

(At GIFFORD's shriek, COMPO gets to his feet and scarpers through the front door doing his own subdued wailing. GIFFORD takes a few steps in pursuit, gets the bugle trapped between his legs. Hops about wildly on the spot trying to free himself.)

GIFFORD It's him by God. It's him!

(CLEGG and FOGGY hurry to GIFFORD's aid with the intention of securing him even more firmly in the entanglements of the bugle.)

GIFFORD Get after him!

CLEGG Just put your leg through here, Gifford.

GIFFORD Don't let him get away.

FOGGY The signal, Gifford. Make the signal.

(From outside come two sets of female shrieks. COMPO still with his hat covering his face comes running back in again through the door, left. He gallops across stage and exits, right, pursued by NORA BATTY prepared to do battle with her umbrella. She exits right, as GIFFORD renews his struggles to get free only to get entangled even further with the aid of FOGGY and CLEGG.)

GIFFORD Stop him.

CLEGG You nearly had him there Gifford.

FOGGY The signal. Make the signal.

(GIFFORD's attempts to get the bugle to his lips are complicated in the extreme now, entangled round him as it is. It's somewhere between his legs and he has to bend

strangely and waddle duck fashion as he tries to blow it. The best he can manage are a few absurd squeaks from the instrument. He's still twisting and waddling and trying to blow it as CONSTANCE enters to lean weakly in the doorway.)

CONSTANCE Gifford. What are you doing here?

GIFFORD I should be asking you that.

(He goes gamely back to his squeaky blowing as NORA enters, right.)

NORA Gone. out the back door and away. Up the street like a squirrel.

(She stands and watches GIFFORD'S performance scornfully.)

NORA Three grown men can't stop him. Why is he still playing with his trumpet?

CONSTANCE Oh it was awful.

NORA It was moving too fast to be awful. Fortunately everything was just a blur.

CONSTANCE When he opened the door I nearly died.

NORA Oh come off it our Connie. You've seen a bloke in his underpants before. *(She indicates GIFFORD.)* Even after fourteen years engaged to this you must have got that far.

CONSTANCE Aunty Nora!

(CONSTANCE pats her hair primly. GIFFORD struggles free of his entanglements. He hurries in belated pursuit of COMPO through the door, right. He returns again.)

- GIFFORD Just remember we're engaged.
- NORA Remember? How can she forget? You've practically made a damned career out of it.
- CONSTANCE We never actually bought a ring, Gifford.
(She examines her ring finger.)
- GIFFORD Soon as I see the right ring. I'm looking. You know I'm looking. *(He snarls at the grinning FOGGY.)* I'll be back.

(GIFFORD exits, right. We hear the fading toots of his bugle. FOGGY and CLEGG exchange a nervous glance.)
- CONSTANCE I hope they catch him. Who was it? What was he doing in here?
- CLEGG Search me. Complete stranger to us.
- FOGGY Absolutely.
- NORA Well from where I was looking I can't say the face was familiar.
- FOGGY Must have sneaked in behind Gifford, when he left the door open.
- CONSTANCE Peculiar.
- FOGGY I always thought so. Well. Now the excitement's over, ladies perhaps you'd care to take your coats upstairs.
- NORA They'll be alright down here.
- FOGGY Perhaps use the bathroom.
- NORA It wasn't that exciting.

(FOGGY *groans then fixes his face into what is meant to be a reassuring smile of welcome.*)

FOGGY My apologies for all these upsets ladies.
Come along through to the living room.
Make yourselves comfortable.

(CLEGG *eases his tight collar with a finger.*
FOGGY *holds the door, right, for the ladies.*)

FOGGY Constance.

NORA (*aside to CONSTANCE*) Show me a man with
good manners and I'll show you somebody
who'll have your blouse unbuttoned if
you're not careful.

CONSTANCE Just lead the way through, Aunty Nora.

NORA Let him lead the way through. God knows
who else is lurking through there without
his trousers.

FOGGY I can assure you madam.

NORA I'll cripple him if there is.

(NORA *exits right, her broolly at the ready.*
CONSTANCE *pauses to impress FOGGY in the
doorway.*)

CONSTANCE Why in this house? Who could it have been?

FOGGY Some passing pervert.

CONSTANCE Long as he's not based here.

(CONSTANCE *exits, right.* FOGGY *grabs the
opportunity for a word with CLEGG.*)