

FRANCIS AUDITION PIECE #1

FRANCIS: My Father, Tommy Henshall, God rest his soul, he woulda been proud of me, what I done with my life, until today. I used to play washboard in a skiffle band, but they went to see The Beatles last Tuesday night, and sacked me Wednesday morning. Ironic, because I started The Beatles. I saw them in Hamburg. Rubbish. I said to that John Lennon, I said "John, you're going nowhere mate, it's embarrassing, have you ever considered writing your own songs". So I'm skint, I'm busking, guitar, mouth organ on a rack, bass drum tied to me foot, and the definition of mental illness, cymbals between my knees. So there I am, middle of Victoria Station, I've only been playing 10 minutes, this lairy bloke comes over, he says – "do you do requests?" I say "yes" he says "I'd like you to play a song for my mother". I said "no problem, where is she?" He said "Tasmania." So I nutted him. This little bloke Roscoe Crabbe seen all this and offers me a week's work in Brighton, says he needs a bit of muscle. I tell him this is all fat. But I need a wage, I haven't eaten since last night. But I don't get paid until the end of the week, and I can't stop thinking about FISH AND CHIPS. I'm staying in a pub, and I don't even have enough shrapnel for a PINT.

Francis sees unfinished drinks on the table nearby; dregs of Guinness, white wine, red wine, orange juice etc. He empties all the dregs into one pint pot and downs it in one. He looks at the nearby dustbin.

FRANCIS: There might be a discarded bag of chips in here. No! I can't go through bins! Must stop thinking about FISH AND CHIPS. Come on Francis! Think about something boring, like... Canada.

RACHEL AUDITION PIECE #1

RACHEL: Oi! Francis. Have you got my letters?

FRANCIS: SOMETHING

RACHEL: Oi! Francis! This letter has been opened!

FRANCIS: *(aside)* Oh no, I need a convincing excuse here. *(to RACHEL)* I had to open it because I realised that there was a small, distressed frog trapped inside. *(aside)* Yes!

RACHEL: How did you know there was a small, distressed frog trapped inside a sealed envelope?

FRANCIS: *(aside)* Shit! *(To RACHEL)* There was no frog actually. I had a letter for me, which I hadn't yet opened, and I opened yours by mistake.

RACHEL: Get my trunk to my room. Then come back here. We need to talk. *(she sits and reads the letter)* It's from a friend of mine, Jackie. I like Jackie, but she can be a bit... needy. *(reads to herself)* Ringo Starr? Which ones Ringo? Is that the drummer? *(nods in realisation)* The ugly one with the huge... *(hold nose)* Oh bloody hell! *(reads)* Awful for you to go to Australia... Love, Jackie. Three kisses? I mean... what is she after?

FRANCIS and BARMAN enter, with the BARMAN carrying the trunk.

RACHEL: Are you stupid?

FRANCIS: No, I could've gone to university, if I'd got the qualifications.

RACHEL: *(smells inside jacket)* I need a clean shirt. What's your ironing like?

FRANCIS: World class. I've got the equivalent of a magna cum laude in ironing from Oxford.

RACHEL: My shirts are in the trunk. Here's the key. Has Charlie the Duck been here with the money?

FRANCIS: No.

RACHEL: I better go chase him up. *(leaves)*

PAULINE AUDITION PIECE/RACHEL AUDITION PIECE #2

RACHEL: Pauline –

PAULINE: - Piss off! I hate you! You ruined my life.

RACHEL: I know what would make you feel better.

PAULINE: You bleeding well touch me, and I'll scream!

RACHEL: I have a secret.

PAULINE: I don't want to know about your life, I wish you were dead.

RACHEL: *(aside)* I can't bear to see her suffer any longer. *(to PAULINE)* I am dead.

PAULINE: Are you? No! Really? What's it like?

RACHEL: Roscoe, my brother, is dead.

PAULINE: You're Roscoe's brother?

RACHEL: Sister.

PAULINE: I don't understand!

RACHEL: I'm Rachel, Roscoe's twin sister.

PAULINE: Oh yeah! They said he was one of two identical twins.

RACHEL: It is not possible for identical twins to be different sexes.

PAULINE: Why not?

RACHEL: Because one would be male and the other female.

PAULINE: I don't understand.

RACHEL: All you need to know is that I am I woman.

PAULINE: So, hang on, that means, I can't marry you, dunnit.

RACHEL: More importantly it means you can marry Alan.

PAULINE: Can I?

RACHEL: In the near future.

PAULINE: I'd better go tell him.

PAULINE makes for the door, but RACHEL stops her.

RACHEL: No! My identity must remain a secret. I need your help.

PAULINE: I'll do anything to marry Alan. I love him.

RACHEL: I too am in love.

PAULINE: Really? With Alan?

RACHEL: No. His name's Stanley.

PAULINE: It's weird innit. Love. It's like being mad.

RACHEL: Insane. Look at me. Dressed in my dead brother's clothes.

PAULINE: Maybe this is your way of grieving for him.

RACHEL: Yes, I hadn't thought of that. *(They hold hands, consoling each other.)* We girls have to look after each other.

STANLEY AUDITION PIECE #1

STANLEY: Henshall! Did you get the letters?

FRANCIS: Yes guvnor. Yeah, they're all here.

STANLEY: How many? Just the one I guess.

FRANCIS: Er... lets have a look. *(he goes through the letters)* There's nothing here for you guvnor.

STANLEY: What are those letters then?

FRANCIS: These are... decoy letters.

STANLEY: Decoy letters?

FRANCIS: The post office release them like homing pigeons. They record how many find their way back and how many get shot down and run over.

STANLEY grabs him by the ear and by the balls.

STANLEY: The truth Henshall! Or you'll never bugger the dolphin again!

FRANCIS: *(in pain)* These are Paddy's letters.

STANLEY: Paddy?

FRANCIS: An old friend of mine. He was collecting letters for his boss, but he hadn't any LUNCH, yet, so I picked his letters up for him, so he could go have HADDOCK AND CHIPS AND MUSHY PEAS!

STANLEY: This letter is for my intended, Rachel Crabbe!

STANLEY releases his grip on FRANCIS' testicles and takes the letters.

FRANCIS: You can't open other people's letters!

STANLEY: Why not?

FRANCIS: It's a very deep human thing that's really basic and doesn't need explaining.

STANLEY: At boarding school we opened eachothers post all the time.

FRANCIS: Yes, but you also held masturbation relay races. Which is not normal either.

STANLEY: No?

FRANCIS: No!

STANLEY: Mmm. It felt pretty good at the time. (*STANLEY walks away from FRANCIS to share the contents with the audience*) (*aside*) It's from Jackie, Rachel's best friend. (*reading*) Dear Rachel, the police know you fled to Brighton dressed as a man, so The Evening News carried an artists impression of what you might look like in mens' clothes. You ended up looking a bit like Ringo Starr, who's already been arrested twice. (*aside*) Rachel, the woman I love, is in Brighton disguised as the percussionist of a popular beat combo! (*reading*) They also carried a boxing photo of Stanley – (*aside*) – that's me! (*reading*) It's so awful that you have to go to Australia. Love, Jackie. Three kisses. (*aside*) Three kisses? That's a bit girls-only-Greek-Island. (*to FRANCIS*) Henshall! Have you met Paddy's boss?

ALAN AUDITION PIECE #1/STANLEY #2

STANLEY: Who's he?

FRANCIS: He wants a word with my guvnor.

STANLEY: I'm your guvnor.

FRANCIS: Yes you are aren't you.

STANLEY: He wants a word with me, does he?

FRANCIS: This gentleman is called Alan.

STANLEY: Oh bad luck.

FRANCIS: I'll be at the post office. *(FRANCIS tiptoes away)*

STANLEY: Are you an actor?

ALAN: Does it show?

STANLEY: The way you stand, at an angle. As if there's an audience, over there.

ALAN: My rival in love, Roscoe Crabbe, arrived from London today and is staying here.

STANLEY: *(aside)* Roscoe Crabbe is the name of the chap I killed accidentally last Saturday evening, stabbing him three times in the chest with a knife I'd bought earlier.

ALAN: He has today claimed my bride, my love, my life.

STANLEY: No! Roscoe Crabbe is dead. I know he's dead because a friend of mine knows someone, who's Dad works with a chap who says he murdered him.

ALAN: I met him not an hour ago. He lives, every breath tortures me.

STANLEY: *(aside)* I suppose when I fled the club he wasn't actually yet dead. Oh jeez! If Roscoe did survive and is in Brighton, he's here for one reason only, to kill me. Oh my God. *(to ALAN)* He's not staying here. I know him. I would have seen him.

ALAN: Oh. I was led to believe. No Matter. My card. If you see him tell him that his life will only be spared if he gives up his wedding plans.

ALAN gives him a card.

STANLEY: You said your name was Alan? This card says Orlando Dangle.

ALAN: Actors' Equity already had an Orlando Dangle.

STANLEY: You chose "Alan"?

ALAN: It's 1963, there's a bloody revolution in the theatre, and angry young men are writing plays about Alans. What's your name sir?

STANLEY: My name? (*aside*) Buggerello! Gonna have to be creative now. Not my best game! (*Stanley looks at trash can*) Trash can, dust bin, Dustin! (*he looks around again, at the pub sign*) Dustin Pubsign.

ALAN: Pubsign?

STANLEY: Pubsign. It's an old Anglo Saxon guild name. The Bakers baked the bread, the Smiths were the blacksmiths, the Pubsigns. Yup! We made the pub signs.

ALAN: It's been a pleasure meeting you, Mr Pubsign. (*ALAN exits*)

ALAN AUDITION PIECE #2

ALAN: What is my life? Am I to eat, drink, sleep, get a good job, marry, honeymoon, have kids, watch them grow up and have kids of their own, divorce, meet someone else, get old, and die happy in my sleep like every other inhabitant of Brighton and Hove? What kind of life is that? No. I am an artist. Character is action. I cannot allow this late suitor to come along and end my beautiful dream, like a dead, discarded Russian astronaut dog landing on my head. *(he notices FRANCIS)* My rival's lackey! This will be the beginning of the end. *(to FRANCIS)* Where is the dog, your gunner? He will die today.

ALAN takes his jacket off, rolls his sleeves up, takes his watch off preparing for a fist fight.

DOLLY AUDITION PIECE

DOLLY: Pauline's written one letter to Alan today, and one letter for Roscoe.

FRANCIS: Are we going then? Majorca?

DOLLY: *(aside)* Oh it's him. I like him. *(to FRANCIS)* I've got a letter here for your gaffer. Can I trust you?

FRANCIS: Confidential is my middle name.

DOLLY: What are your other names?

FRANCIS: Francis. Henshall.

DOLLY: So your full name is Francis Confidential Henshall?

FRANCIS: At your service, gorgeous.

DOLLY: *(aside)* Calling a woman "gorgeous" is patronising, and chauvinist, obviously. But since I fancy him rotten, and I haven't had a proper workout for a while, I'll forgive him. *(to FRANCIS)* You've got honest eyes.

FRANCIS: Thankyou, Baby.

DOLLY: No trouble, Big Boy.

FRANCIS: A friend of mine likes you.

DOLLY: What's his name?

FRANCIS: Paddy.

DOLLY: What's he look like?

FRANCIS: Could be a film star.

DOLLY: Godzilla?

FRANCIS: He's a good looking lad. He's er... big boned.

DOLLY: And how did he get big bones?

FRANCIS: The usual. Nature over nurture.

DOLLY: Partly genetic, partly pies?

FRANCIS: He likes his food, yeah.

DOLLY: Does he prefer eating or making love?

FRANCIS: *(aside)* Mmm. Tricky one that, innit. *(to DOLLY)* Would you like to meet him?

DOLLY: I wouldn't want to interrupt him if he's eating.

FRANCIS: I'll go and get him. Stay there. Don't put your glasses on. *(leaves)*

DOLLY: I've done a lot worse. We've all done a lot worse, haven't we girls? We've all woken up in the morning after the night before, taken one look at the sorry state of the bloke lying next to us, and we've all leapt out of bed, sat down and written to Parliament demanding that tequila should be a controlled drug. ...just me then?

CHARLIE/DANGLE AUDITION PIECE

DANGLE: Have the impediments before Alan's marriage to Pauline been removed as I demanded?

CHARLIE: No. And it ain't my fault. I thought Roscoe was dead.

During Dangle's next speech, Charlie tries to interrupt but fails.

DANGLE: Your precocious contract with Roscoe was initiated in order to facilitate a relationship of mutual expediency and as such is antithetical to the Judeo/Christian and common law conception of marriage. The contract's legality is at best ephemeral and in resurrecting it, following Roscoe Crabbe's own miraculous resurrection, is a classic exemplar of Breach of Promise. Post hoc ergo propter hoc. *[After this, therefore because of this]*

CHARLIE: What are you trying to say?

DANGLE: You're up shit creek without a paddle!

CHARLIE: In my world, there's a code. It ain't written down, there's no books, but it's a code. Like the law. I ain't got no choice but to abide by it.

DANGLE: On reflection, I am not sure that I want my son to dive into the fetid pond that is your family.

CHARLIE: Yeah, yeah. Pauline's gonna marry Roscoe and that's that. And I'll give you some Latin for a change. Que sera sera! *(Exit DANGLE. Enter ALAN.)* Bugger me, it's Errol Flynn!

ALAN: Is it true?

CHARLIE: Yeah, it is true, yeah. What?

ALAN: Is Pauline to marry Roscoe Crabbe?

CHARLIE: That's right. Wait here. I'll get you a presents list.

ALAN draws the knife nervously, a little embarrassed by its reality.

ALAN: Do not torment me! I am no longer responsible for my actions, I am dangerous, unpredictable, like a wasp in a shop window.

CHARLIE: Where did you get that knife?

ALAN: Woolworths.

CHARLIE: What are you going to do with it, sunshine?

ALAN: Don't push me! I can do it.

CHARLIE: No you can't. 'Cause this is real, it ain't a play.

GARETH/ALFIE AUDITION PIECE

GARETH: My name's Gareth. I'm the head waiter. This is Alfie.

ALFIE: I'm eighty six.

GARETH: No you're not. You're eighty seven.

ALFIE: I thought I was eighty six.

GARETH: No. That was last year. Be patient with Alfie please, he's a bit deaf, so don't turn your back, he's gonna lip read.

ALFIE: I ain't never going back there! It was a bloody massacre.

GARETH: During the First World War he was at Gallipoli. He has balance problems, he suffers from the tremors, and he's got one of them new fangled pacemakers for his heart.

FRANCIS: Is that all I need to know?

GARETH: There's one other thing.

FRANCIS: What's that?

GARETH: It's his first day. I've been told to set places for Mr Clench and your guvnor.

FRANCIS: In there, the Compton room, and my other guvnor will eat alone in the Bradman room later, and they've both insisted that I personally wait on their tables.

GARETH: You've got two employers?

FRANCIS: Yeah. I'm that good. I was trained by the legendary French waiter, Jean Jacques Jim.

GARETH: In France?

FRANCIS: Of course.

GARETH: Which town?

FRANCIS: Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

GARETH: That's in Leicestershire.

FRANCIS: It is now.

ALFIE: Do these guvnors of yours know you've got two jobs?

FRANCIS: No, that is our secret for today.

GARETH: What's in it for me and Alfie?

FRANCIS: It's less work for you and you still get paid.

GARETH: What about our tips?

FRANCIS: You'll get a pound each at the end of the afternoon.

GARETH: Deal! Alfie! Set one place in the Bradman room. I'll get some wine lists.

Alfie walks slowly to the Bradman room. Enter Lloyd with the menu.

LLOYD AUDITION PIECE

LLOYD: Rachel?

RACHEL: You're looking pretty good Lloydie!

LLOYD: Girl!? What all dis wid dee rude boy disguise!

RACHEL: The Old Bill are looking for me. Can I trust you?

LLOYD: You're like a daughter to me!

RACHEL: My brother, Roscoe, is dead. My boyfriend killed my twin brother, yeah. I should hate Stanley for that. But I love him. Have you ever been in love Lloyd?

LLOYD: True love? Yes, once. *(aside)* Brixton prison.

RACHEL: Me and Stanley are going to have to go to Australia.

LLOYD: Australia! No man! Oh my god, no. That's really terrible. Australia. You poor thing girl! Why Australia? Do you like opera?

RACHEL: Not especially. But we've no choice. We sail from Southampton on Monday. The morning tide. The police will be watching the ports so –

LLOYD: - Brighton's near enough, but safer?

RACHEL: And Charlie the Duck lives here, and we need money.

LLOYD: I guess. Where is your Stanley now?

RACHEL: Brighton, somewhere. I've left a letter for him at the post office with instructions for a rendezvous. I pray to God he's alright.