord knows what's goin' through 'is mind.

JIM: At least we kept our integrity. No-one can crucify Kulan if he crucifies himself.

HILDA: She wasn't goin' to crucify you!

JIM: She was only using us, Hilda!

HILDA: O' course she was usin' you! Everybody uses everybody! Don't you use 'im, and 'im you? Don't all of us use each other?

JIM: But we also have feelings for one another!

HILDA: Well maybe she 'as too. And maybe she 'asn't. It don't matter. You'd 'ave to be Jesus to feel for everybody. When you was a soldier, did you feel for the people you was Shootin'? She never meant you no 'arm, and it wasn't her fault she didn't fall in love.

JIM: Anyway, I don't know.

HILDA: Don't know what?

JIM: I don't know why, Hilda.

*He has slumped. She sees it, and after a moment's pause changes her tone.*

HILDA: Well, it's done. No use lookin' back. Tomorrow's another day, innit, 'Arry? Another day, another race, as my old man used ter say. (*No response from Harry.*) We're all a bit tired. Things'll seem different in the mornin'. Let's pull the curtain on today, shall we?

*She gets up.*

I'll see meself out.

JIM: I'm sorry I upset you, Hilda.

HILDA: Not me. At my time o' life, even 'is underpants are an adventure. Just try an' get 'im to bed. And yourself. There's nothin' that can't be sorted out while yer snorin'.

JIM: Thanks, Hilda.

HILDA: Night, 'Arry.

*No response. She looks at him for a moment, turns down her mouth, and looks at Jim. He gives her the slightest of waves, and she goes out. Silence.*

JIM: I'm sorry if I messed things up, Harry. Harry!

*Harry looks at him, expressionless.*

The girl was going to spill the beans anyway. At least we made them sit up, eh? (*No response.*) And we can go on being Kulan if we want to. (*Pause.*) I'm tired, Harry. Let's go to bed. You want to use the bathroom first or shall I?

*Harry nods towards Jim.*

Me? OK.

*He wheels himself off. Harry sits still for a moment, then gets up, crosses to the wardrobe, and reaches up for a bag which is on top. He opens it, rummages, takes out a gun, and replaces the bag on the wardrobe. Then he goes towards the bathroom, and quietly closes the door. His face crumples as he puts the gun to his head, fires, and falls.*

JIM (*off*): ' Harry? What the hell was that? Harry?

*He opens the door and wheels himself in.*

Harry?

*Just as he sees the body, there is a ring at the door.*

What happened?

*He wheels across, and then realizes the truth.*

Oh my God! No, Harry! No!

*He tips himself off the chair, and pulls himself along to sit beside the body. While he is doing so, the doorbell rings again.*

Harry! Harry!

*He is crying.*

BECKY (*off*): Jim! Harry! It's Becky!

*She rings again.*

Jim! We're going to be on the front page!

**Curtain**

**THE END**