



Preview Script



by **Christopher Wortley**
(assisted by Brian Clemens)



*'Act Your Age' is dedicated to **Tom Dodd**, who laboured to teach me music theory at William Ellis School.*

Thank you.

Act Your Age

by Christopher Wortley

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Preview Script (Based on Order Code SA-0140)



Synopsis

The action takes place over a 24 hour period in a large house in a remote village. The house is a clinic that offers sanctuary, rest, relaxation and therapy to celebrities, but it has seen better days: it has debts, just two patients, and all the staff have walked out except for Pat who remains loyal to the beleaguered owner/manageress, Valerie.

Suddenly, there's a chance of salvation. 'Victoria's' agent rings. She is coming ... right now! She will be checking-in as 'Mrs Smith'. She may even suggest to some friends that they come too - but she expects to find no publicity, and a professional, well-run establishment. A crisis looms!

Meanwhile, in the same village, there's an old people's home run by Mrs Hewitt, a headmistress-like woman who allows her old folk few luxuries. And they are in crisis too. A bungling workman has been digging up the road and left the old people's home without electricity or water ... and the loos are backing up!

Under the impression that the clinic is well run and well staffed, Mrs Hewitt leaves her old folk in the care of Valerie while she and her own staff go off to find new premises.

The old folk are a mixed bag : some are very old, some are rather younger; some are more compos-mentis than others. Valerie has discovered that they're all a little star struck ... they read 'Hello' magazine under the bedclothes. So they are easily persuaded to keep schtum and to masquerade as staff and as patients in return for the possibility of rubbing shoulders with 'Victoria and friends'.

The old folk, pretending to be new patients, join the two real patients:- Melanie; who, despite her claims to the contrary, is desperate to be unmasked as an A-list celebrity; and a middle-aged nymphomaniac, Angela who has attended the clinic many times in the hope they will wean her off men.

Then 'Mrs Smith' arrives and, sure enough, she's heavily disguised, but it's Jenny, not 'Victoria'. Jenny is soon to be married but first she wants to understand her roots. She was once a teenage runaway and so she has no family – but she has received a tip off that her mother is now running the clinic. She wants to observe Valerie whilst remaining unobserved herself.

Then a succession of furtive people arrive to check in as patients. They are all assumed to be friends of Victoria's and treated with reverence. In fact, each hides a different secret:- The Reporter; he likes to think of himself as a hard nosed hack, but he is just incompetent. He has got wind of 'Victoria' and arrives incognito hoping for his big scoop. Once inside, he smuggles in The Photographer, who is clearly in the wrong job because he keeps trying to take staged, arty photos. Then there's the gigolo, Mario who is Angela's latest weakness, and John, Jenny's jealous fiancé, who has followed her to the clinic suspecting her of infidelity.

The new staff must take over the daily routines and administer the various designer therapies. So, we have amateurs ministering to people they take to be celebrities and 'celebrities' who are nothing of the kind but don't want to be unmasked.

Not only that but more disasters in the workman's trench have left the therapy annexe uninhabitable, so massage, sauna and other therapies must take place in make-shift rooms with make-shift equipment.

Towards the end of the first Act there's some classic farce, but set to music. It's night time. Mrs Smith is creeping about looking for childhood memorabilia; Angela and Mario are creeping about looking for each other; John is looking for Jenny and The Photographer and The Reporter are looking for a scoop. All the creeping about in a large room with three tempting doors means they are all bound to be popping in and out unexpectedly.

In Act Two there's more traditional farce as patients and therapists come in and out of the make-shift, therapy rooms in a succession of complicated manoeuvres, narrowly avoiding revealing their 'naked' forms to the audience. Meanwhile, it seems that one of the old folk, Mrs Cousins, has broken ranks and told her son what's been happening. Mr Cousins appears with his extended family, all pretending to visit 'mother' but clearly desperate to touch the famous. Mindful of Victoria's stipulations, Valerie quickly tells him that mother is going gaga and that this house, which is indeed temporary home to the old folk, is really a boarding school. It certainly isn't a clinic for celebrities and it certainly doesn't have any celebrities in it.

Now it is the turn of the chorus to take part in farcical goings on. First, the old folk must revert to behaving like old folk in order to convince Mr Cousins. But then, Mrs Smith is seen to be approaching so Mr Cousins and family must be distracted whilst everyone pretends to be staff and celebrity patients again. And then Mrs Hewitt reappears. She mustn't learn that her lovely old dears are being exploited and exposed to the corrupting modern influence of celebrity. So more panic sets in as the old folks must once again act their age.

And then, as if all that wasn't enough, a jewel thief arrives ... with some stolen, diamond-studded underwear... still being worn by a mannequin. It turns out that one of the old folk, Iris, isn't as gaga as she seems. She's been using the old people's home as a cover for her jewellery fencing business. Everything comes to a head in the finale when happy endings and plot resolutions come thick and fast ... all set to music!

Notes About Names

Throughout the story, everyone is convinced that one of the characters, who calls herself Mrs Smith, is famous. This person is only ever referred to by her first name. The director should choose a name that is evocative of a current, super-celebrity eg 'Britney' or 'Nicole'. The name used in this version of the script is 'Victoria'.

First Production

Waterside Musical Society (www.wos.org.uk) staged the first production of 'Act Your Age' at The Waterside Theatre, Holbury, Hampshire in November 2006.

Valerie	<i>Jan French</i>	The Workman	<i>Alan Vicarey</i>
Pat	<i>Christine Talbot</i>	Anna Cousins	<i>Gill Dando</i>
Melanie	<i>Debs Rich</i>	Cousins Children	<i>Heidi Bottrell & Ian Pidgley</i>
Angela	<i>Chris Stanway</i>	Policeman	<i>Alan Vicarey</i>
Mrs Hewitt	<i>Dawn Hall</i>	Betty	<i>Heather Watton</i>
Jenny (Mrs Smith) ..	<i>Claire Crayton</i>	Ellen	<i>Catherine Moore</i>
The Reporter	<i>Robin Watton</i>	Iris	<i>Jennifer Edwards</i>
The Photographer ...	<i>Liam Hunter</i>	Joan	<i>Lisa Philips</i>
John	<i>David Putley</i>	Joanna	<i>Kathleen Vicarey</i>
Mario	<i>Phil Barrett</i>	Josephine	<i>Maureen Wills</i>
Gerry Jackal	<i>Ian Pidgley</i>	Shirley Cousins	<i>Peggy Kemp</i>
		Joe	<i>Barry James</i>
Other Sunny Seniors	<i>Muriel Abbot, Phil Barrett, Vera Chard, Claire Crayton, Gill Dando, Sue Forsdike, Dawn Hall, June Hall, Liam Hunter, Ian Pidgley, Robin Watton</i>		
Sunny Senior Staff	<i>Heidi Bottrell, Catharine Leach</i>		
Celebrity Sanctuary Staff	<i>Phil Barrett, Heidi Bottrell, Claire Crayton, Ian Pidgley, Liam Hunter</i>		
Director	<i>Christobel Thomas</i>		
Musical Director	<i>Ian Peters</i>		
Assistant Director	<i>Mark Ponsford</i>		
Choreographers	<i>Christobel Thomas, Mark Ponsford</i>		
Musicians	<i>Derek Goodger, Paul Spanton, Alex Craik</i>		
Rehearsal Pianists	<i>Rose Newman, Joy Reynolds</i>		
Stage Manager	<i>John Goodes</i>		
Lighting Manager	<i>David Edwards</i>		
Sound Manager	<i>James Mitchell</i>		
Scenic Designer	<i>Alan Vicarey</i>		
Set Construction & Painting	<i>Chris Byers, Catharine Leach, Alan Vicarey, Robin Watton</i>		
Properties	<i>Chris Byers</i>		
Wardrobe Mistress	<i>Maureen Wills</i>		
Costumes	<i>Muriel Abbot, Tine Ayles, Maureen Greenwood, Peggy Kemp, Catherine Leach, Kath Vicarey, Maureen Wills</i>		
Prompt	<i>Helen Hodrien</i>		
Make-Up Advisor	<i>Julia Allen</i>		
Publicity	<i>Robin Watton</i>		
Advance Ticket Sales	<i>Robin Watton</i>		
FOH Manager	<i>Paul Holyoake</i>		
Box Office	<i>Kate Watton</i>		

ACT YOUR AGE



MUSIC #1 - OVERTURE

ACT 1

Prologue

MUSIC #2 - PRELUDE ACT I (DEPARTURE)

A song for Pat, Angela, Valerie and a semi-chorus of Celebrity Sanctuary staff.

It is the evening. We see Angela, Melanie, Pat and the Celebrity Sanctuary staff in the run up to Scene 1. The staff have reached the end of their patience having worked yet another full day without any sign of a pay cheque. Meanwhile, Angela engineers an encounter with a male member of staff.

Angela *How I love men with muscles.
And although your clothes conceal them, [Copping a feel]
I can feel them.*

The staff member is embarrassed. Angela backs off, though, as Valerie enters L. Exeunt R, Angela and Melanie. The staff have had enough and resolve to leave. Pat remonstrates with them, loyally sticking up for Valerie.

Staff *So long, farewell.
Auf Wiedersehn.
Good night.
We're off.*

Pat *No, wait.
Staff Yes, we're off.*

Pat *This place is rather dodgy, I admit.
But do you really need to quit?*

Staff *No pay, so we're off.
[To Pat] We leave the place to you.
We're off to pastures new.*

Group 1&2 *It's time to say adieu.*

[Each hands in his/her notice to Valerie]

Group 3 *So goodbye ...*

Group 2 *... goodbye ...*

Group 1 *... goodbye.*

P & V *Must you go?*

Group 3 *So goodbye ...*

Group 2 *... goodbye ...*

Group 1 *... goodbye.*

P & V *Must you go?*

Group 3 *So goodbye*

Group 2 *... goodbye*

Group 1 *... goodbye ...*

P & V *No, please don't go*

Staff *... .. . to you!
We're off.*

The staff exit L. Valerie collapses at the desk. The prologue dissolves into Scene 1.

Scene 1 (Part 1)

- Valerie** *(Depressed)* So, that's it: Michael, Sally, Grace, all of them - gone.
- Pat** *(Brightly)* I'm still here.
- Valerie** Like rats, they've deserted the sinking ship. *(Only now acknowledging what Pat has said).* I wasn't counting you. *(Back to her theme).* And why? I was a good employer, wasn't I? *(Pressing on without waiting for an answer).* I didn't berate them for turning up late. I didn't stop them from making fun of the patients behind their backs - and I only read their personal e-mails when I was bored. Oh, it's all a bloody disaster. Another flaming catastrophe. *(She takes a whiskey bottle and glass from a drawer in the desk. She goes on talking as she pours herself a drink).* And I would have paid their salaries, eventually.
- Pat** I'm still here.
- Valerie** *(Resignedly)* Ah yes, Pat is still here. I have a clinic full of celebrity clients, all anxious for twenty-four hour relaxation, pampering and exotic one-on-one therapies and all I've got to offer is someone who can change the light bulbs and fix the bannisters.
- Pat** *(Puzzled)* Valerie, why do you sometimes call them clients and sometimes call them patients?
- Valerie** Most of the time they're patients - but I call them clients when I'm thinking about their cheque books.
- Pat** So they really do have things wrong with them do they? It's just that sometimes they don't seem to be all that ... unwell.
- Valerie** Of course they're unwell! You'd be amazed how many disorders affect the famous.
- Pat** And the treatments we offer? ... The rest and relaxation ... The various therapies? ...
- Valerie** ... are all tailored to the needs of the celebrity concerned. There isn't a toxin we can't coax out or an energy-balance we can't restore. At least there wasn't whilst I had some plausible therapists about the place.
- Pat** *(Brightly)* Well at least we're not really, like, full of celebrity clients, Valerie. There's only Melanie and Angela and maybe they won't notice that all the staff have gone.
- Valerie** There is something faintly disturbing about an eternal optimist who has an inexplicable desire to stand by me through thick and thin. Well, they'll certainly notice when the bailiffs come and repossess the building. I need another drink. *(She pours another glass).* Do you remember my first business venture - mail-order clothing? That's when you showed up, wasn't it? - and I hired you on the spot - mostly because you were prepared to work for a pittance. It should have worked, you know. Although I admit it was a bit of a long shot, specialising in designer swimwear for Morris Dancers. Now here we are, ten years on, and yet another business is about to go to the wall.
- Pat** Something will turn up.
- Valerie** I take it back, you're not an optimist, you're a fantasist ...
- Pat** I'll bet, like any minute now, the phone will ring and some dead famous celebrity will be saying, "Oh, Hi, I just heard about Celebrity Sanctuary and I just gotta, like, check in and check it out for myself ...".
- Valerie** Living in a fairy tale ...
- Pat** No, really. The phone always rings at the critical moment. Like in EastEnders when Shirley and Ash were about to have sex for the first time.
- Valerie** *(Sarcastically)* Oh right. I'll just pop out and drag in some man off the street shall I? We could use this desk perhaps - it would be handy for when the phone rings, right after he tries for third base.
- Pat** *(Pat is used to Valerie's put-downs and is unfazed)* OK, maybe that wasn't the best example. But in stories, whenever things are blacker than black, the phone always rings.
- Pat and Valerie stare at the phone. It doesn't ring. Instead, the lights go out accompanied by the muffled sound of an explosion outside.*
- Valerie** Well, Pat, it's blacker than black now.
- Pat** I'll go and find out what's going on. Maybe it's a fuse.
- Exit L Pat.*
- Valerie** Or maybe it's the apocalypse - just dropping by to consign me to the dustbin of life.

The lights come on again. Enter R the two remaining patients, Melanie and Angela who have come to find out what's going on.

Angela What's with the lights, darling?
Melanie Valerie, You promised me this place was secure. It doesn't feel secure to me.
Valerie I'm sure there's nothing to be alarmed about, Melanie.
Melanie Suppose it's some sort of raid.
Angela What? Like SAS? Fit young men leaping about on ropes. Bring it on, darling. I'm here to be rescued.
Melanie No! I mean fans; souvenir hunters. All pawing at us; tearing our clothes.
Angela That's pretty much what I had in mind. Though I'm afraid your days of being 'pawed at' are only to be found now in the pages of your autobiography.

The doorbell rings.

Melanie At least I'm not like you, Angela, drooling at the thought of bedding a squad of squaddies.
Angela Not squaddies, darling, SAS. Quite different. *(Then, remembering)*. But I'm not allowed am I? I'm on a diet. That's why I'm here in this God-forsaken clinic - to learn to think pure thoughts; to be weaned off the boys. *(Enter L Pat and the workman. The workman's face is sooty from the explosion. Now pointedly at Valerie)*. I'm being kept on a short leash.
Melanie Who's he? Why have you let him in? I'll bet he's brought fans with him?
Workman Vans? No, just the one, lady. Ford Transit. For me tools.
Angela *(Disappointed)* You can relax Melanie, darling. He's harmless, more's the pity.
Valerie Who are you?
Workman Sorry about the power cut lady. Bit of a mix up in the trench. I was going for the hard core but I ended up puncturing your lead cable.
Valerie What trench?
Workman For the drains.
Valerie Drains? At this time of night?
Workman Terrible problems with the drains.
Valerie There's nothing wrong with our drains.
Workman No, not 'ere. Up the road - at Sunny Seniors.

Everyone looks blank.

Melanie Where?
Workman You know? Sunny Seniors, the retirement home. Anyway, I'm well on the way to getting it sorted. And I've patched up your electrics. You'll be right as rain now. Sorry to have troubled you ladies.

The workman vigorously shakes Valerie's hand. His is filthy and Valerie examines the damage. Meanwhile, the workman moves on to Pat.

Pat *(Unimpressed)* I'll show you out.

Exeunt L the workman and Pat. The workman looks appreciatively at Melanie as he leaves.

Melanie *(Trying to hide her pleasure)* Do you think he recognised me?
Angela Never mind about him, Melanie, darling. I'm not going to hang around in this place much longer if the lights are going to be turning on and off like a menopausal Christmas tree. And what about the sun-lamps ... and the sauna. Not much of a Celebrity Sanctuary if we can't have sun lamps and saunas. You make sure it's all sorted out by morning Valerie, sweetie, or you'll find your best clients ... make that your only clients, are off to another clinic. Come on Melanie.

Exeunt R Melanie and Angela. Valerie slumps back at the desk again and pours another drink. She sighs deeply. She picks up the photo on the desk and looks at it. The audience can't see the picture. Pat enters L soundlessly. Valerie is about to drink.

Pat He's gone.

The unexpected sound causes Valerie to spill her drink.

Valerie Don't do that! You creep about the place like something scary out of Scooby-Doo. It's unnerving.

As Valerie is talking she struggles to put the photo frame back where it was, embarrassed that Pat saw her looking at it. Meanwhile, Pat rushes forward with a dishcloth and starts mopping up the spillage.

Pat Sorry.

Valerie Alright, alright, I can manage.

Valerie takes over the mopping.

Pat Sorry.

Valerie Well I hope he knows what he's doing or we're in for an evening of explosions and power-cuts ... *(absent-mindedly she squeezes the dish cloth into the glass and drinks it)* ... when what we really need is a miracle.

Pat *(With great faith)* Or an unexpected phone call. *(They both stare at the phone. It doesn't ring. They then stare at the free standing light. It stays on).* It isn't always the phone, you know. Sometimes it's an unexpected guest. Like in Corrie with Karen and Steve – when Karen's estranged father, Malcolm, turned up on their doorstep ...

Valerie I don't know why I let myself listen to you. *(The phone starts ringing. Pat tries to draw this to Valerie's attention).* I should trust my own instincts. I should take comfort in my ever-growing conviction that the world will soon come to an end and I'll ... *(She picks up the phone and speaks automatically).* Hello. Celebrity Sanctuary. Valerie Granger speaking.

Pat Right, well I'll go and lock up for the night. I'll see you in the morning. If Melanie or ...

Meanwhile, Valerie is looking stunned. She flaps at Pat to keep quiet.

Valerie Yes ... *(pause)* ... yes, well yes, of course. *(Pause).* No no, I understand. No publicity; no cameras. That's not a problem. We're very isolated here. *(Pause while she flaps at Pat to find pen and paper which Pat finds under piles on the desk).* Yes, I see, no particular treatment; just rest and relaxation. 'Mrs Smith', right. This evening! No no, that's not a problem. We'll be expecting her. *(Pause).* As well! No, we'd be delighted. Thank you.

Valerie puts down the phone and says nothing. Pat can't contain herself.

Pat Good news? A new patient? *(Valerie nods).* A real celebrity!?

Valerie *(Excitedly)* That was ... her agent.

Pat *(Excitedly)* Whose agent?

Valerie *(Pausing for effect)* Victoria's.

Pat *(Very excitedly)* What!? ... you mean, the ...

Valerie Yes ...

Both Victoria!

Pat Wow!

Valerie And she's going to recommend us to a few friends as well; suggest they all check in as well to keep her company.

Pat When, when?

Valerie Tonight.

Pat Victoria. Here. Tonight?

Valerie Yes ... tonight.

Pat Crumbs. I must go and tell Sally ... and Michael will need to ...

Pat trails off as the truth dawns on both of them.

Valerie Ah, a little grey cloud is peeking out from behind the silver lining. I wonder how long Victoria and her friends are likely to stick around in a place like this, with no staff and a couple of washed-out, D-list celebrities for company.

Pat Well, I ...

Valerie Don't answer that Rosencrantz ... it was rhetorical. No, we are; how shall I put this, stuffed. Not only are we up the creek without a paddle but the hull is leaking and there's white water ahead. It's a perfect example of sod's law.

MUSIC #3 – ‘SOD’S LAW’

A duet for Pat and Valerie who lament life, acting out mini-stories to illustrate the point.

- Valerie** *(Spoken)* It's like when I'm trying to relax. Sometimes I get so wound up even Classic FM isn't relaxing enough. That's when I fantasise about taking a bath . . . the ultimate most luxurious bath.
- Pat** *(Spoken)* Ooh yes! Describe it to me. What's the bath like?
- Valerie** *The bath? It's sunk beneath the floor.*
- Pat** *Scented candles?*
- Valerie** *[Spoken] Oh yes. [Sung] By the score.*
- Pat** And in the bath?
- Valerie** *Essential oils.*
- Pat** Wow!
- Valerie** *By Dior.*
- Pat** Oh Yes!
- Valerie** *Wait a minute, what was that?*
[Spoken] Bing Bong!
[Sung] Bloody Avon at the door.
- Both** *That's sod's law.*
That's sod's law.
- Valerie** *If something can go wrong,*
- Pat** *Then something will go wrong.*
- Valerie** *The story of my life don't you agree?*
- Both** *That's sod's law.*
That's sod's law.
- Valerie** *When the toasts slips from your hands,*
Ten to one it lands,
Flat on it's face, just like me.
- The tunnel's black as coal,*
But then I see the light.
God has sent a high-speed train,
To run me over just for spite.
- Pat** *Just around the bend lies opportunity for some.*
- Valerie** *For me there lurks a hammer that is destined for my thumb.*
- Both** *Ouch!*
- Valerie** Let me set the scene. I'm cooking. A very special meal for that very special new man in my life. Mexican Shepherd's Pie - that's shepherd's pie with extra chilli. *(She mimes adding chilli to the dish, sucking fingers and wincing).*
- Pat** Right. So where are you now?
- Valerie** *In the kitchen?*
- Pat** And how's it all going?
- Valerie** *I'll get by.*
- Pat** And the romantic meal?
- Valerie** *Without a hitch, he loves the pie.*
- Pat** Then later, in his arms?
- Valerie** *I get an itch*
- Pat** Where?

Valerie *In my eye*

Pat No!

Valerie Yes!

Valerie *It couldn't have been worse.*

Pat Well, actually ...

Valerie Don't go there!

Valerie *Yeah, life's a bitch, and then you die.*

Both *That's sod's law.*
That's sod's law.

Valerie *If something can go wrong,*
Pat *Then something will go wrong.*
Valerie *The story of my life don't you agree?*

Both *That's sod's law.*
That's sod's law.

Valerie *When the toasts slips from your hands,*
Pat *Ten to one it lands,*
Valerie *Flat on it's face, just like me.*

*The tunnel's black as coal,
But then I see the light.
God has sent a high-speed train,
To run me over just for spite.*

Pat *Just around the bend lies opportunity for some.*
Valerie *For me there lurks a hammer that is destined for my thumb.*
Both *Ouch!*

*That's sod's law.
That's sod's law.*

Valerie *It's an immoderate law,*
Pat *A shoddy law,*
Valerie *An odd little law*
Pat *A God-awful law*
Valerie *A 'look what I trod' in law.*
Both *It's sod's law!*

Scene 1 (Part 2) - the old folk arrive.

The doorbell rings.

Valerie Oh my God, it's her. She's here already. What are we going to do? Right. Stay calm. Presentation is all.

Pat Presentation?

Valerie You go and let her in.

Pat Me!?

Valerie Yes, yes and I'll, I'll ...

Exit L Pat to answer the door while Valerie is left trying to think what she is going to do. Enter L Pat and, from the Old People's Home, Mrs Hewitt.

Mrs Hewitt Ah, good. Are you in charge here? Excellent. I'm sure I can count on you. *(Calling off)*. Come along everyone, we're in here. *(She blows a whistle, a la Von Trapp)*.

MUSIC #4 – ‘SUNNY SENIORS ARE US’

A Chorus song. Led by a member of Mrs Hewitt’s staff, the first wave of Sunny Seniors enter L marching.

Group 1 *Sunny Seniors are us,
Fuelled by ginseng and Pro-Plus.
Life begins when you get your bus pass,
Sunny Seniors are us.*

Valerie Well, now you’re all here, perhaps you wouldn’t mind ...

Mrs Hewitt No, not quite. A few more still to come. *(She blows her whistle).*

Led by another member of Mrs Hewitt’s staff, the second wave of Sunny Seniors enter L, aided by walking sticks.

Group 2 *Sunny Seniors are us.
Fuelled by ginseng and Pro-Plus.
Life begins when you get your bus pass,
Sunny Seniors are us.*

Valerie Mmm, well I’m delighted to meet you all. But perhaps now you wouldn’t mind ...

Mrs Hewitt Just a minute. There are a few stragglers. *(She blows her whistle).*

Led by yet another member of Mrs Hewitt’s staff, the third wave of Sunny Seniors enter L aided by Zimmer frames.

Group 3 *Sunny Seniors are us.
Fuelled by ginseng and Pro-Plus.
Such a long time since we got a bus pass.
Sunny Seniors are us.*

All Groups *Sunny Seniors are us.
Fuelled by ginseng and Pro-Plus.
Life begins when you get your bus pass.
Sunny Seniors are us.
Are us, are us, are us, are us.*

Valerie pointedly goes and looks off L.

Mrs Hewitt Right, everyone, this is the place.

Valerie Any more of you?

Mrs Hewitt No, we’re all present and correct.

Valerie And you are ...

Mrs Hewitt Hewitt’s the name. How d’you do. I’m afraid we’ve got a bit of a do on up at the home. There’s some fellow out there in a trench and he’s managed to put his pick-axe through something vital. We’ve got no electricity or water ... and now the loos are backing up as well. Josephine, I don’t know what’s so funny but if you don’t stop giggling I’ll send you back to help clear up the mess. And Joan I won’t tell you again about slouching. Stand up and be proud. Sunny Seniors don’t slouch.

Valerie Well, Mrs Hewitt, I’m afraid that tonight is not ...

Mrs Hewitt Good! I was sure you’d be able to help. That’s wonderful. Some sort of a clinic aren’t you? Don’t worry if you haven’t got rooms for them all. They’re used to sharing. Ellen ... don’t do that. Right, best if I push off now. The staff and I need to clean up ... and to look around for new premises. We’ll be back tomorrow to pick everyone up. Tomorrow evening at the latest. *(Together with her staff she starts to go but then she spots Josephine holding something furtively).* You see, Mrs Granger this is, I’m afraid, the sort of frivolous behaviour we discourage at Sunny Seniors. Josephine here seems to be under the impression that within the pages of this publication, *(looking disdainfully at the magazine)*, she’ll find edification and wisdom. Alas, all she will learn about are the mating habits of *(derisively)* celebrities. But I’m sure I can rely on you, Mrs Granger, to maintain Sunny Seniors’ standards in my absence. I’m sure you too run a tight ship. No surfing the net, no DVDs that might cause over-excitement, no reading after lights out, that’s the sort of thing.

MUSIC #5 – ‘A TIGHT SHIP’ (AND ‘SUNNY SENIORS’ REPRISÉ)

Sung by Mrs Hewitt, Josephine and the Chorus. During the song, more little luxuries are discovered and confiscated by Mrs Hewitt and her staff:- food, DVD’s and, importantly, celebrity magazines. Each item is placed on the desk.

Mrs Hewitt *The chores are always done and that’s because we run a tight ship.
Don’t waste our time on fun and that’s because we run a tight ship.
No pickled onions under bedclothes when you run a tight ship.
No watching Naked Gun. At Sunny S we run a tight ship.*

*Stand tall. Stand proud.
Don't mope. Don't grouch.
Be bold. Be brave. [Spoken] And Josephine ...*

Josephine

Yes?

Mrs Hewitt

... don't slouch.

*We rise before the sun to show the world we run a tight ship.
No money to be won from gambling when you run a tight ship.
[Now referring to a magazine the men have been caught looking at]
No gawping at a stunner. That's no way to run a tight ship.
No chocolates by the ton. At Sunny S we run a tight ship.*

Mrs Hewitt *The chores are always done* **Groups 1,2,3** *Sunny Seniors are us
and that’s because we run
a tight ship.*

*Don’t waste our time
on fun and that’s because
we run a tight ship.*

Fuelled by ginseng and Pro-Plus

*No pickled onions
under bedclothes
when you run a tight ship.*

Life begins when you get your bus pass

*No watching Naked Gun.
At Sunny S
we run a tight ship.*

Sunny Seniors are us

*Are us, are us, are us ...
Are us.*

*Are us, are us, are us ...
Are us.*

Exeunt L Mrs Hewitt and her staff. The old folk start chatting amongst themselves. They are a motley bunch: some are very old, some are rather younger ... some are more compos mentis than others.

Pat What are we going to do?

Valerie I don’t know. I don’t think I’m in charge any more. Mrs Captain Mainwaring has taken over. I think I’ll just find somewhere to lie down.

Pat Maybe it’s not so bad. Maybe Victoria won’t mind having a few old folk around?

Valerie You must be joking! Her agent said she wanted to get away from the public gaze. If she finds that lot gazing upon her she’ll be on the first stretch-limo back to Stringfellows.

Joan Excuse me. Can you tell me where the little girls’ room is, please.

Pat There’s one at the back there.

Joan exits into the lavatory while Valerie picks up and names a couple of confiscated magazines from the desk.

Valerie Look at this stuff. They’re all obsessed with celebrities. *(She picks up a confiscated boxed DVD set). “Celebrity Love Island”, (Director to replace with topical reference as necessary) ... “the very best of the very best bits” ... in four volumes. And this. (She picks up another magazine.) “Celebrities - The Naked Truth : Explicit photos they would rather forget”. (She opens it). That’s disgusting! Whose is this? (The magazine is claimed sheepishly by one of the male old folk). These are exactly the kind of people Victoria will want to avoid.*

Josephine Did you say Victoria?!

Pat Yes, she’s coming here ... tonight.

There is immediate excitement amongst the old folk.

Valerie But! ... as soon as she gets here, she'll turn around and go home.

There is *general disappointment*.

Joanna Why, what's the problem?

Valerie You are!

Joanna Me?

Valerie All of you. Look at you!

Old Folk (*Indignant, ad lib protestations such as ...*) Well really! / Who does she think she is? / What's wrong with us? / That's ageism, that is! (*etc etc*)

Valerie slumps in a chair ... but then, suddenly has a change of mood.

Valerie Wait a minute. Wait a minute! Shhh. Quiet everyone. Shhh. I have an idea. Now, let me get this straight. You lot want to see Victoria ... (*General agreement*). So ... you'd all be willing to lend a hand? (*More agreement*). OK then. Here's the deal. You must all pretend to be patients at this clinic. You will be celebrities, staying here in order to relax and recuperate and to take advantage of our extraordinary range of designer therapies. Do you think you can handle that? (*The old folk discuss the proposition amongst themselves*). If you're convincing; if you persuade Victoria, then she'll stay ... and you guys will be rubbing shoulders with her all day tomorrow. That's got to be better than trying to read these celebrity magazines behind Mrs Hewitt's back. What's more, if Victoria really believes in the place, I'll get an endorsement – and I'll be back in business. So, what do you all say? Will you be celebrities for a day? Let's have a show of hands. (*The female old folk indicate their assent. Joan enters from the lavatory and joins the group in time to add her vote*). Good! (*Valerie thinks she's got everyone on board but Pat whispers something to her*). What? Oh, apparently the men are less convinced. Gentlemen, let me paint a picture for you. Victoria and some female friends are coming here to check in for intensive therapies including sauna, massage and many other forms of relaxation that all involve wandering around the place dressed in nothing but a towel. (*All the men raise a hand*). Fantastic! Game on. Pat, you go and get some of those accessories we've got in the storeroom for emergencies.

Exit Pat into the storeroom.

NOTE : The dialogue that follows is based on celebrity news as of September 2006. It needs to be updated a couple of months before the performance so as to reflect the news and gossip of the day. The structure of the dialogue should be altered as little as possible so as to retain the key features such as the old folks' familiarity with celebrities' lives - almost as if they know them personally, the reference to cameras, Loopy Lou's introduction, the argument about star signs (because this is what prompts Joanna to look up the answer in her magazine and discover the missing page) etc. If the production team can identify (a) a celebrity couple (b) his celebrity ex, (c) another celebrity couple who have either just had a baby ("enjoying being a dad") or are about to have a baby ("looking forward to being a dad") and (d) star signs associated with the above – then only the names need to change.

All the old folk are excited. During the dialogue, the old folk who don't have specific lines listen to the conversation and have similar (mimed) conversations of their own - and they make reference to the celebrity magazines that have escaped confiscation.

Josephine Which of her friends do you think she'll invite along?

Betty What about Brad?

Joan Ooh, yes. And Katie.

Joanna Don't you mean Angelina?

Joan No, Katie. I want to ask her about her stretch marks.

Josephine I didn't think you got stretch marks with Scientology.

Betty I think she's looking a bit peaky

Joan Katie?

Betty No, Angelina!

In the background, Pat enters from the storeroom with a box of sunglasses and any other accessories that might be appropriate for celebrities.

Ellen I don't really like Brad. Not since he told me there could never be anything between us.

Josephine reveals a camera that has escaped Mrs Hewitt and holds it up, pointing it towards herself.

Josephine Hey, Betty. What do you think? Me and Angelina.
Valerie (*Seeing the camera with horror*) No! No cameras. Victoria's agent was very clear. If she sees any cameras, she'll walk.

Pat snatches the camera and puts it with the other confiscated items on the desk. Josephine is nonplussed but is consoled by some of the other old folk who surreptitiously reveal that they too are hiding cameras. Meanwhile ...

Iris What about Jennifer? (*She turns to Loopy Lou, the giant rag doll she drags behind her in a little cart everywhere she goes*). You like Jennifer don't you, Loopy Lou.

Joanna Well she won't come if Angelina does, will she!?

Josephine Maybe they could learn to be friends.

Joanna Not a chance. Jennifer's Aquarius and Angelina has her sun in Gemini and her moon in Aries.

Betty I thought Angelina was Virgo.

Joanna Aquarius.

Betty I'm sure she's Virgo, Joanna.

Joanna goes over to the desk to retrieve her celebrity magazine.

Iris Do you think Tom's enjoying being a dad.

Joan Well they're all at it now, Iris ... having babies. Soon there'll be an Oscar for it: best baby, most interesting name, most exotic conception. Ooh, this all so exciting. I think I need the loo again.

Josephine It's not the excitement, dear, it's the diuretics!

Joan Oh yes ... now, where did I put them?

Joan rummages in her handbag.

Joanna Look, here it is, Betty; Aquarius. I knew it.

Ellen The media are always asking me about my star sign.

Joanna That's strange.

Ellen That's just the way it is I suppose ... when you're a hot celeb like me.

Joanna Who tore out this page; the article about the diamond-studded underwear?

Valerie (*In disbelief*) Diamond-studded underwear ... this is another world.

Iris withdraws from the conversation. Meanwhile, Joan has found her bottle of diuretic pills. She reads the label.

Joan Take four every two days. Oh dear. I think I've been taking two every four hours.

Joanna (*To Valerie*) Tiffany made them, for an undisclosed celebrity. They are about to go on display in London before she models them for Vogue.

Joan I don't think I'd fancy that.

Joanna Vogue?

Joan No, diamond-studded knickers. Not very comfortable. Not when you need to get them up and down in a hurry.

Joan exits hurriedly into the lavatory. As she turns, she reveals some lavatory paper that must have got caught up in her clothing on the last visit. Meanwhile, the old folk start to discuss the advisability of diamond-studded underwear as Ellen hands round some sandwiches.

Valerie Ladies and gentlemen. No more time for chatting. Victoria will be here any minute.

Ellen What do you mean? I am here.

Ellen hands Valerie a sandwich

Valerie (*Speaking loudly, assuming Ellen is deaf*) No, I said "Victoria".

Ellen Yes, that's me. Does 'Hello' magazine want me for another photo shoot?

Iris (*Confidentially to Valerie*) Don't worry about Ellen. She's quite bonkers. Loopy Lou thinks so too.

Betty About that sandwich ...

Valerie (*To Pat*) I don't think this is going to work. Look at them. It's hopeless. (*She bites the sandwich and gags*). What the hell is this!?

Ellen Snail porridge sandwich.

Valerie This is definitely not going to work.

Betty Ellen does her cooking after lights-out so the choice of ingredients is a bit hit and miss.

In the background, Joan enters from the lavatory.

Joanna (To Valerie) Don't give up so easily. It's typical of the younger generation. We will all make fantastic celebrities.

Josephine (To Joan) That was quick.

Joan False alarm.

Joanna We just need a bit of practice.

Pat What about the staff?

Joan What about the staff?

Pat We haven't got any

Joanna No staff! (To Joan and Josephine, throwing her eyes to heaven). No staff. OK, well, we'll have to be the staff as well. Who do you need?

Valerie For a start, we need a personal therapist ... for massage therapy, stone therapy, cupping therapy that sort of thing.

Joan I can do that.

Joanna Yes, Joan's very up to the minute on cupping.

Valerie And then we need a group therapist. For seeing-angel therapy, bio-energy therapy ...

Joan What about time-lapse therapy.

Valerie Time-lapse therapy?

Joan Oooh, yes. I read all about it the other day. It's all the rage.

Joanna I'll do that then.

Joan And sing-a-long therapy.

Valerie Sing-a-long therapy?

Joanna Josephine can help with that. We'll say that it's a Celebrity Sanctuary special.

Pat You see, it's all going to work out fine.

MUSIC #6 – 'COUNT ON US'

Joanna and Chorus. During the song the old folk discard the trappings of old age (sticks, Zimmer frames etc) in exchange for dark glasses and other accessories to make them look like celebrities - all handed out by Pat. Joan, Joanna and Josephine are each given nurse-like staff uniforms.

Joanna No need to worry
No need to fret
None so keen as a
Sunny Senior
Set us to work and
You won't regret
Trusting old folk to amaze
We'll play our part as each one arrives
Soon as we see them we will flatter and praise
We know their secrets
We know their lives
We know their celebrity ways

Chorus No need to worry
No need to fret
None so keen as a
Sunny Senior
Set us to work and
You won't regret
Trusting old folk to amaze
We'll play our part as each one arrives
Soon as we see them we will flatter and praise
We know their secrets
We know their lives
We know their celebrity ways

[Instrumental]

Joanna *We will chat about earnings with celebrity cooks
While Joan, here, is rubbing their backs
And we will mention how stunning each celebrity looks
While crystals and stones help them relax
Who's seeing who in the celebrity world
And whether they do Tantric sex
And which celebrity boy has a celebrity girl
Who's up for three in a bed with his ex.*

Women *His ex?*
Men *Lucky boy.*

Chorus *No need to worry
No need to fret
None so keen as a
Sunny Senior
Set us to work and
You won't regret
Trusting old folk to amaze
We'll play our part as each one arrives
Soon as we see them we will flatter and praise
We know their secrets
We know their lives
We know their celebrity ...
Know their celebrity ways.*

Chorus *Old folks should act their age
That's understood
But deception is all the rage
So let's try faking it good
None of us is old as such
Now we've heard the call
Watch us ditch the crutch
Cheer us. We're marching once more
Stick near us 'cause we know the score*

Sopranos *Fear us. Dad's Army's at war.* **Others** *Here we are. Dad's Army's at war*
Sop/Alto *We'll be secret squirrel,* **Tenor/Bass** *Hush, hush, hush.*
Secret agents *Hush, hush, hush.*

Chorus *And won't act our age.*

Joanna *Leave things to us
Don't make a fuss
The guests will find nothing amiss
We've got off pat
Celebrity chat
If you doubt us then listen to this ...*

Chorus *My anorexia
Hardly shows.
Drugs make me sexier,
But coke gets up my nose;
I'm seen
With Charlie Sheen
In Hello Magazine,
Chilling out at the yacht club,
Or down the Casino,
Or sharing a hot tub ...
With Quentin Tarantino,
Oh Yeah!*

Scene 1 (Part 3) - the guests arrive.

The doorbell rings.

Valerie *(Panicking)* She's here!

Joanna Don't panic. It'll be fine. But I do think someone should let her in.

Valerie waves hurriedly at Pat. Exit L Pat. There is an expectant hush as everyone adopts suitable poses for their new roles. Enter L Pat and Jenny (Mrs Smith) heavily disguised (dark glasses, scarf on her head etc). Just in time Valerie whips the camera off the desk and into the waste paper basket.

Pat *(In a loaded manner)* This is 'Mrs Smith'.

Jenny behaves furtively. Everyone is convinced she's Victoria.

Valerie Yes of course; Mrs Smith. We're delighted you could come. Welcome to Celebrity Sanctuary. If there's anything you need while you're here don't hesitate to ask. Can we take your bag? *(Jenny clutches her overnight case to her).* Of course. I understand. *(Aside to Pat).* Designer clothes ... very expensive! And when your 'friends' arrive to check in ... *(Jenny looks alarmed).* Ah, yes of course. Discretion is our middle name. We don't know anything about any friends. Please; Pat will show you to your room. We've put you at the back.

Everyone freezes while Jenny sings.

MUSIC #7 – 'FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE'

Solo for Jenny.

Jenny *For once in my life,
I can't see things clearly.
Can't see what's really important to me.
For once in my life,
I am sapped of emotion,
Trapped by devotion that won't set me free.

Scared of what I'll find.
A part of me I left behind.

For once in my life,
There's an uncertain sky.
A future that I can't discover alone.
For once in my life,
My heart's started burning,
Constantly yearning for love never known.*

Everyone unfreezes. Exeunt R Pat and Jenny. As soon as they are gone there is a buzz of excitement.

Iris She doesn't look like Victoria to me.

Ellen Well of course not. I'm Victoria. She's an impostor.

Joanna It's well known. They never look the same in the flesh as they do on TV.

There is general discussion. The doorbell rings.

Valerie Shhh. Quiet everyone. This will be one of her friends. Make like celebrities again. *(Everyone adopts suitable poses. Enter L John escorted by Pat).* Welcome, welcome to Celebrity Sanctuary.

John Who was that woman who just came in?

Valerie *(Pleased with herself for spotting a trap ... and in a loaded manner)* She was 'Mrs Smith'.

John Are you sure?

Valerie Oh yes, quite sure. And you?

John Well I guess that makes me a 'friend' of Mrs Smith.

Valerie Ah yes, we thought so ... but we didn't want to presume. May I have a name?

John John ... John Popalopodus.

Valerie John ... *(incredulously)* ... Popalopodus.

MUSIC #8 – ‘EVER SO DISCREET’

Chorus and Valerie. Unseen by Valerie and the new arrivals, the old folk try to take pictures of all the new arrivals. They manage to hide their cameras in time to concur with Valerie when she says there are no cameras on the premises. In the last verse, the old folk are spotted by Pat who confiscates the cameras and dumps them in the waste paper basket.

Valerie *(Spoken over the introduction to the song)* Well ... John, I do hope you'll enjoy your recovery period with us here in the sanctuary.

Valerie *Step through the door and wave the punters goodbye,
For this is a fortress where the press cannot pry.
And discretion's assured,
And transgressions ignored,
And the media never invade.*

Chorus *We won't bug your bed,
And nothing that's said,
Gets printed ...*

Valerie *... unless you've been paid.
Yes, the game is in hand,
The press understand,
That cameras with priapic lenses that expand are banned, so ...*

[Pat ushers John off R as the chorus sing ...]

Chorus *Step through the door,
We're here to serve the elite.
You can be sure we're,
Ever so, ever so discreet.*

Valerie *(Spoken over music)* This is getting to be rather exciting *(As Pat enters R the doorbell rings and she immediately runs to exit L)*. That'll be the next one. Are you all ready? *(Enter L Mario escorted by Pat)*. And you are?

Mario *(Spoken over music)* Mr Smith.

Valerie *(Spoken over music. Alarmed)* 'Mr Smith'. Goodness, you and Victoria must be very good friends. I'm afraid we don't allow room-sharing at Celebrity Sanctuary. *(Mario shrugs, puzzled)*. But we'll put you in nearby rooms and I'm sure you'll find time to get together. It must be difficult, finding yourselves some privacy. *(Confidentially)*. But we won't breath a word.

Valerie & Chrs *We never saw you.
We don't have stories to sell.
Step through the door,
And escape from kiss and tell hell*

Valerie *There's no need to fear,
Someone from here,
Slagging you off for a laugh.*

Chorus *There's a contract to sign,
With clauses each line,
Gagging each member of staff.*

Valerie *If things you confide,
Get repeated outside,
Their tongues are cut out and preserved in formaldehyde, so ...*

[Pat ushers Mario off R as the chorus sing ...]

Chorus *Step through the door.
We're here to serve the elite.
You can be sure we're,
Ever so, ever so discreet*

Valerie *(Spoken over music)* Fantastic. Victoria; one friend and one 'friend'. *(As Pat enters R the doorbell rings and she immediately runs to exit L)*. That must be another one. *(To the old folk)*. Come on

celebs - keep it up. (*Enter L the Reporter escorted by Pat*). How lovely. You must be another 'friend of Mrs Smith'. I can tell.

Reporter (*Spoken over music. Alarmed*) Is that like being 'a friend of Dorothy'? Look. I haven't come here to ...

Valerie (*Misunderstanding*) ... to have stereotypes thrown in your face. Don't worry. We understand. You have a public persona - a theatrical image - but it's all a ruse isn't it? An affectation. Well, we won't tell anyone. You can be as straight as you like behind the closed doors of Celebrity Sanctuary. We let everyone be themselves.

Chorus *If you can't afford to be seen losing your grip*

Valerie *Step through the door,
And let your public mask slip.*

*'Cause we're blind and we're deaf
If a top TV chef
Dines on beans and stale baguette*

Chorus *We never debunk,
A sultan of punk,
Who likes listening to Tammy Wynette*

Valerie *In public you are fey,
And famously gay,
But where on your iPod are Judy and Doris Day?*

[Pat ushers The reporter off R as they sing ...]

Valerie & Chrs *Step through the door,
We're here to serve the elite.
You can be sure,
Yes, you can be sure,
Won't you please be assured,*

Chorus *We're ever so, ever so,
Ever so, ever so,
Ever so, ever so,
Ever so, ever so,*

Please,

Valerie & Chrs *be assured we're,
Ever so, ever so,
Ever so, ever so,
Ever so, ever so discreet.*

Valerie Brilliant! Well done everyone.

Joe You said her friends would be women.

Valerie Did I? Well I wouldn't be surprised if some women arrive tomorrow. And Victoria's a woman isn't she? Now, time for bed everyone. It's too late for dinner but I'm sure Pat will arrange a snack for anyone who's peckish. Sweet dreams - and tomorrow we'll set this place humming. This is going to be the most sought after celebrity clinic in the country. Victoria and her friends are going to go home telling the world there is no place quite like it!

Exeunt all the old folk L and R as Pat enters R.

Pat I told you. It's just like in EastEnders.

Pat starts tidying up which takes her to the desk, where, unseen by Valerie, she picks up the photo and looks at it sadly. Then she hurriedly replaces it.

Valerie I'm sure EastEnders never had a plot line quite like this! But yes, I admit it. If we can just keep Melanie and Angela and all our new celebs happy, this could be the making of me. This could just be the break I need.

Exit R Pat.

MUSIC #9 – ‘THIS COULD BE THE TIME’

Solo for Valerie.

Valerie *Could this be the time,
When things start going right for me?
Could this be a time,
When the future's looking bright for me?*

*Dreams dance in the air,
Beyond the reach of those who mope.
Catch them if you dare.
Never give up hope.
This could be the time when things start going right.*

*Could this be the time,
For providence to smile on me?
Could it be the stars,
Will cast their favours, for a while, on me?*

*It's the lucky ones, for sure,
Who win the Porsche or win the Jag.
But now it's time to make the draw,
My lucky number's in the bag.
This could be the time when things start going right.*

*Choices take us on a journey.
Never quite know where.
Take us far from those for whom we care.*

*The future's not for plotting, you can try but if you do,
A butterfly might flap her wings at you.
Just to see her face or to hear her voice there's no price I wouldn't pay.
But what's done is done and the rest of my life starts today.*

*Could this be the time,
When I put the past behind me?
Could this be a time,
When spectres don't remind me.*

*Haunted by regrets, ghosts I can't escape.
But now it's time to place your bets,
I'm running for the tape.*

*This could be the time,
This could be the time.
I know life's not some lot on Bid TV,
Complete with three year guarantee. But,*

*This could be the time
When things start going right?
When things start going right.*

Scene 2 – In The Middle Of The Night

Throughout this scene, the three rooms at the back are referred to as the storage room (R), the lavatory (middle) and the office (L). NB ‘Enter’ and ‘Exit’ refer to the stage hence ‘Exits to the changing room’ means the actor is going into the changing room from the main room.

Jenny enters R. She is looking for something. She rummages in the desk. Then she picks up the photo and looks at it. She replaces it and takes a well-read letter from her pocket and starts to read it. Then she hears someone coming and exits into the lavatory to hide. Angela enters L. She notices Jenny disappearing into the lavatory but pays little heed. Instead, she calls Mario using her mobile.

Angela *Hullo Gorgeous ... No, neither can I ... Ooh, what a naughty thought ... No, where are you?
... You’ve checked in already! Did you call yourself Mr Smith like we said? ... Who’s Mrs*

Smith ... Look, forget Mrs Smith. When are you going to come and ... No Valerie has my bedroom watched. Ever since that unfortunate incident with the gardener and the ice cream van. ... What? You can't have lost it. Look, forget about your watch Mario, Darling. We'll go shopping and I'll buy you a great big Rolex if that's what you'd like, but right now, your little Angela needs some TLC ... No, your room is too risky. Come and meet me downstairs. I'll be in the little room next to the loo. Grrrr.

Angela exits into the storage room. Enter R the Reporter followed by the Photographer who has been hiding in the garden. He has with him photographic lenses ranging in length from long to ridiculously long, all feebly disguised eg in brown wrapping paper.

- Photographer** Where the hell have you been? I've been out in that garden freezing my nuts off for the last three hours and I ...
- Reporter** *(Stage whisper)* Shhh! You'll wake everyone up. We're supposed to be covert. This is our big break and you're going to ruin it.
- Photographer** OK, OK. If anyone comes, I'll pretend that I'm ...
- Reporter** *(Interrupting)* What are all these?
- Photographer** My lenses of course.
- Reporter** They're all wrapped up.
- Photographer** You said to come disguised.
- Reporter** How are you going to get compromising shots of Victoria with those? By the time you've got one of those cocked and ready she'll have her toes dry and her kit back on.
- Photographer** You're the reporter, aren't you? I thought you were going to interview her. Properly. You know, like David Dimbleby. I can't just leap in and take pictures you know. I need to get the lighting right.
- Reporter** Need to get the lighting right? You really haven't got the hang of this paparazzi thing have you? There's no time to be artistic. It's got to be 'wham bam'.
- Photographer** Where's the creative freedom in that? How can I reach Victoria's inner soul with 'wham bam'?
- Reporter** You've got to get in there, shoot and leave.
- Photographer** Oh right, like a gun-toting, grammatically-correct panda
- Reporter** What?
- Photographer** You know. When he walks into the saloon, he eats, shoots and leaves.

The Reporter stares at the photographer in disbelief.

Reporter I think we'd better practise.

MUSIC #10 – 'YOU'VE BEEN PAPPED'

Duet for Reporter and Photographer.

- Reporter** *(Spoken)* Look I'll be a celeb. A sporty celeb. Call me Linford. I'm half way through a celebrity 'fun run' around Central Park. There's a big crowd.
- Photographer** *(Spoken)* OK, so tell me; how was the big send-off?
- Reporter** *[Sung]* *Not my best.*
- Photographer** Why? What went wrong?
- Reporter** *I fell over and they clapped!*
- Photographer** And now?
- Reporter** *I'm in a mess.
I've just been lapped.*
- Photographer** Now what?
- Reporter** *Is this some sort of test?
Look I've stepped,
Where some dog's ... been.*
- Photographer** *[Á la TellyTubbies]* *O-Oh!*

Reporter *Oh sssugar! Here's the press!*

[Flash bulb effects]

Photographer *Yes, you've guessed it, you've been papped!*

Both *The paparazzi,
The paparazzi.*

Reporter *Celebrities do wrong.*

Photographer *That's why we tag along*

Reporter *To show how very naughty they can be.*

Both *The paparazzi,
The paparazzi.*

Reporter *We like to lurk about.*

Photographer *So when celebs go out.*

Reporter *We can take the pics the public need to see.*

Don't have therapy for piles.

Photographer *Don't have therapy for stress.*

Reporter *Don't sell your story to the Mirror,
We have trashed celebs for less.*

Photographer *Smart guys don't do drugs.*

Reporter *Smart guys don't do whores.*

Photographer *When smart girls have a baby
They don't breastfeed out of doors.*

[Both make a tut tut noise.]

Reporter Ok, I still think we need more practice. I'll be a celebrity again.

Photographer What kind of celeb?

Reporter The kind that has a temper! And I'm talking to this chap here who's in charge of my latest sponsorship deal.

Photographer Right, I've got the picture. But why are you looking so cross?

Reporter *He's just confessed,
The budget has been capped.*

Photographer *So you'll get less?*

Reporter [Spoken] *Worse than that.* [Sung] *The whole deal has been scrapped.*

Photographer *I can see you're not impressed?*

Reporter [Spoken] *Let's put it this way.* [Sung] *He's cruising to get slapped!*

Photographer [Á la TellyTubbies] *O-Oh!*

Reporter *Oh sssugar! Here's the press!*

[Flash bulb effects]

Photographer *Yes, you've guessed it, you've been papped!*

Both *The paparazzi,
The paparazzi.*

Reporter *Celebrities do wrong.*

Photographer *That's why we tag along*

Reporter *To show how very naughty they can be.*

Both *The paparazzi,
The paparazzi.*

Reporter *We like to lurk about.*

Photographer *So when celebs go out.*

Reporter *We can take the pics the public need to see.*

Don't have therapy for piles.

Photographer *Don't have therapy for stress.*

Reporter *Don't sell your story to the Mirror,
We have trashed celebs for less.*

Photographer *Smart guys don't do drugs.*
Reporter *Smart guys don't do whores.*
Photographer *When smart girls have a baby*
They don't breastfeed out of doors.

Both *The paparazzi,*
The paparazzi.

Photographer So, watch out celebrity boys
Reporter And as for the celebrity girls ...

Reporter *If you pout and look unhappy,*
Photographer *Fall out of something strappy,*
Reporter *Get off on wearing nappies,*
Photographer *Or really you're a chappy!*

[Flash bulb effects]

Both *Oh yes.*
You've been papped.

Reporter Quick. Someone's coming. You hide in there. *(He indicates the storage room).*

The Reporter exits L. The Photographer gathers his lenses with difficulty and goes to exit into the storage room but comes out hastily again as if Angela has made a grab for him. He exits instead into the office Enter R Valerie. She is talking on her mobile.

Valerie Oh, come on, Pat. How many times has Melanie said she's seen a stalker lurking in the garden? Well, I couldn't see anyone. I'm sure she's imagining it as usual. *(Behind Valerie, Jenny enters from the lavatory, creeps across the stage and exits R).* Alright, I'll check out the rest of the house.

Valerie heads off L but then hears a noise from the garden (eg Jenny tripping on a flowerpot) and instead exits R. Enter L the Reporter. He knocks on the storage room door; which is of course the wrong door.

Reporter Stay there, I'm going to track down Mrs Smith.

The Reporter exits L as Angela looks out from the storage room, puzzled.

MUSIC #11 – 'YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ME'

A farcical piece for John, Jenny, Angela, Mario, the photographer and Valerie. What follows is farce set to music - a mixture of recitative, song and underscored dialogue. Angela retreats as John enters R. He is making a phone call on his mobile.

John *(Spoken over music)* No I can't talk any louder ... Because she might hear me ... Yes I know she's a lovely girl but that's not the point ... No I'm not paranoid ... Mother will you listen! ... Because I followed her here that's how I know.

John *Yes, it was Jenny.*
Mum, you know that I adore her
But I saw her!
She checked in as Mrs Smith.
Very iffy, Mrs Smith
Ever so discreet
But I know she's here to cheat.
Ever so discreet, she's here to cheat.
Ever so discreet, she's here to cheat.
Ever so discreet, she's here to cheat!

And I know who he is
I overheard him plotting
He plans to meet her here.
Perhaps she's hiding near.
He plans to meet her here.
Perhaps she's hiding near.
She'll meet him here.

*She's hiding near.
I fear they'll do it here.*

[John starts towards the doors at the back but then hears someone coming so he hides behind the desk.
Enter R Mario].

Mario *So, here is Mario
I am ready to impress you
And possess you
Who needs Richard Gere
When Sweetheart, here I am
You shall be my ewe
And I shall be your ram
Who needs Richard Gere. Here I am
Who needs Richard Gere. Here I am
Who needs Richard Gere. Here I am*

[Mario starts unbuttoning his shirt as he exits into the office (ie the wrong room). John leaps up from behind the desk and bangs on the door of the office].

John *I know you're there,
I know your game.*

[Mario enters from the office with an unbuttoned shirt].

Mario *What do you know?*

John *You and Mrs Smith.
Have you no shame?
Don't you play dumb.
Out you come!*

[Enter the Photographer from the office].

John *Who the hell are you!? (He looks into the office to check no-one else is there).*

Photographer *I'm the ummm, builder ... I'm looking for dry rot.*

John *Dry rot!?*

Mario *Listen, I'd love to stay and chat ... but business before pleasure.*

Mario smiles at the photographer and exits to the storage room.

Photographer *Must get on.*

The Photographer exits back into the office, shutting the door. John is bemused, but then realises the possibilities of the storage room. He knocks on the door.

John *I know you're there
I know your game*

[Mario enters from the storage room without a shirt on].

Mario [Sung across John] *What do you know?
This is getting tedious, repetitive, monotonous.*

John *You and Mrs Smith.
I know that's not her name.
Don't you play dumb,
Out you come!*

Enter Angela from the storage room, half dressed. John looks in past her to check there's no-one else there.

Angela *(Flirtatiously) Well, what have we got here? You're all fired up, aren't you. Anything I can do to help?*

Mario *So, Mario has been forgotten already. Mario will take care of his needs in here.*

Mario exits into the lavatory.

John *I'm sorry ...*

Angela *No need to be sorry, Darling.*

John *I thought you were ... I thought you were Mrs Smith.*

Angela Mrs Smith? Do you mean that strange woman in a scarf. She went in there. *(She points at the lavatory door).*

John Right that's it! That is so it! *(He bangs on the lavatory door).*

John No you don't.

[The lavatory door opens and Mario who is doing up his flies starts to enter].

John Oh no you don't ...

John pulls Mario out and exits into the lavatory looking for Mrs Smith. Meanwhile Mario loses his temper.

Mario Mario has had enough of this.

Mario punches John as he enters from the lavatory. John falls back and collapses in the lavatory doorway. The door stays open.

Angela At last, a real man. [She takes Mario by the hand]
To make me feel like new. [She sweeps everything from the desk except the photo].
Come on, let's do it,
Here and now

Mario Here?

Angela And now.

Mario Here and now!

No wait. Someone's coming.

[Mario pulls Angela away from the desk. Angela exits into the storage room pulling Mario in with her. Enter R Valerie and Jenny. Valerie is very attentive].

Valerie Please there is no need
To be hiding in the garden
In just a cardigan.
It's freezing
Mrs Smith
Very chilly, Mrs Smith.

[As Valerie sings, she guides Jenny stage L. Behind them, the audience sees a very long telephoto lens appear through the window in the office door and follow them both across the room].

*Come inside the house
Where we'll keep you safe and sound
Cameras can't be found for miles around
Cameras can't be found for miles around
Cameras can't be found for miles around*

[The lens disappears back into the office. Exeunt L Valerie and Jenny. At the same time, Mario enters from the storage room, buttoning his shirt].

Mario I'm sorry Sweetheart
It's no joke
This to-ing and fro-ing
Has put me off my stroke!

[Spoken] *Maybe tomorrow, Sweetheart.*

[Mario exits R. Angela enters from the storage room, still half dressed and holding the rest of her clothes].

Angela Typical, typical, typical, typical,
Typical, typical, typical, typical,
Man!

Angela looks at John who is groaning and groggy on the ground in the open doorway of into the lavatory.

Angela No, even I draw the line at semi-conscious

Exit L Angela. Blackout.

Act 1, Scene 3 - a bit later

MUSIC #12 - 'I WANNA BE A CELEBRITY' (PAT & CHORUS)

Note : Everyone can take part in this 'dream sequence'.

Enter R Pat, onto the empty stage. She is in a dreamy mood. She starts off shyly, dreaming of a life of glamour but as she gets more into the song she imagines more and more glitz – and the audience see her dream acted out on stage as she is fêted by the public and press alike.

Pat	<i>Somewhere in a crowd Someone cries out loud Is it her?, Look! It's her, Can't be her!, Yes, it's her Yes, it's her It's not me Who have I ever wowed? That's why [‘The people’ gradually enter behind Pat]. I wanna be a celebrity I want my face on TV I've seen folk, at a stroke Go from pleb to celeb. Why shouldn't that be me I wanna be a footballer's wife What better life could there be The press would obsess 'bout the sex and the cheques And people would care about me</i>			
		People	<i>Aaaah Aaaah Aaaah Aaaah</i>	
People	<i>We all care, we all care what you do. We don't care, we don't care if it's true. We all care, we all care what you say. Each of us, thinks of you every day. We read about you in our magazines. Watch you daily on our TV screens. We can't wait learn. 'Bout each twist and turn. We all care about which men you date. When you dump them we commiserate. Your problems are ours.</i>			
Sops	<i>We even send flowers to You</i>	Altos	<i>Yeah</i>	Men <i>All we think about is ...</i>
	<i>You</i>	Altos	<i>Yeah</i>	Men <i>All we care about is ...</i>
	<i>You</i>	Altos	<i>Yeah</i>	Men <i>All we dream about is ...</i>
	<i>You</i>	Altos	<i>Oh yes it's ...</i>	Men <i>All we talk about is ...</i>
	<i>You!</i>	Altos	<i>We love. It's ...</i>	Men <i>We love. It's ...</i>
	<i>Do</i>	Altos	<i>Oh yes we ...</i>	Men <i>Oh yes we ...</i>
	<i>You</i>	Altos	<i>Yeah</i>	Men <i>All we think about is ...</i>
	<i>You</i>	Altos	<i>Yeah</i>	Men <i>All we care about is ...</i>
	<i>You</i>	Altos	<i>Yeah</i>	Men <i>All we dream about is ...</i>
	<i>You</i>	Altos	<i>Oh yes it's ...</i>	Men <i>All we talk about is ...</i>

	<i>You</i>		<i>Altos</i> <i>We love. It's ...</i>		<i>Men</i> <i>We love. It's ...</i>
	<i>You!</i>		<i>Altos</i> <i>Yes, truly</i>		<i>Men</i> <i>Yes, truly</i>
Pat <i>(with female semi-chorus)</i>	<i>I wanna be a celebrity I want my face on TV I've seen folk, at a stroke Go from pleb to celeb. Why shouldn't that be me Why shouldn't that be me.</i>	People	<i>We all care, we all care what you do. We don't care, we don't care if it's true. We all care, We all care what you say. Each of us, thinks of you every day. Each of us, thinks of you every day.</i>		
	<i>I wanna be a celebrity I want my face on TV I've seen folk, at a stroke Go from pleb to celeb. Why shouldn't that be me Why shouldn't that be me</i>		<i>We all care, we all care what you do. We don't care, we don't care if it's true. We all care, We all care what you say. Each of us, thinks of you every day. Each of us, thinks of you every day.</i>		
Pat	<i>Oh, Why, oh Oh Why, oh Oh Why, oh Oh Why, oh Oh Why shouldn't that be me.</i>	Sops/Altos	<i>Why</i>	Men	<i>Why</i>
		Sops/Altos	<i>Why</i>	Men	<i>Why</i>
		Sops/Altos	<i>Why</i>	Men	<i>Why</i>
		Sops/Altos	<i>Why</i>	Men	<i>Why</i>
		Sops/Altos	<i>That</i>	Men	<i>That</i>
		Sops/Altos	<i>Should Be</i>	Men	<i>Should Be</i>
Sop&Men 1	<i>That should be you</i>	Sop2/Altos/Men2	<i>That should be you That could be you That should</i>		
Pat	<i>Be me.</i>	Chorus	<i>Be you.</i>		

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

Scene 1 - Early The Next Morning

Throughout this Act, the three rooms at the back are referred to as the Therapy Room (R), the Changing Room (middle) and the Sauna (L). NB Enter and Exit refer to the stage, hence 'Exits to the Changing Room' means the actor is going into the Changing Room.

MUSIC #13 - PROLOGUE ACT II 'MAKE DO AND MEND'

Pat and some trustworthy recruits are putting the finishing touches to their emergency plan to relocate the therapy facilities to the three rooms at the back (eg putting up signs, carrying in fires etc). Exeunt L all, as Valerie enters R.

Valerie (Calling after Pat) Pat?

Enter L the Workman.

Workman I'm sorry lady but still no joy. I should have you fixed up by the weekend but I can't promise.

Enter L Pat, carrying a deck chair and an old-style electric bar heater.

Valerie "Fixed up"? What are you talking about. You haven't broken the electrics again have you?

Pat No. This time it's water. We're waist deep in water. Nobody can get in or out.

Workman It was an accident missus. While I was trying to fix the drainage problem up at Sunny Seniors, I was working on this pipe and ...

Valerie Stop! Stop! What are you both on about? Where are we waist deep in water?

Pat In the therapy annexe.

Workman That's not too vital is it?

Pat That's where we do the pampering. The massage and sauna and that.

Workman I'm rather partial to a spot of pampering myself.

Valerie It's not pampering. We offer 'an extensive range of therapies'.

Pat All the equipment is built-in. I couldn't move it out of the annexe. So I had to improvise.

Valerie Improvise?

Pat Yes, look. The office will be the new sauna. I've fixed it up nice. It'll be fine. It just needs this chair and one more heater and it'll be fine.

Pat exits into the office and enters again without the chair and heater. The workman looks into the 'sauna'

Workman I wouldn't have all those fires in there if I were you.

Pat Yes, well, unlike you, I know what I'm doing. That room happens to have it's own ring main so there won't be a problem.

Workman On your head be it, missus.

Valerie looks into the office in disbelief. Pat exits R.

Valerie Do you know? I actually started to convince myself that this was all going to work out. But now I know that there are malevolent Gods out to get me. And they seem to be using you as their agent. *(She advances angrily on the Workman who hurriedly exits L. Pat enters R, wheeling an ironing board draped with a tablecloth).* And what is that! No, don't tell me. Ironing therapy.

Pat This is the new massage table ... for the new therapy room. *(She indicates the name above the door. Then, seeing Valerie's look...)* It will all be OK Valerie. I promise.

Exit Pat, wheeling the 'massage table' into the therapy room. Enter L & R the 'new patients', Josephine, Joanna and Joan. All are excited.

Valerie Listen up everyone. There's been an incident overnight and what with one thing and another I think we're going to have to call the whole thing off.

Joanna What did I tell you yesterday about a negative attitude. We're up for anything. Bring it on.

Valerie But it's no good.

Pat Quick, the others are coming. *(The 'new patients' adopt celebrity poses. Enter L Angela and Melanie).* Come on Valerie. This is your big moment.

Valerie is clearly torn between defeat and masquerade. She resolves to go for the latter.

Valerie Melanie, Angela. Let me introduce you to some of our new clients.

Angela 'New clients', darling? Well, that's something I haven't heard in a while.
Valerie They all arrived last night. You probably missed them at breakfast. They like to get up very early.
Melanie I hope they've been vetted. None of them are press are they?
Valerie They are all certified celebrities, Melanie dear. Some are almost as famous as you. This is Iris. And this is ... umm?
Betty Betty.
Valerie And this is ...
Shirley Shirley. (*Proudly*). I'm ninety-two you know.
Valerie Shirley, yes that's it. Loves to joke about her age. And we have new staff as well! This is Josephine and this is Joanna and Joan.
Ellen (*Holding out some peculiar food*) And I'm Vic... (*She is restrained by the 'new patients'*).
Valerie So, today is scheduled as an intensive day of therapy. Joanna's looking after the time-lapse therapy. Joanna?
Joanna Yes, thank you, Valerie. As you know, t'ai chi has become so 'yesterday' ... terribly tedious, standing there, rooted to the spot. Here at Celebrity Sanctuary we now practice something much better called time-lapse therapy. I'll demonstrate.

Joanna starts demonstrating. The therapy seems to consist of walking about the stage with exaggerated movements, as if in slow motion. The 'new patients' start copying.

Melanie I've never heard of time-lapse therapy.
Valerie Joanna's very much in demand, Melanie.
Angela Isn't time-lapse all about speeding things up not slowing things down?
Valerie She may be unorthodox but (*she glances around conspiratorially*) she works with the best. Tom Cruise refuses to start filming until he's had a one-to-one with Joanna. (*Melanie and Angela reluctantly join in. Meanwhile, Valerie sees the waste paper basket, still full of cameras and takes one out. She whispers to Pat*). I thought you were going to get rid of these. (*Enter R Mario, the Reporter and John. John has a black eye from his encounter with Mario the previous night. He keeps well clear of Mario. Valerie hurriedly hides the camera behind her back, then says casually*). Ah, gentlemen. Is 'Mrs Smith' with you?
Reporter (*Disappointedly*) No. I was hoping she'd be here.
John So was I.
Valerie Well, never mind. Now you're here, why don't you join in with the therapy sessions.
Joanna And ... rest. Very good everyone. Now, Josephine, here, is going to do some sing-a-long therapy with you.
Angela Ooh yes. And this new boy can learn-a-long with me. (*She grabs hold of Mario*). Can't you Gorgeous.

MUSIC #14 – 'THE SING-A-LONG THERAPY THING' (JOSEPHINE AND CHORUS)

Josephine *For a therapeutic sing-a-long, sing-a-long with me,
Do you all see what I'm getting at?*

Chorus *Yes we see.*

Josephine *Just like Julie Andrews and doh ray me.*

Chorus *Just like Julie Andrews and doh ray me.*

We never knew it but it seems it can help if you sing.

Let's see if it truly will

Be therapeutic when

We learn to do the

Sing-a-long therapy thing.

Josephine *To show that we're versatile.*

Let's try a different style.

Chorus *Yes, let's show we're versatile,*

And sing in a different style.

Chorus *We never knew it.*

Could it be we never knew it,

Never knew quite what singing could bring?

*Now, we love to do it.
Can't you see we love to do it.
The sing-a-long therapy, sing-a-long therapy,
Sing-a-long therapy thing?*

Josephine *Here's how to raise a smile,
Sing in Lloyd Weber style.*

Chorus *We never knew just what drama singing could bring.
Now we love to do the
West End musical,
Broadway musical,
Sing-a-long therapy thing.*

Valerie Well, I'm sure you all feel better for that. And there will be many therapy sessions as the morning progresses. Meanwhile, Joan will be seeing to your one-on-one therapy needs in the new therapy room at the back there. Sauna is available in the new sauna room there, and you can get changed in the err ...

Pat *(indicating the lavatory)* In the new changing room.

Valerie Yes, in the new changing room. But I must stress that space is limited to one person per room. So, if you'd like to make your booking with Joan ...

Everyone lines up to book with Joan while Valerie collapses at her desk, worn out by her efforts at deception.

Scene 2 – Later that morning

NOTE : This scene is a set-piece farce:- no music, little dialogue and a large number of stage directions. To help keep a handle on all the comings and goings, the action is divided into numbered sections. Most entrances and exits can overlap with the dialogue and with each other. Generally speaking, the faster the pace the better. Parts 10 and 11 can be seen on the Video Trailer available for this musical.

*The therapy sessions are well underway. An orange glow is visible through the window of the sauna. Pat is on stage.
Enter R, Valerie.*

Valerie How's it going?

Pat Fine. I told you it would be OK.

Valerie I haven't seen anything of *(stage whisper)* Victoria, have you? Maybe that's not a bad good thing. Melanie and Angela are bound to get suspicious soon and then they'll blab to everyone. What about Victoria's friends?

Pat Mr Popalopodus is in the sauna, *(she indicates)* and Mr Smith is in the therapy room *(she indicates)*. No sign of the others, though.

Valerie Have a look round.

Exit L Pat, as Valerie busies herself at her desk.

Part 1

John enters from the sauna apparently naked except for a towel wrapped around his waist. At the same time, Joan enters from the therapy room.

Joan *(Indicating the room she's just left)* Mr Smith is just relaxing after his marma massage session.

John Oh yes, Mr Smith likes a bit of marma massage.

Joan You know each other?

John Oh we go way back. *(Confidentially)*. 'Course, the therapy Mr Smith really needs is ... colonic irrigation.

Joan Colonic irrigation?

John Yes, but he's too shy to ask. *(He exits into the changing room).*

Joan Valerie?

Valerie Whatever the client wants Joan.

Joan Right. I'll go and get some equipment. *(She exits R to find some make-shift equipment for colonic irrigation).*

Part 2

Enter L Ellen. She is carrying a cake in the shape of a camera with a big lens.

Ellen *(Proudly, to Valerie)* It's a 'celebrity cake'. I baked it for my friends. It's made entirely of chocolate and Gruyere cheese!

Valerie realises that Ellen would give the game away if she were to come anywhere near Mrs Smith and her friends.

Valerie Not now, Ellen dear. *(Ellen protests as she exits to the sauna, unceremoniously pushed by Valerie as John, now fully dressed, starts to enter from the changing room. Valerie bars the way to Ellen who is trying to enter from the sauna).* Is everything alright Mr Smith?

John *(With a sideways look at the therapy room)* Oh yes, everything's going to be just fine.

Part 3

Exit John L. Valerie starts to let Ellen out of the sauna but then hears someone coming and pushes her back in. Enter R, the Reporter.

Valerie Ah, Mr Sylvester.

Reporter *(Consulting his booking form)* I've come to 'commune with crystals'. I'm booked for eleven o'clock ... in the therapy room.

Valerie Yes, of course. The changing room is just there.

The Reporter exits to the changing room. Now Valerie can let Ellen out. She enters from the sauna looking hot and flushed. Her cake has completely melted.

Ellen What are you trying to do, kill me? It's roasting in there.

Valerie You do look a bit flushed.

Ellen Look at my cake! *(She holds up the melted cake. She is upset and exits L, as ...)*

Part 4

Enter R Melanie and Angela.

Melanie I'm going to try the 'new' facilities. I've come for a sauna. I hope it's up to the usual standards, Valerie.

Enter the Reporter from the changing room wearing a towel about his waist. Exit Melanie into the changing room. The Reporter starts to exit into the therapy room but beats a hasty retreat.

Reporter Sorry. Didn't know you were ...

Valerie The therapy room will be free in a little while, Mr Sylvester. Why don't you have a nice sauna before you commune with the crystals?

Reporter *(Opening the sauna door)* It's a bit hot.

Valerie Regulation temperature ... it's set at the melting point of gruyere cheese. *(The reporter exits into the sauna while Angela peeks into the therapy room and sees Mario inside. Melanie enters from the changing room wrapped in a towel. She heads towards the sauna but Valerie, who is getting quite fraught, intercepts her).* Sorry Melanie. You'll have to wait a moment. There's a bit of a bottle-neck.

Meanwhile, Angela surreptitiously exits into the changing room, trying not to be seen by Valerie.

Melanie Well I can't wait all day.

Part 5

Joan enters R carrying make shift equipment for colonic irrigation – a hot water bottle and a garden hose with a large nozzle. She announces the procedure loudly as she starts to go into the therapy room.

Joan Here we are Mr Smith, colonic irrigation. Mr Popalopodus tipped me off. If you'd just like to lie on your stomach and remove the towel.

Mario screams and enters from the therapy room, rushing past Joan with a towel clutched round his waist He tries to get into the changing room but it is locked so he exits R at a run. Meanwhile, Joan realises she needs the loo but she can't get into the changing room because it has been locked on the inside by Angela.

Valerie *(To Melanie, with exaggerated calm)* Ah look. The therapy room's free now. *(She knocks on the door of the sauna).* You can come out now, Mr Sylvester.

The Reporter is heard crying out from inside the sauna. Valerie and Melanie peer into the sauna through the window. The orange glow is brighter.

Melanie He's on fire! Do something!

Part 6

Valerie grabs a nearby water-based fire extinguisher and exits dramatically into the sauna.

Valerie Hold still while I squirt you.

There's a scream from the Reporter who enters quickly from the sauna, drenched and with a charred towel about him. It has burnt holes everywhere and he is having difficult staying decent. He tries to get into the changing room but as Angela is still inside, it is still locked, so he rapidly exits into the therapy room.

Reporter *(From inside the therapy room)* I need a new towel. Will someone please get me a new towel!

Enter L, Pat.

Melanie *(To Pat, struggling to be coherent)* The sauna! Mr Sylvester! He was on fire!

Valerie His towel must have caught one of the bars.

Valerie reaches into the therapy room (making a show of not peeking) and retrieves the charred, damp towel. Just then there is a loud bang from the sauna. The orange glow disappears and smoke starts coming out of the door. Pat peers inside.

Pat I think it was the water. It's blown the circuit.

Melanie What about my sauna? I was looking forward to a nice sauna.

Valerie and Pat whisper together hastily and mime to one another their plan: they will swap the sauna and the therapy room. Pat looks into the therapy room. She beats a hasty retreat making a show of averting her eyes.

Pat Yes there's still power in there. Like I said, it's on a different circuit. So we can use this room *(indicating the therapy room)* for the sauna and we'll do the massage and stuff in there *(indicating the sauna)* as soon as I can get it cleaned up.

Reporter *(Angrily putting his head around the door of the therapy room)* Where's my towel!

Pat exits into the sauna.

Valerie Don't worry Mr Sylvester. I'll get you one.

Valerie tries the door of the changing room which is still locked. Joan is now hopping up and down.

Joan It's been locked for ages.

Valerie hurriedly exits L to look for another towel.

Part 7

Pat enters from the sauna carrying an electric bar fire and a deck chair. She then calls into the therapy room – again trying not to look.

Pat Perhaps you could send out the massage table, Mr Sylvester.

The ironing board is duly pushed out. Pat positions it in front of the therapy room with the fires and chair on the ground in front.

Melanie I wish you'd get a move on.

Pat looks at the extension leads that link the electric fires together. They all look charred. Exit L Pat with the leads in search of replacements.

Part 8

Angela enters from the changing room dressed in a towel. Immediately, Joan exits to the changing room. With a conspiratorial nod to Melanie, Angela exits into the therapy room. As she does so she speaks ...

Angela OK Darling, there's no escape now. Prepare to be ravished.

The Reporter rushes out naked, but he can only be seen from the waist up because of the ironing board, the table cloth and the chair. Worried about the intentions of Angela, he holds the door closed behind him. There is an awkward silence between the Reporter and Melanie who is standing in front of the open sauna door dressed in a towel. Then they start talking. During the conversation below, the Reporter tries not to be self-conscious about his naked state or the occasional attempts being made by Angela to open the door to the therapy room behind him.

Melanie You're staring.

Reporter Sorry.

Melanie It happens to me all the time.

Enter L, Shirley and Betty who cross R talking to quietly to one another.

Reporter Really?
Melanie Yes! It does. As soon as people realise who I am.
Reporter Who you are? Oh! Of course. Yes, I see. You are ...
Melanie *(Conspiratorially)* Shhh
Reporter *(Conspiratorially)* Oh, I do understand. It's so difficult for people like us. Keeping a low profile. Avoiding the press.

Part 9

Pat enters L with the new extension leads. She picks up the deck chair and electric fire. The Reporter's naked legs are now visible below the tablecloth that's draped over the ironing board. Pat exits into the therapy room, and in order to do so, she pushes the ironing board out of the way and in front of the changing room. As she does so, the Reporter moves to keep behind the ironing board, letting go of the therapy room door. The Reporter continues his nonchalant conversation with Melanie whilst trying to open the changing room door to get his clothes. But, it has been locked from the inside by Joan.

Reporter It's the same everywhere these days. You can't trust anyone.
Melanie No
Reporter 'Heat Magazine' have got people everywhere.
Melanie I know, It's the same with 'Hello'.

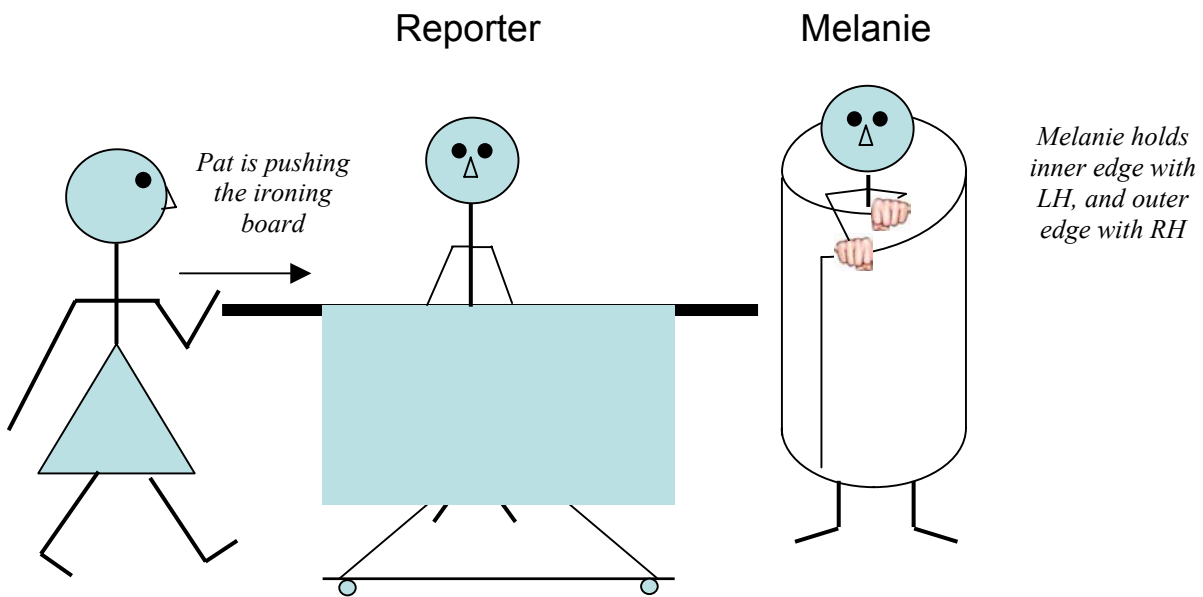
Enter R a small group of 'new patients' who move downstage R in a huddle, talking quietly.

Part 10

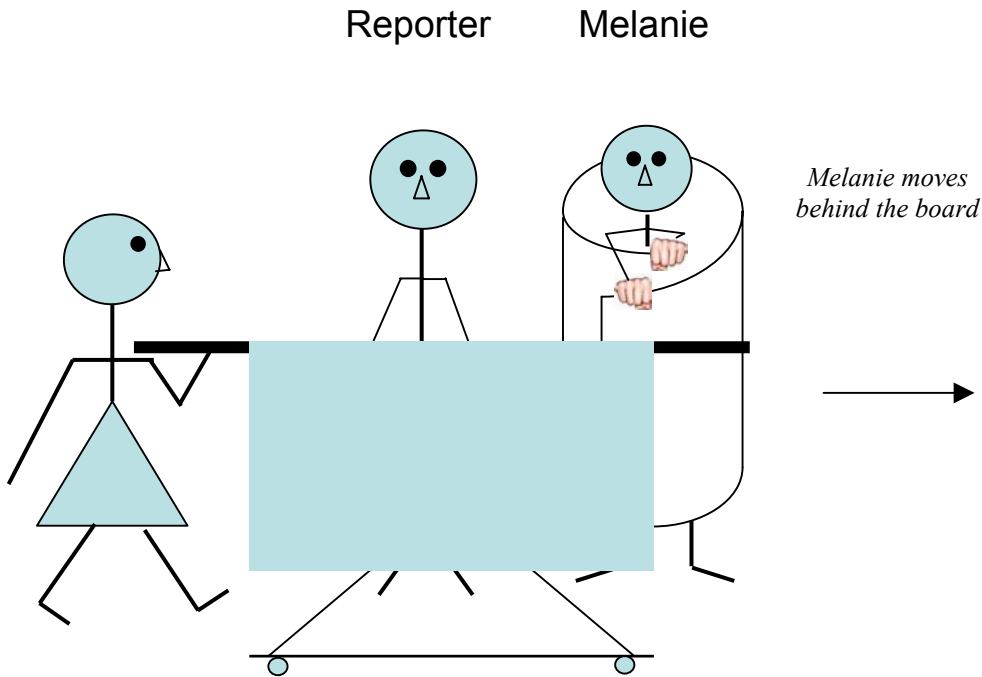
Pat enters from the therapy room.

Pat *(To Angela, who is still inside the therapy room)* Sorry, Angela. Best stay put while I finish swapping everything over.

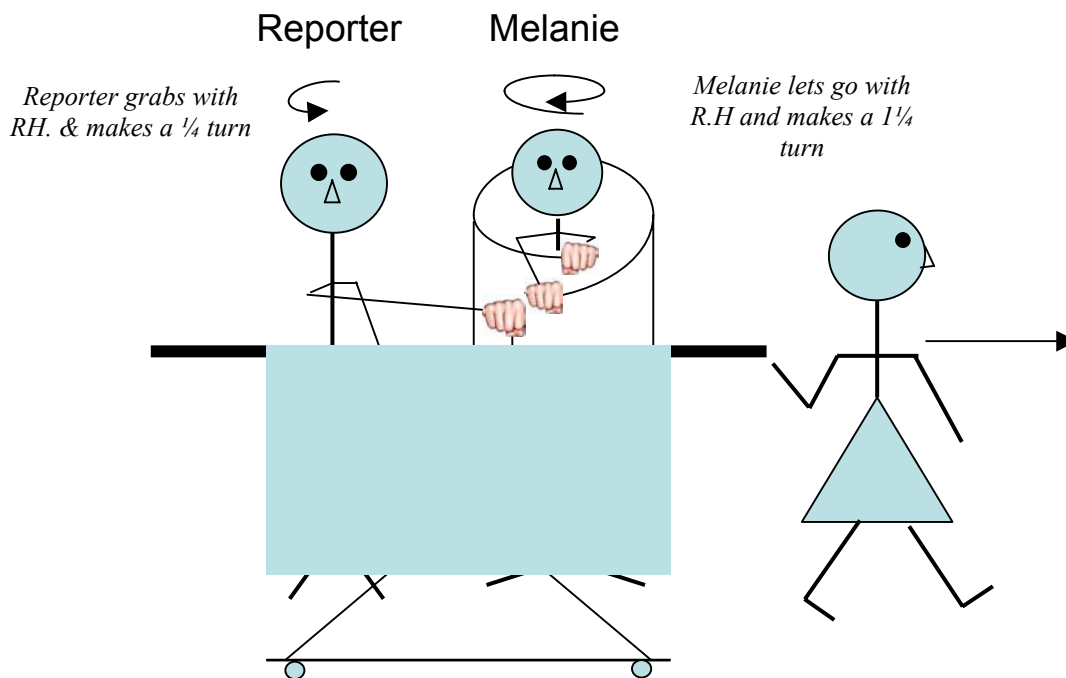
Pat starts to move the ironing board into the sauna, the door to which is still open.



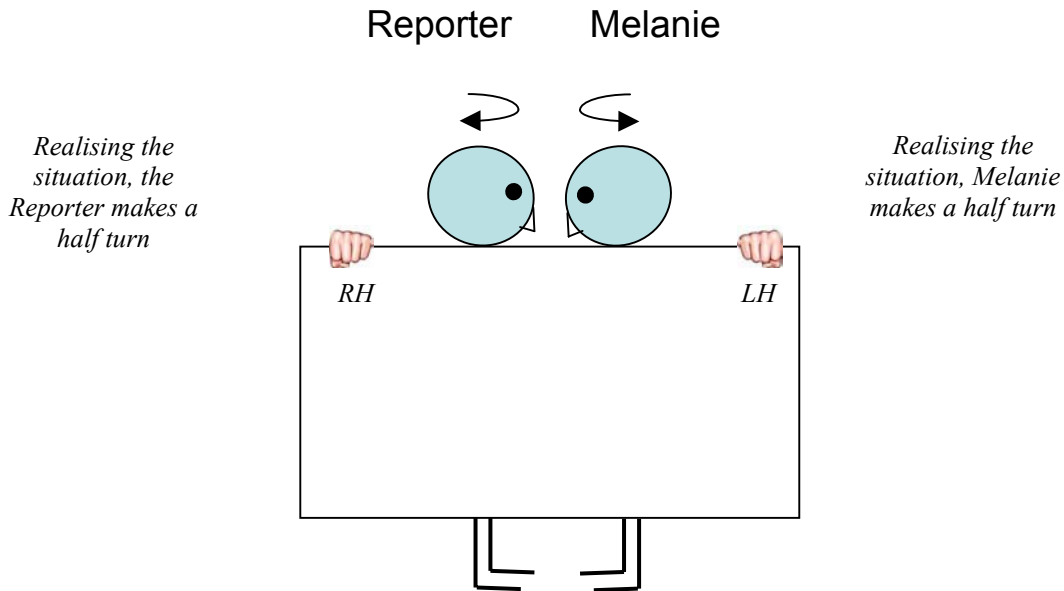
Melanie steps behind the board to get out of the way. At the same time, the Reporter is edging towards the sauna to keep from being exposed.



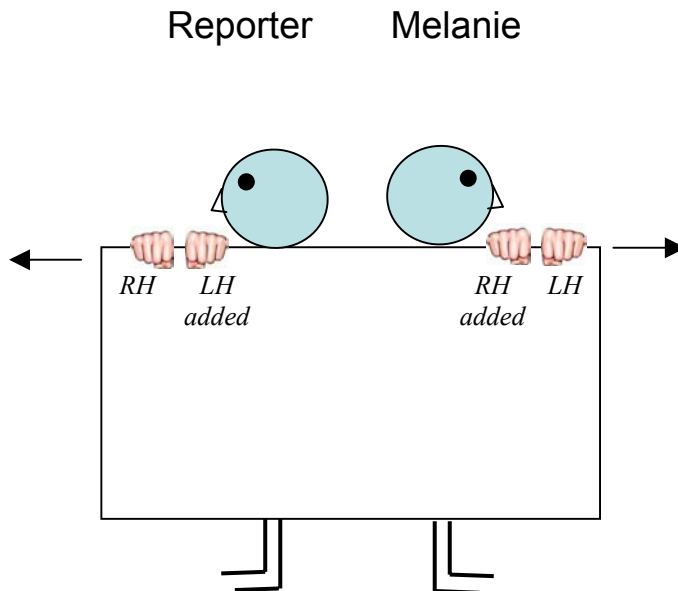
The Reporter and Melanie are now both behind the board in front of the changing room. Pat now moves to the other end of the board to pull it into the Sauna. Just as the board is about to disappear into the sauna revealing the Reporter's nakedness, the Reporter grabs Melanie's towel and pulls.



Melanie spins round as it unwinds leaving them both behind the towel, closely facing each other. Pat and the ironing board are now in the sauna leaving these two and their towel. The audience can see them both from the shoulders up and knees down – the towel hides the rest. They both look down and, realising they are both naked, they give a startled cry and immediately turn.



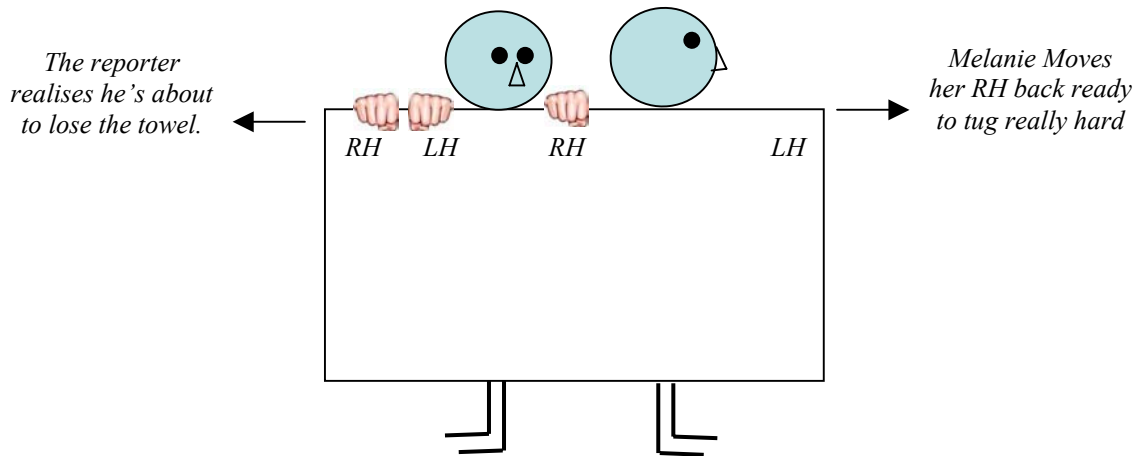
They are now facing in opposite directions as below, each holding one end of the towel.



Part 11

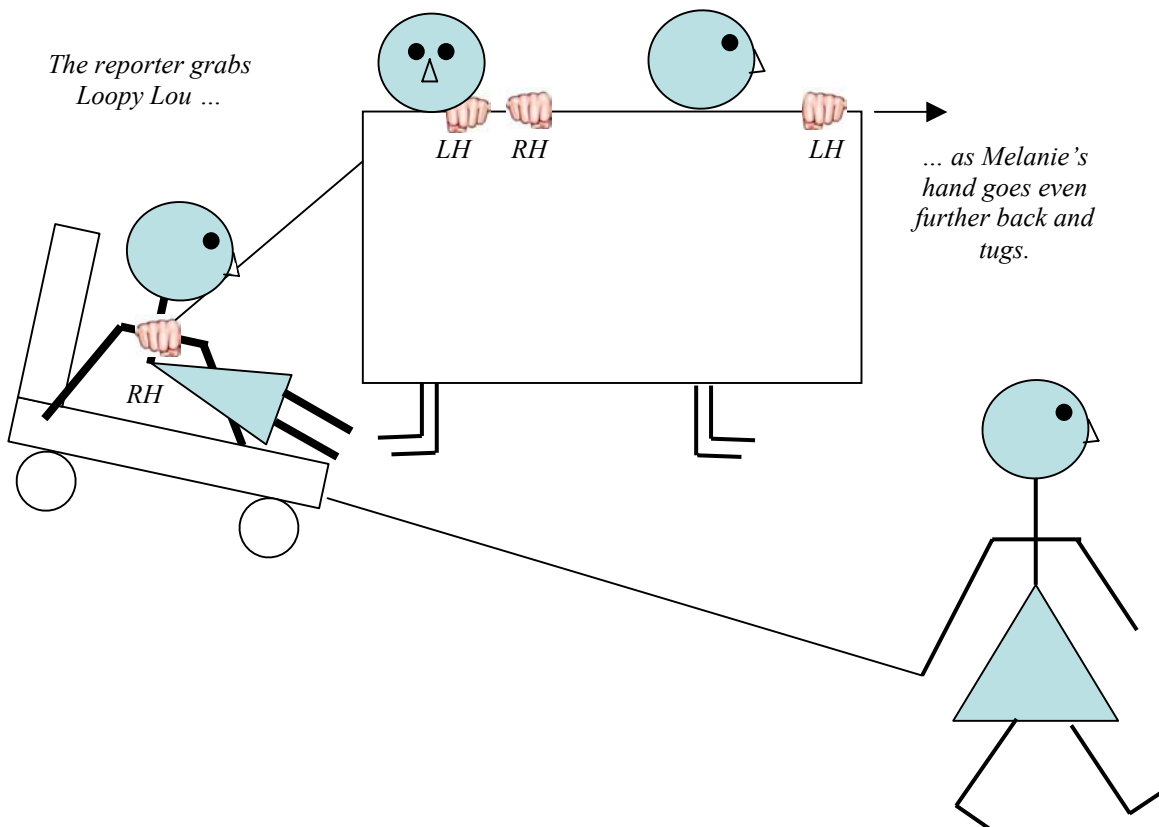
The Reporter and Melanie start fighting over the towel (ad lib dialogue). Meanwhile, a 'time-lapse therapy' group start coming across the stage from L, led by Joanna. Their attention is on Melanie and the Reporter. Enter R Iris, who, as always, is towing her cart with Loopy Lou riding inside a little way behind her. She heads stage L towards the time-lapse therapy group, oblivious of the Reporter and Melanie. Melanie gets a good grip on the towel and goes for a winning tug. The Reporter realises he is about to be exposed.

Reporter Melanie



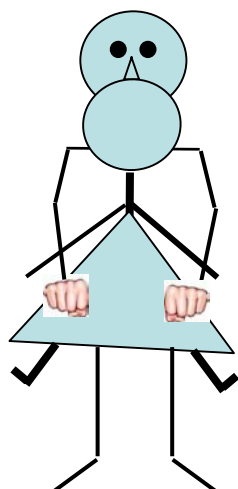
Just in time, he picks up Loopy Lou from the cart ...

Reporter Melanie

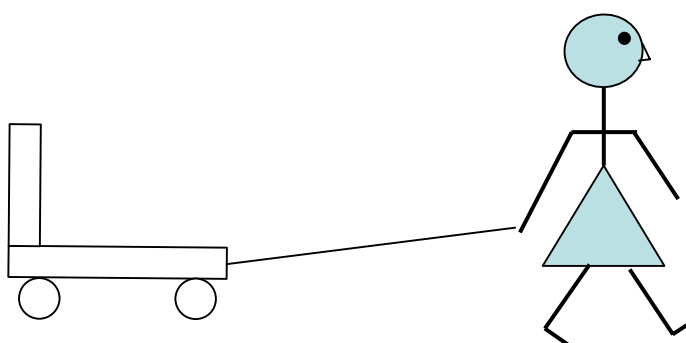
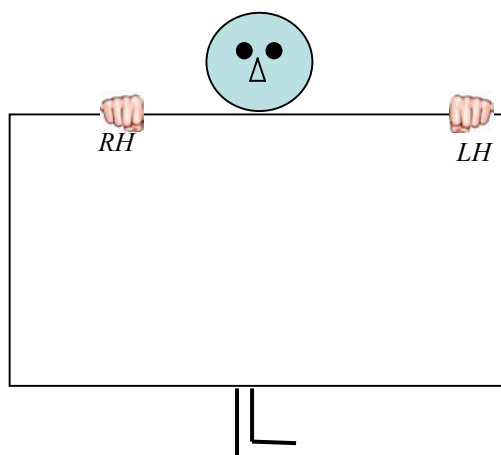


The Reporter clutches the doll to his middle – her arms and legs wrapped around him.

Reporter



Melanie



Enter Angela from the therapy room. Everyone is looking at the reporter with the doll.

Angela Hey, lover boy. How come the doll's getting all the action?

Angela advances on the Reporter and grabs Loopy Lou. As she goes to pull the doll away, there's a well-timed blackout.

Scene 3 – That Afternoon

All the old folk are complaining to Valerie.

Betty Where's Victoria then? You said we'd meet her.

Josephine Yes, I've been time-lapsing all day and I haven't seen hide nor hair of her.

Ellen I expect she's got a special cream for that.

Josephine What?

Ellen Unwanted hair.

Joe I know where she is. She's in her room. Been there all day.

Betty How do you know?

Joe I could hear her moving about when I tried to look through the keyhole.

Shirley *(To Valerie)* Well it's not fair. You promised us we'd meet her. I'm ninety-two you know. If I don't meet her soon it might be too late.

General discontent.

Valerie Quiet everyone. Quiet. Maybe she doesn't feel properly at home yet.

Iris We've got our disguises haven't we?

Ellen Aren't we doing it right? Don't they like us? I don't want to get voted off.

Josephine Ellen, Sweetheart, this is real life. You can't get voted off real life.

Shirley I wouldn't be so sure about that. Not when you're ninety-two.

Joan Valerie's right. Celebrities only ever mix with their own sort.
Joe The sort of people who buy diamond underwear.
Joanna Oh, yes. Did you hear? The diamond knickers have been stolen. Smash and grab from Tiffany's in London.
Shirley Well, that's it then. When we see her, we'll talk about designer underwear.
Josephine Or babies.
Shirley What?
Josephine I could say I'm having Leonardo's baby.
Ellen I'm going to have a baby ... by my personal trainer. He's a bit shy though so I thought we might try IVF.
Josephine There's no answer to that.
Iris What about cosmetic surgery. Surely that's a hot subject. If we were all genuine celebs, we would all be talking about our little nips and tucks.
Joanna She's right you know. They're all at it.

... in this Preview Script, the remainder of the musical has been deleted ...

If you would like to purchase the full script, please contact ...

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