

## SIR HENRY AT RAWLINSON END

MARTIN: We now bring you our tribute to the late, great Viv Stanshall, voice of the Bonzo Dog Doodah band, comic genius and tall ginger geezer. Due to circumstances beyond our control, Rob the Janitor will be playing the part of Hubert in tonight's show as well as providing sound effects. Over many years on the John Peel programme, Viv created a world that was strange, but recognisably English... English as tuppence, changing yet changeless as canal water, nestling in green nowhere, armoured and effete, feudal still, reactionary Rawlinson End...

(Music: Stately Homes of England)

NARRATOR: The story so far. The body of Doris Hazard's Pekinese, asphyxiated beneath her husband's bottom has been given over to Old Scrotum, the wrinkled retainer, for burial under Sir Henry's giant marrow.  
Great Aunt Florrie, toast crumbs specking the fine hairs gracing her upper lip, teacup half-empty lukewarm in her lap, is dozing in a cosy Chippendale settle.  
Scrotum scrunched up the gravel singing a dirty song.

(FX: footsteps on gravel)

(FX: Whistling "Good ship Venus" or similar)

NARRATOR: Florrie started when the old man pushed open the back door.

FLORRIE: Ooh!

SCROTUM: (clearing throat) Mornin' ma'm. I filled in the grave nice.

FLORRIE: Perhaps you'd... care to wash your hands?

SCROTUM: Arr, no thank'ee ma'm, I already did that up against a tree afore I came in 'ere.

FLORRIE: Very well. Now I'd like you to set up the card table, and put down some sawdust in the smoking room. Lord Tarquin Portly and the Lady Phillipa of Staines are popping over this evening.

NARRATOR: The wrinkled retainer hung up his greasy fez on a peg, and made his way out into the hall. Later, Florrie, awake, took the interminable beige thing she was knitting into the garden.

FLORRIE: Goodness, these gnomes look more... masculine than they did yesterday. So that's why Gerald has been buying so much Plasticene. Poor boy spends too long observing the sun through a telescope: his squint has become permanent. (beat) Dear me - daydreaming; and the Staines coming tonight! Almost noon, I have yet to go the launderette in town to thaw out chickens in the spin-drier...

(FX: link music)

(FX: Birdsong – dawn chorus)

NARRATOR: Sir Henry greeted the morning in his usual style, hangover at full tilt, fuss

(FX: Fart)

NARRATOR: bother and itch

SIR HENRY: Filth! hounds of Hades! God's turban and tutu; do I need a dare of the hog?

NARRATOR: He reached for the bell rope, yanked savagely to summon the housekeeper, and discovered himself on the rug. Paralysis lasted scarce a blink, but he bellied his unwilling hulk to the wardrobe

SIR HENRY: Hah! Shotgun! Roll over... cock over! Safety off! Both barrels through the ceiling!

(FX: double barrelled shotgun twice)

SIR HENRY: Mrs Eeeeeeeeeee.!

MRS E.: (nasal) Yiths?

SIR HENRY: (Furious) I don't know what I want, but I want it now!

MRS E.: Fried or fried, dear?

SIR HENRY: Now!

MRS E.: Fried?

SIR HENRY: Fired!

MRS E.: With or without dear?

SIR HENRY: With - in! Get out!

MRS E: Dunno 'ow I got out of bed this mornin: I 'ad it all down one side. Ooh, put me foot down - Gawd! it was like pluggin into the mains,

it shot right up an' I came over all giddy. I thought: Ooh no, I'm goin', and it started swimmin', me life, before me, ooh, I 'ad such a good cry, it was lovely: I just wanted to lay back there, course I can't really... recline, he's put me on tablets... it's a constant fight to relax. Sunday last, I was heatin' a drop of liniment, just bent down to pull up me surgical stockin's when ooh, it slipped out again. Busy? Well, didn't 'ave time to straighten up! Course I can't sleep, not since Mr. E. passed over; it's like 'avin yer leg off: you think it's still there, in the bed, I mean, it was 33 years last Tuesday: I'd just got used to 'is snorin, and mornin's, 'e'd make me a, a herbal infusion, I used to love doin' for 'im...

(FX: MUSIC)

NARRATOR: On Sensible Common, Hubert Rawlinson and friends are playing cricket. During a break, Hubert and the rest of the team enjoy a chilled glass of Parafino.

HUBERT: (sadly) You could see everything from the top of that bus. We were in The Crescent, and I was looking right into County Hall. I could see 'em all running around inside, catching diseases and giggling. My father leant across to me and said: You'll be in there if you don't stop playing with yourself. He died of chrysanthemum poisoning. They had to kill all his plants... They strapped a bloom to his back, and it came up all blotchy. That's why he drank. It was Brasso, mostly... He boiled roly-poly puddings in old socks...

NARRATOR: Hubert was unusual. In his adolescence he would throw himself naked onto the lawn, and with that loathsome bluey Roman clock face tattooed about his private parts, think about Joanna Lumley very hard, and from the shadow cast, tell the time with remarkable accuracy.

HUBERT: Look! No hands, Aunty!

NARRATOR: He would screech. In the winter, he tried with birthday candles stuck in the end but was hours slow, and Henry told him to put a sock on the sun-dial bit.

(FX: MUSIC)(FX: cutlery on plates)

NARRATOR: Back at Rawlinson End, the table was still cluttered for breakfast

SIR HENRY: Awkward beasts, winkles. My brother Hubert uses 'em for earplugs. Turns my belly to see him of a morning, fiddling about in his lugholes with a pin. Don't know why he bothers: never hears anything I say.

(FX: CRASH of breaking glass, thud of brick)

SCROTUM: Aaarrgghh!

SIR HENRY: God's teeth, a brick with a note wrapped round it. What the devil does it say?

(Fx: Rustle of paper)

THE NOTE: Hello now! I'm yer new neighbour.

SIR HENRY: Seems a decent enough egg! At least he didn't have the impertinence to present himself at the front door.

NARRATOR: The room darkened, as a hang glider passed across the sun.

SIR HENRY: That's a novel way to commit suicide. Pass me m' pistol, and I'll see if I can't bring the blighter down into the lake.

NARRATOR: With a weapon in his charge, Henry was apt to be very... sporting and unpredictable, and Scrotum took cover.

SIR HENRY: What're you doing, cowering down there?

SCROTUM: Ee..errr... it be out of respect, sirrr.

SIR HENRY: Well you're supposed to love me, you vile jelly, take that!

(FX: Whack of soft end of pistol on head)

NARRATOR: Mercifully, he hit him with the soft end of the pistol. Henry strode back to the window and took aim at the hang glider. It was an impossible shot, so he emptied the gun into the tyres of a van parked in the drive.

(FX: Six gunshots, hiss of tyres)

NARRATOR: On the side were painted Nice and Tidy - Just Relax, and Let Us Do It and the masks of Tragedy and Comedy, labelled Before and After. Florrie, believing that -

FLORRIE: All theatricals are Nice People

NARRATOR: Had invited them up to the Great House to use the piano. Henry's reaction to their presence was of apoplectic astonishment

SIR HENRY: You don't expect decent people to take you up on an invitation - it's downright rudery! Well, I'll see 'em off the premises m'self.

The hounds are all fagged out from yesterday's Jehovah's Witnesses, and we don't want blood all over the lawns again.

N & T: Laughter (OFF).

SIR HENRY: Great Thing! Those simpering nancy-boys are in the house! Get up you stinking blancmange, go and lock the piano, chop chop!

NARRATOR: But it was too late: a hint of cologne, pornographic discord and...

(FX: piano music – jolly stuff - ?Happy Days?)

NARRATOR: This unasked-for jollity in the middle of an English afternoon left Sir Henry shivering with a red passion, his face a crumpled tissue on which a lobster might well have wiped its bottom.

SIR HENRY: All crime is the result of incorrect breathing

NARRATOR: He snatched down the sickle-sharp boar tusks he used for defacing Readers' Digest, crossed the hall, and flung open the doors of the music room. Startled, Nigel Nice, straw boater askew, mince-mince-minced across the room.

NICE: Sir Henry! Nice to see you! To see y...

SIR HENRY: Do you know what a palmist once said to me? She said will you let go! Gentlemen, I am a bulldog and you will know my bite is worse.

NARRATOR: Suddenly, a half-thawed chicken caught him in the back of the neck.

(FX: whack of chicken on neck – delivered by FLORRIE with rubber chicken)

FX: MUSIC

NARRATOR: After luncheon, the gutters leaked like secrets, and the rain rain-rained like rain at Rawlinson End. In the library, Sir Henry was in expansive mood.

SIR HENRY: (Dambusters) Nrrrrrowww, brmm brm, kcchhh-pbfff blm! Dan dan hhhmm!

(Wing Commander) 'Course there were troops in the city - thousands of 'em, massing for counter-attack. (Sniff) Death's-Head fanatics, the lot of 'em, heads like peanuts... brmm brmm... brrrrmmm... Glasgey... Nrrrowww rrrmm... Bad news Jock?

(Glasgow Jock, distraught) Aye, sir - eh, it's the wee puppies, sir - during the blackout Jerry came over and... and the screaming, it went on, and...

(Wing Commander) Now, now then man, nrerrr, pull yourself to... here, have a piece of special chocolate, wurrr... (Douglas Bader) Damn this leg, by crikey! (sings) Who put the bounce in the bouncing bomb?...

NARRATOR: Silent as a smelly one, Hubert entered the room.

HUBERT: Can I play too, Henry? I like taking orders.

SIR HENRY: Don't kamerad me, you quisling! You're not in uniform, and it's dark!

HUBERT: But... I.. I'm in pyjamas, and I'm your brother!

SIR HENRY: (shouting) I'm afraid this is going to be an understandable mistake...



(FX: Gunshots)

(FX: MUSIC)