

BERTIE'S GENIUS

A Family Musical

by

MARY HONOR

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

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ISBN 978 1 872475 12 7

Printed and published by
SchoolPlay Productions Limited,
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Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU

BERTIE'S GENIUS
(a family musical)

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The action of the play moves from an auction room to an antique shop somewhere in London. A brief couple of scenes on board ship, and we find ourselves on the fanciful island of "Zevkli" somewhere near Turkey - or is it Arabia? The island is famed for its fabulous, unique sweetmeats.

The time - around the mid-twenties.

(Any resemblance to persons living or dead is wholly unintentional and purely coincidental.)

The characters:

Myrtle Grimcheck *Proprietress of an antique shop and one time nanny.*

Horace Maybecq *A celebrated writer of travelogues.*

Reginald Maybecq *Nephew of Horace and assistant in the antique shop. A bit of a drip.*

Bertie (Egbert) Worthy *Miss Grimcheck's charge and also junior assistant in the shop. Cheeky.*

Foreign Man - alias Viso Yashti *A thoroughly bad lot.*

Padisah of Zevkli *A thoroughly nice chap.*

Fezzo *Court Chamberlain and Royal Taster to the Padisah.*

Silvester *A Diplomat. Rather bland.*

Auctioneer *Excitable.*

Gemini Genie 1

Gemini Genie 2

Morris *Horace Maybecq's chauffeur.*

4 Shoppers *2 ladies & 2 men.*

2 Porters in auction room *Also turning up in different guises throughout play.*

Compere *On board ship and at palace.*

Chorus of people at auction, travellers, porters, crew of ship, dancers on board ship and in palace, courtiers and palace guards.

ACT I

SCENE 1 (The Auction Room) (S. Effects - Tape of crowd talking, as 'bidders' enter)

Chorus: *In the saleroom today there's bustle and clamour,
As priceless treasures go under the hammer.
Curios or a rare antique
Something special every week.
In the saleroom today there's bustle and clamour
As priceless treasures go under the hammer,
Never know what you may find,
Make a bid if you feel inclined.
Pictures, carpets, an Eastern pot
Side by side with tat and tot.*

Auctioneer: *What am I bid, what am I bid,
What am I bid for this fine lot?*

Porters: *A nod, a wink, a wave of the hand
Are signs the man will understand.
The slightest move a bid can make,
Be careful not to sneeze, or you'll buy by mistake!*

Chorus: *Pictures, carpets....This fine lot?*

Auctioneer: *Ladies and Gents., it's my intention
To start the proceedings,
May I have your attention?
You'll find the greatest choice of goods by far
From cricket bats to objets-d'art!*

Chorus: *Pictures, carpets etc....This fine lot?*

(Bertie has been playing with a ball - at this point he lobs it, a man examining cricket bat goes to swipe it and knocks head off a statue with bat)

Auctioneer: And now we come to Lot 72, ladies and gentlemen. Placed before you is er - excuse me *(he studies his catalogue)* ah, yes, a most unusual Moustache-cup. What am I bid? Who'll start?

1st Man: Sixpence!

Auctioneer: Sixpence! Surely, sir, you meant 'pounds?' *(crowd laugh)*

Lady: Five shillings!

Auctioneer: Ah, now, that's more like it. Five shillings, five shillings. Thank you

madam. One pound and - one guinea in the corner. One guinea, one guinea -
Come along, now, we can't all be done at one guinea.

2nd Man with thin moustache: One pound fifteen shillings.

Man with large moustache: And sixpence!

Auctioneer: Ahem! And sixpence - er thank you.

2nd Man: (*emphatically*) One pound sixteen shillings!

Auctioneer: One pound sixteen shillings! Any advance? Then going for the first time, going for a second time - one pound sixteen shillings (*hammers desk*) sold to Sir Alex Postlethwaite! (*People around him congratulate him*)

(*Crowd murmurs approval*)

Auctioneer: And now we come to Lot 73 - a most intriguing item indeed - a 17th century writing box. It is beautifully fitted inside, complete with containers for ink and sand - pre-blotting paper days, of course! (*Murmurs from crowd, who crane necks to see it, etc.*)

Reg: Look, Bertie, that's the piece Miss Grimcheck told me to buy.

Bertie: It looks a tattered old thing from here - she'll never be able to sell it again.

Reg: Well, that's not my problem - she said money was no object, too.

Auctioneer: Who'll start the bidding please?

Foreign man: Fifty pounds! (*gasp from crowd*)

Auctioneer: (*surprised*) Thank you sir, fifty pounds I am bid!

Reg: One hundred pounds! (*more gasps*)

Auctioneer: Thank you sir! One hundred pounds I am offered for this most unusual object.

Lady: One hundred and twenty pounds.

Auctioneer: (*getting excited*) One hundred and twenty pounds, I hear from the back of the room.

Reg: One hundred and fifty! (*Crowd gets more and more excited as the bidding increases*)

Foreign man: Two hundred pounds!

Auctioneer: Thank you!! Two hundred pounds - any advance on that figure?

Bertie: Steady on - Miss Grimcheck will go bust if you go any higher.

Reg: No, she said money was no object, so I must bid higher - Two hundred and fifty pounds!

Auctioneer: Well, thank you very much, sir - Two hundred and fifty pounds - are we all finished at two hundred and fifty pounds?

Foreign man: Two hundred and seventy five pounds. (*Auctioneer continues his patter whilst REGGIE and BERTIE talk*)

Reg: Can you see who's bidding against us? I really don't think we can go much higher, in spite of what Miss G. said.

Bertie: It's that bloke in the nightie over there.

Reg: You mean Gaftan.

Bertie: How did you know his name?

Reg: I don't, you idiot. That's what you call the thing he's wearing!

Bertie: Oh. I'll see what I can do to fix him! Leave it to me.

(Bertie makes his way through the crowd until he is behind the Foreign man. He fishes in his pocket and appears to bring out something very carefully)

Reg: Three hundred and fifty pounds!

Auctioneer: *(nearly hysterical)* Three hundred and fifty pounds I am bid, ladies and gentlemen. This promises to be a record price for such an item! Three hundred and fifty pounds I am bid - once...*(Foreign man is about to speak - opens his mouth but clutches at his clothes, dances about and disappears off stage)* It all seems to have been a little too much for your opponent, sir. Three hundred and fifty pounds for a second time - going, going - all done at three hundred and fifty pounds - *(strikes hammer)* GONE!! Sold to Miss Grimcheck's assistant. Thank you very much indeed young man! And that concludes today's business. ladies and gentlemen. *(Mops his brow)*

(Crowd sing a final chorus of "Pictures, carpets..." etc whilst REGGIE and BERTIE take the cheque to the auctioneer and get a receipt. After the song crowd disperses and set begins to change to the Antique Shop, whilst REGGIE and BERTIE hold conversation)

Reg: Thank goodness we won the day. Miss Grimcheck would have been very angry if we'd gone back empty-handed. It was odd how that Foreign Gent. rushed off without making another bid for the writing case.

Bertie: I told you to leave him to me.

Reg: What do you mean?

Bertie: It's amazing what effect a pinch or two of itching powder can have when sprinkled down the neck!

Reg: Trust you! Unscrupulous boy! as Miss Grimcheck would say. Oh well, I'm not complaining.

Bertie: I bet old Wee Willie Winkie is doing plenty of complaining, though!

Reg: Wee Willie Winkie? What are you rambling on about now?

Bertie: Him in the nightie.

Reg: Gaftan! Oh, come on, let's get back to the shop.

SCENE 2 (The Antique Shop)

(It is about 5.15 p.m. There is a counter, old furniture pots, curios etc. strategically placed. A door with "Open/Closed" sign, if possible. MISS GRIMCHECK is busy polishing an old chest of drawers (or similar item) with her back turned towards door, or entrance. Door opens with a bell tinkling, and REGGIE

enters.)

Reg: Here we are, Miss Grimcheck. *(She turns around slightly startled and peers over her glasses)* We managed to get it - come on Bertie, put it on the counter. *(BERTIE appears at door with writing box)* That cost a small fortune! We were very lucky to get it.

Bertie: Yeah, there was this horrible looking fella called Cafe, or something, and he kept pushing the bidding higher and higher, but I fixed him!...

Reg: *(hastily)* All right, Bertie, Miss Grimcheck doesn't need the details. *(to MISS GRIMCHECK)* It was case of the best man winning in the end, but I'm afraid I had to go to three hundred and fifty pounds.

Miss Grimcheck: *(who has been busily examining the purchase and rubbing her duster over it)* Yes, yes, very good. You did very well boys. *REG. and BERTIE exchange surprised looks at the cool manner in which MISS GRIMCHECK accepts the price. At this point a lady customer comes in and begins to browse)* Bertie, run into the store-room and put the kettle on, will you? Can I be of assistance, madam?

Lady customer: I'm seeking a walking cane for my husband. Are these all you have?

Miss Grimcheck: There may be one or two more in the store-room. Excuse me a moment. *(Calls to BERTIE)* Bertie! Will you sort out a few more walking sticks while you're in there. *(To customer)* Shan't keep you a moment.

(A couple enter and browse for a moment or two, then REGGIE attends to them. There is a loud crash offstage and a cat's squall. All the CUSTOMERS jump, and 1ST LADY CUSTOMER speaks)

Lady Customer: Whatever was that?

Miss Grimcheck: Oh nothing, really. Excuse me one minute, please. *(She exits and BERTIE is heard offstage)*

Bertie: Ouch!! It wasn't my fault!

Miss Grimcheck: *(enters with walking sticks)* If you want something done, you have to do it yourself. Would either of these canes suit your requirements?

Bertie: *(enters)* It were that cat going after your kippers on the dresser.

Miss Grimcheck: Egbert! *(TWO MEN enter with goods for the store-room. They proceed to fetch and carry boxes etc.)*

Bertie: It were him what sent the tea-pot flying.

Miss Grimcheck: Be silent! Give the delivery men a hand. *(To the LADY)* So sorry for the interruption - are any of these to your liking?

Lady Customer: Well, really! This is a most extraordinary shop..*(as DELIVERY MEN push past her)*

1st Delivery Man: Watch it, Fred. Lift your end a little, no, not you, lady! 'Scuse us ducks!

Lady Customer: (*getting irate*) How dare you call me “duck!” (*BERTIE making signs and mouthing Quack, quack!*)

Lady Customer: (*storming out*) Ooh! How dare you!

Miss Grimcheck: You unscrupulous boy! We shall have no customers left at this rate! For that you can go without your supper tonight. (*MISS GRIMCHECK chases him round the counter and goes to hit him. He ducks and she very nearly assaults the FOREIGN MAN who enters - this time looking different, as he is not wearing the ‘nightie’ and so he is not recognised*) Oh, I beg your pardon - I was having trouble with a brat, I mean a gnat! (*Pretends to swat a gnat on a chair nearby*) Egbert, go and give the delivery men a hand!

(*BERTIE exits. REGGIE has put the writing box on a shelf behind the counter*)

Can I help you, sir?

Foreign Man: (*looking very shifty*) No! Er - that is, perhaps. I am interested in oriental curios - pots, jars - that kind of thing.

Miss Grimcheck: You mean spice jars?

Foreign Man: (*tentatively*) Yes, that sort of thing.

(*The Delivery men come from the store-room and have a delivery note to be checked and signed by MISS GRIMCHECK which she does*)

Miss Grimcheck: We have only what you see here displayed - please feel free to browse and please excuse me for a minute or two. (*She attends to the delivery men who hang around pretending to be interested in some books, but inconspicuously keeping an eye on FOREIGN MAN, who in turn is looking shiftily about the shop. Meanwhile, REGGIE has been attending to yet another customer, who was choosing jewellery, and MISS GRIMCHECK makes a telephone call*)

Miss Grimcheck: (*picks up telephone*) Winstonely 397, please. Thank you....Good afternoon, is Mr. Maybecq available please? Thank you....Hello Mr. Maybecq. Myrtle Grimcheck here. How are you keeping? (*She listens sympathetically*) I seek oh, so sorry to hear that. Oh yes, the sunshine on Zevkli Island will soon buck you up. Mmm, yes, oh really? Researching for a new book? I shall look forward to reading it - so enjoyed the others. What’s that? Sailing tomorrow evening? Well, this is a timely call because I managed to get the writing box. Fetched a pretty price, but it was the one you wanted. Yes, do call in tomorrow morning - it will be waiting for you....Thank you, Mr. Maybecq - not at all, it was a pleasure....Goodbye.

(*During conversation FOREIGN MAN is pretending to browse but is listening to the telephone conversation and, before it is ended, he leaves, followed by the two delivery men*)

Have you found anything to interest....? Oh, he’s gone! Egbert, go and gather in the books from the table outside the shop, then you can take

yourself off to bed! (*BERTIE groans*) Time you went home Reggie.

Reggie: (*looking at his pocket watch*) So it is, Miss Grimcheck. (*Begins to cover up the counter*) I say, I didn't realise that the writing box was for my uncle Horace. He's got more writing cases than I've got socks! Lucky old thing travelling the world like that! So he's off to Zevkli tomorrow.

Miss Grimcheck: Yes, and I shall be off to that book-sale in the morning, so you will have to see that he gets the writing box safely when he calls.

Reggie: Right ho, Miss Grimcheck. Goodnight. Goodnight Bertie.

Bertie: (*who has been struggling with piles of books*) 'Night! - but there's nothing good about it! (*REGGIE exits as BERTIE goes sulkily up the stairs*)

Miss Grimcheck: (*turning the 'Open' sign round*) Now for those kippers!
(*Blackout*)

SCENE 3 (*The same - 2.00 a.m.*)

(*BERTIE creeps down into shop and out into kitchen/store-room in his night-clothes. There's a crash followed by a cat-squall*)

Bertie: (*offstage*) Mangy moggy! (*He tiptoes in with a large slice of cake*)

Miss Grimcheck: (*from upstairs*) Who's that? (*She comes downstairs with a poker and a candle. BERTIE hides quickly before she appears*) Anyone there? (*Looks about - goes into store-room and we hear cat miaowing and purring*) Fluffikins! Was that you having a midnight frolic? Tut, tut, naughty little puss-cat, waking mother. I see - you were trying to get a piece of cake! Well here you are - just a little morsel although it looks as though you've already had quite a big piece! Now you come and sleep on my bed. We'll keep each other nice and warm.

(*She toddles back with puss in her arms and goes to bed, and there is the sound of her door shutting*)

Bertie: (*emerging with his cake*) Phew! That was a close one! Fancy giving cake to that greedy cat! Old Grumbly Grimcheck has no idea about a boy's stomach. It's all right for her - bet she enjoyed those kippers - which *I* rescued. All I got for my trouble was a rumbly tum. (*he eats a bit more cake and sings his song*) -

SONG: **BERTIE'S SONG**

*I'm in the dumps,
I've got the grumps,
I'm fed-up with grown-ups
Who don't know how to play fair
Always trying to please old Grumbly Grimcheck
Try as I might
What the heck,*

*I always get it in the neck!
See if I care!
I've got the blues,
Sick of don'ts and do's
People only use me
I think I'm blowing a fuse!
There isn't much joy
In being a boy
Who gets less attention
Than that there mangy old cat.
I always seem to annoy old Grumbly Grimcheck
From morning to night
I'm kept in check
And always getting it in the neck
See if I care!!*

Bertie: Still! What a day we had at the auction! Why on earth should anyone want to pay threepence hapenny for this old thing, let alone three hundred and fifty quid!? Hmm...I think the pots are silver - bit dirty. (*he rubs the lid of the ink pot and a GENIE appears behind him, with a whooshing sound. BERTIE does a double take over his shoulder, and falls off the counter, where he has been sitting*) What the dickens?!!!

Genie: Your wish is my command! Gemini Genie before you now behold, the secrets of my magic I'll willingly unfold. Please summon up my Genie twin, if wondrous things you'd have me do, for I alone few powers possess, and mere advice can offer you.

Bertie: Coo!! Summon up your twin? How do I do that?

Genie: Ahem! (*points to writing box*)

Bertie: What's that?

Genie: (*whispering*) Rub the other pot!

Bertie: Ah - I see. Here goes. (*He rubs the other pot, then covers his eyes in anticipation of another whoosh. Nothing happens so he tries again, without success, in spite of vigorous rubbing*) Perhaps I'm doing something wrong - nothing is happening.

Genie: Tut, tut. What can have become of him? We did have to vanish from our last assignment rather hastily, it's true.

Bertie: What was that? Were you rescuing a princess from a dragon?

Genie: Nothing so romantic I fear. We always seemed to get the very mundane tasks to fulfil. We were summoned to assist the Padisah on the Island of Zevkli.

Bertie: That name rings a bell. Now where did I hear it? Got it! That's where Horace Maybecq, the writer, is off to tomorrow. And this old writing box is going with him!

Genie: The path of fortune stretches before me - perhaps I can be reunited with my twin, although it will be a very difficult task to find him.

Bertie: I could help you, if only I could come along; but Mr. Maybecq would never want a kid like me for company. Nobody wants my company, come to think of it. Wish you could magic me there!

Genie: As I mentioned just now, I am only able to offer advice - action requires the joint energies of my twin and myself.

Bertie: So what advice can you give me?

Genie: This Mr..Mr....

Bertie: Maybecq.

Genie: Thank you, Maybecq, must be persuaded that he requires a companion on his journey.

Bertie: How do I do that?

Genie: A bright young man such as yourself should have no trouble.

Bertie: Obviously you don't know what it's like being a boy. Oh yes, I'll just go up to old Maybecq and say, "Look here old boy you need me for stimulatn' company on your trip". Come on, Genius, you must be able to do better than....(*GENIE has vanished*) Coo! He's gone!

(*Blackout*)

SCENE 4. (The same. 8.30 a.m.)

(*BERTIE comes down the stairs looking pretty sleepy. He wanders past the counter, staring at the writing box. He exits to store-room and returns with a mug, jingling a spoon in it. He looks upstairs and listens, then creeps over to the writing box and once again summons the GENIE who is in his pyjamas holding a toothbrush and a round tin of paste*)

Genie: Your wish is my - what's this? My early-morning call?

Bertie: Sorry, Genius, - thought you might have been something I dreamed and had to make sure....

Genie: Well be a decent sort of chap and let me get on with my ablutions - unless you need another spot of advice?

Bertie: No, no, sorry to have bothered you. (*He drops his spoon and when he stands up again GENIE has gone*) I wonder what it's like living in a bottle. Oh no, he's gone again. Still I'll be in a tight spot if I don't get going.

Miss Grimcheck: (*coming downstairs*) How right you are, young Egbert. Just you behave yourself today and be helpful. I'm off to the book sale. Reginald will be here shortly to open up the shop for me. (*She carries cat to the store-*

room) - I will be back well before lunch time. Go and feed Fluffikins for me. Go on! (*MISS GRIMCHECK exits. BERTIE unwillingly goes to store-room to feed cat*)

Bertie: (*offstage*) Puss, puss, puss! Breakfast time! Oh, come on down from that shelf (*Crash! Miaow!*) Not again! She'll never believe it wasn't me! (*REGGIE arrives, takes dust covers off counter and prepares to take piles of books outside. He turns the 'Open' sign round and generally busies himself tidying*)

Reggie: (*calling to BERTIE*) Morning, Bertie. Did Miss Grimcheck get off on time? I hope she finds some bargains at the book sale.

Bertie: (*entering*) Yes, she was in plenty of time. Left me to feed that monster cat! She is supposed to be MY guardian, but she doesn't guard me from that cat's wicked ways!

Reggie: Cheer up, old chap. Give me a hand with the books will you? I say, isn't it exciting about my Uncle setting sail for the Island of Zevkli!

Bertie: Yeah, lucky dog. Wish I could go with him. They make smashing sweets there.

Reggie: We all have our dreams, Bertie, but....

Mr Maybecq: (*enters*) Ah, good morning, dear Reggie. How are you - and your young assistant? (*He doesn't wait for a reply. BERTIE takes the books outside*) Now I've very little time to spare, and I've come to collect the writing box which (*BERTIE re-enters*) Miss Grimcheck managed to purchase for me.

Bertie: (*aside to REGGIE*) Coo, of all the cheek! WE did battle for that thing! (*REGGIE puts writing box on the counter, and gives BERTIE a "hush-up" look*)

Reggie: This is it, Unc....

Mr. Maybecq: Absolutely superb! Just the ticket! (*He examines it a little more closely*) Hmmm, very old indeed and has a distinctly Eastern flavour in the decoration. It's perfect. Now all I need is a goodly sized trunk to take with me. I shall be bringing home a few small souvenirs and nick-nacks and a trunk will be essential. Ah, this one will do! Yes!

Bertie: I think you could do with a smart young man to go with you to give you a hand with your luggage, run your errands and wave a fan in your face when you get too hot. (*REGGIE looks surprised at BERTIE'S outburst*)

Mr. Maybecq: Do you know, young man, you are absolutely right! Yes, yes, I insist that (*BERTIE gets wide-eyed with anticipation*) you come with me, Reggie (*BERTIE is crestfallen and indignant all at the same time*) You've been looking a bit pecky of late. I shall write a little note to Miss Grimcheck (*he takes out a pocket book and begins to scribble a note*) and she'll understand. Off you go at once Reginald and pack! I'll call for you at 2.00

p.m.

Reggie: (*stands gaping*) But, Uncle Horace, Uncle Hor....

Mr. Maybecq: Don't stand there looking like the daft end of a codfish! Away with you and pack, Pack, PACK!! (*REGGIE exits without a word, still gaping*)

Bertie: 'Scuse me, Mr Maybecq, but I really meant me - *I want to go with you.*

Mr. Maybecq: You?! I'm afraid you are a little too young for such a voyage. When I was a boy I suffered the same longings for adventure. Let me explain.

SONG: MAYBECQ'S SONG

*Dear England, precious land of my origin
No finer land than this can there be,
But I have a built-in love of voyagin'
Because my father spent his life
A-sailing on the sea!*

Chorus: *You see, my feet begin to itch
And my pen, it starts to twitch
So I pack my bags at the double
Because the call of the unknown
Beckons mind and flesh and bone!
It's good-bye to England's rain and snow and fog -
The world is waiting,
The world is waiting,
The world is waiting for another Maybecq travelogue!
My pater told me many thrilling tales
For hours I'd sit and listen at his knee,
I longed to join his crew beneath the sails,
And see those spicy lands, that lie beyond the sea.*

Chorus: *You see.... travelogue.*

(*Chorus music is repeated for BERTIE and MAYBECQ to perform a little soft-shoe shuffle*)

Miss Grimcheck: (*entering, looking rather put-out*) Well, that was a wasted trip - the sale had been postpo....Oh, Mr. Maybecq how nice to see you - has Reggie attended to your requirements?

Mr. Maybecq: Yes indeed, and in fact I was leaving you a note to say that, at my insistence, he is joining me on the trip. I knew you wouldn't mind, and I am purchasing that large trunk too. I will call Morris in to load it into the boot....

Miss Grimcheck: But, Mr. Maybecq....

Mr. Maybecq: Yes, yes, knew you would be pleased for young Reggie. Now I must fly - the ship will not wait even for a celebrated writer! Farewell! (*He*

exits leaving MISS GRIMCHECK somewhat taken aback. BERTIE looks sulky. MISS GRIMCHECK goes into the store-room to hang up her hat and coat. Whilst she is in there BERTIE has a bright idea and he quickly climbs into the trunk. MISS GRIMCHECK returns as MORRIS, the chauffeur enters the shop)

Miss Grimcheck: The man's a whirlwind! Ber....

Morris: Mornin - this the trunk for Mr. Maybecq?

Miss Grimcheck: Yes, indeed. It is rather cumbersome.

Morris: I'll manage - got a trolley. *(He hauls the trunk onto trolley and with a few huffs and puffs exits, saying as he goes)* Blimey! What's it going to weigh once old Maybecq gets 'is souvenirs inside!?' Mornin'

Miss Grimcheck: Goodness ! What a morning - Bertie? Bertie? Now where has he gone? Round to the tuck shop, I'll be bound. Unscrupulous boy!

CURTAIN

ACT II.

SCENE 1 (the Quayside)

(Gangway is at side of stage. There are people milling about, some with luggage, some seeing others off. Various sailors and porters)

SONG: CHEERIO

All: *Cheerio, toodleoo, toodlepip
Hurry up the gangway to board the ship
Quickly with the tender parting
Soon your voyage will be starting,
Cheerio, toodleoo, toodlepip.
Cheerio, toodlepip, toodleoo
There are sunny shores just waiting for you,
And many adventures beside,
Sail away, sail away, on this high tide.*

(Music is repeated quietly during dialogue)

Mr. Maybecq: This way, porter, and where has Reginald got to? That's it, my man, Cabin 17 - Port side, of course, ah! There you are, Reggie, did you tip the taxi-driver?

Reggie: (*He's absolutely loaded with luggage*) Yes, Uncle, but he was so uppity about helping to load me up. I felt like tipping him into the dock!

Mr. Maybecq: (*Not taking any notice of REGGIE*) Come along, she sails in half an hour. (*He goes the gangway. REGGIE has put down a case or two and, as he is gathering his luggage together, he notices a FOREIGN MAN - in yet another disguise, followed fairly inconspicuously by two men dressed 'artily'*)

Reggie: How odd! I'm sure I've seen those two before somewhere (*he shrugs and struggles to gangway*).

(Scene change to side of ship with passengers waving and singing chorus)

All: *Cheerio, toodleoo, toodlepip,
We hurried up the gangway to board the ship,
We'll have fun galore
Once we leave old England's shore,
Cheerio, toodleoo, toodlepip.
Cheerio, toodlepip, toodleoo
Soon the horizon will be the only view,
Siren's sounding, hearts are pounding,
Engines going, kisses blowing,
Cheerio, toodlepip, toodleoo!*

SCENE 2.

(Scene changes by removal of front-drop and dim lighting to aboard the ship; the passengers are seated at small tables enjoying dinner. The cabaret consists of our two 'arty' types singing, with chorus of passengers and dancers)

SONG: TROPICAL CRUISE

Two Cabaret Singers: *Have you been feeling down, just lately?
Your sorrows tried to drown, just lately?
Haven't been eating adequately? (to REGGIE who isn't eating)
Been behaving too sedately? (to a prim lady)
Now all that's got to change!*

(CHORUS of FLAPPERS run on from the wings)

All: *Throw your cares out to sea,
Fill your days with fun and glee.
You've nothing to lose
But the blues
On a tropical cruise!
Feel the sun, ride the wave,
It's up to you how you behave.
You've nothing to lose....
There's nothing like a shipboard
Romance under the stars,
Dear ladies, do watch out for
Amorous Jolly Jack Tars!
Stroll the decks, have a fling,
Let your days go with a zing.
You've nothing to lose....*

(Audience and diners applaud)

Steward: Thank you, thank you, for that great song! The dancing will continue, ladies and gentlemen. Have a great night! *(dance)*

Mr. Maybecq: Think I shall take to the floor shortly - there's a rather sporty-looking party sitting over there. She looks capable of a nifty two-step! *(REGGIE is looking distinctly under the weather)* I say, Reggie, this is an excellent dinner - but YOU haven't touched a scrap yet. Eat up; got to keep your strength up.

Reggie: Really, Uncle, I couldn't - I haven't got my sea-legs yet.

Mr. Maybecq: Then you need one of my herbal gems - Anti-Quasi-Quickies - you'll find them in my cabin. Do help yourself.

Reggie: Thanks, Uncle, I think I might. *(He exits. Music continues, some*

passengers are dancing. MR. MAYBECQ leaves his table and asks one of the lady passengers to dance. He returns to his table just before REGGIE returns with the pills and with BERTIE in tow) I found more than pills in your cabin, Uncle Horace - I found a pain!

Mr. Maybecq: *(turning round)* Bless my stars! It's the laddie from Miss G.'s shop!
(He roars with laughter)

Reggie: And he says someone's been snooping around your cabin.

Mr. Maybecq: Have they indeed! I must make a point of locking the door. Well, it looks as though you are coming with us after all - a stowaway! Well done young Bertie - I'll make your peace with the captain, and Reggie can squeeze you into his cabin. *(REGGIE looks very put-out)* Welcome aboard! Tuck into Reggie's dinner, and welcome aboard!

Bertie: *(falling on the food)* *Coo!*
(Blackout)

End of ACT II

ACT III

SCENE 1. (A dusty Eastern roadside)

(MR. MAYBECQ is sitting on the trunk. The other two are holding all the luggage and all are very hot. A few local people stroll by)

Reggie: Phew, Uncle, you could fry an egg on this hat box!

Bertie: Coo - smashing idea! My stomach's rumbling!

Reggie: Change the record, Bertie!

Mr. Maybecq: Isn't this magical! The beautiful Island of Zevkli at last! Don't you love the sun, the atmosphere, the sights, the smells....

Bertie: Pooh! You can say that again! I think it's called "Camel No. 5". It's giving me the 'ump.

Mr. Maybecq: Never belittle a camel - wonderful animals - ships of the desert. I think this must be the consul coming to meet us.

Reggie: *(to BERTIE)* Mind your language in front of him, he moves in high circles.

Bertie: Coo! I'll get giddy watching him!

Reggie: Oh, shut up!

Mr. Maybecq: Hello, Silvester, good to see you again. *(They shake hands)*

Silvester: Hello, Horace. Glad you got here safely. I see you have young Reggie with you, how are you? *(They shake hands)* And who's this?

Mr. Maybecq: Meet Bertie from Miss Grimcheck's antique shop - he stowed away.

Reggie: So we are having to put up with him. *(REGGIE and BERTIE exchange grimaces)*

Silvester: I see - there won't be room for all of you and all of the luggage in the carriage, so perhaps young Bertie could wait here with some of the bags, and I'll pop back for him. Must get a move on - your visit to the Palace is all arranged.

Mr. Maybecq: Come on Reggie - my pen is itching to scratch paper! What a wonderful place. Lead on, Silvester! *(All except BERTIE exit)*

Bertie: Well of all the nerve. Leaving me here to fry! *(He takes out ink pot and, making sure no-one is about, rubs the lid and GENIE appears)*

Genie: Your wish is - oh I say! Well done young master - we've arrived!

Bertie: Thought I'd better keep you posted - so far so good, and we're off to the Palace later - watch out! You'd better disa.... Oh, you have! *(An Eastern man strolls on - FEZZO - in disguise - BERTIE pops the bottle into his pocket before FEZZO has a chance to see.)*

Fezzo: Selam! Greetings, O weary traveller. You must be in need of refreshment. Now that you are in Zevkli you simply must try the delicious delicacy for which we are famous - a wonderful sweetmeat!

Bertie: Coo, it does look good, but I haven't any cash on me.

Fezzo: It is our custom to present all our visitors with a free sample. Please accept it with our compliments!

Bertie: Smashing! *(He takes a piece of the sweetmeat and eats it)*

Fezzo: It's a pleasure! I believe you have journeyed all the way from England?

Bertie: Yes - Coo! It's hot here. *(Yawns)* Makes you want to doze o.... *(BERTIE falls asleep and at this point FEZZO is joined by the FOREIGN MAN from the ship)*

Foreign Man: Is he dead?

Fezzo: No, but he will sleep for half an hour or more. Quickly, this is what I have waited so long to possess *(taking hold of the writing box)*

Foreign Man: *(snatching it back)* You? No! I HAVE WAITED FOR THIS MOMENT! THE POWER IS HERE!

Fezzo: Wait - THIS is NOT the moment. I must return quickly to my duties. No suspicion must be aroused. We shall meet later.

Foreign Man: *(looking at BERTIE)* And him? Shall I finish him off? - he's a trouble-maker?

Fezzo: No! I said we must NOT do anything to arouse suspicion - he will be dealt with in due course. *(They chuckle evilly together)*

Foreign Man: *(as they leave)* Sweet dreams, child! Ha, ha, ha.. *(to FEZZO)* Yengi!

Fezzo: Yengi! * *(They make a silly secret sign, such as touching right palms together twice)* [*Yengi = Victory]

(Whilst BERTIE sleeps, there is a dream sequence and he is seen dancing with at least one camel, cakes come floating by and MISS GRIMCHECK appears, chases BERTIE and takes away the cakes. Scene to be ad lib but funny Any lighting effects can be employed, but scene ends with BERTIE sleeping on the luggage. Dream sequence music)

Silvester: *(arrives)* I say, wake-up, young Worthy. Has the journey been too much for you?

Bertie: *(very drowsily dragging himself up)* Eh? What? I was so hot and *(yawning)* tired.

Silvester: Best foot forward, lad, the Padisah must not be kept waiting. *(Scene ends as they exit with luggage)*

CURTAIN

SCENE 2. *(Inside Palace in an Ante-chamber)*

Mr. Maybecq: How magnificent! Did you ever see such splendour, Reggie?

Reggie: It's absolutely top-hole, Uncle. Quite takes the breath away.

Mr. Maybecq: The old pen will be pushed to describe this lot! Oh! *(He laughs at his own joke)* Get it? Pen - pushed - me - pen-pusher!

Reggie: Oh! Rather! (*snort*) Ha! ha! ha! (*snort*) What a wag you are Uncle.

Fezzo: (*enters and bows*) Gentlemen. Allow me to introduce myself - Fezzo - Court Chamberlain and Royal Taster to his Magnificence - The Padiisah of Zevkli.

Mr. Maybecq: How do you do. (*They bow to each other*)

Reggie: How do you do too, I mean, how do you do. (*They bow twice to each other*)

Fezzo: Ah, here comes the honourable gentleman, Mr. Silvester, with, I presume, your young friend. Dear, dear, the boy does look tired.

Silvester: (*enters with BERTIE*) Here we are - Bertie was sound asleep on the trunk when I returned for him. (*BERTIE tries to speak to MAYBECQ*)

Mr. Maybecq: Glad you've arrived, I (*BERTIE tries to interrupt, without success*) didn't want to meet the Sultan without (*BERTIE tries again, only to be quietened by REGGIE*) your support.

Bertie: MR. MAYBECQ!

Mr. Maybecq: (*startled*) Yes?!

Reggie: Bertie!

Bertie: I'm sorry, Mr. Maybecq, but I have to tell you that something awful happened whilst I was dozing - and I couldn't help it - must have been the heat....

Reggie: (*severely*) WHAT happened, Bertie?

Bertie: (*sheepishly*) The writing box disappeared.

Mr. Maybecq: }

Reggie: } WHAT?

Bertie: It wasn't my fault, really! It's so HOT here!

Mr. Maybecq: (*to FEZZO*) Have we come to a beautiful, but lawless country? Is this beauty too good to be true?

Fezzo: (*humbly*) Oh, sire! I shall instigate an immediate investigation! Please be so kind as to describe the missing item and I shall send a small army of seekers to find it.

Mr. Maybecq: (*calming a little*) Well, that's very civil of you. It's just a rather battered but jolly handy, brown wooden writing box. Cost me a packet, on account of it's great age, you know. (*He signals the size of box with his hands*)

Fezzo: I shall go at once. Rest assured that every effort will be made to find it.

Mr. Maybecq: Thank you.

Fezzo: Be good enough to wait here for his Magnificence, gentlemen. His entourage will appear at any moment. Kindly wear these special spectacles. (*He takes dark glasses from a servant, who has been standing with them on a cushion*)

Bertie: *(surprised)* What For?

Reggie: You'll get "what for" any minute now!

Fezzo: *(ignoring BERTIE)* The Magnificence's presence is too much for visitors' eyes. The glasses are a precaution.

Bertie: He must be a real flash-Harry! *(REGGIE gives him a stern look)*

(Before REGGIE can quash BERTIE the fanfares play, the scene opens on to the throne-room and the parade of the entourage begins. Numbers of servants etc. carry the PADISAH in on a litter which is rested on a special base which becomes a throne).

SONG: **CEREMONIAL SONG** *(entry of PADISAH'S entourage)*

Slaves: *Selam, selam! Azam Padisah!
Protectors are we of the Padisah,
None shall assail him from near or far.
Bow with due solemnity
Respect his unique dignity.
Sound the loudest Oompah!
Selam, selam, su Padisah!
Shield all eyes from his eminence!
His pathway must take precedence.
He is the true magnificence!
Oracle of providence!
Sound the loudest Oompah!
Selam, selam, su Padisah!*

THE PADISAH is richly attired and sits motionless, whilst being fanned with huge fans, and very well-covered dancing girls do a routine for him. Scope for a rich imagination here! The music ends and the girls finish in a line at the side of the stage. PADISAH waves approval and the visitors applaud. To everyone's astonishment, the PADISAH then peels off his robes, removes his headgear, and appears to all intents and purposes to be an ordinary city gentleman in a plain suit, or even blazer and white flannels if preferred. He walks over to the visitors.

Padisah: My, my, it's good to get the ceremonials over. Good afternoon Silvester, won't you present your guests to me?

Silvester: *(bowing)* Good afternoon sire. Allow me to introduce my cousin, Horace Maybecq, the celebrated travelogue writer.

Mr. Maybecq: Your Magnificence. I have taken the liberty of bringing you a copy of my most recent book, on the subject of the Arctic. *(Sultan nods)*

Silvester: His nephew, Reginald Maybecq.

Reggie: *(bowing)* Your Magnificence!

Silvester: Young Egbert Worthy.

Bertie: (*bowing and holding on to his glasses*) How do - you can call me Bertie. And is it safe to take these goggles off yet?

Padisah: (*laughing*) Oh, please! We only do it to impress our enemies! But I can see that we are firm friends already. Come and sit by me, young Bertie. You remind me of my fag at Eton. (*He claps his hands and the dancers amaze everyone by whipping off their robes, to reveal that they are dressed as tea-room waitresses, and three of them are dressed elegantly and form a string (or other musical) trio. They sit in a corner and proceed to play.*) Tea time! (*Tea is served and of course BERTIE is in his element*)

Mr. Maybecq: Forgive me saying so, sir, but this is just about the most unlikely scene I could ever imagine in a Padisah's Palace.

Padisah: Let me explain. As a child I was taken to England for refuge from the coup which was effected in my Grandfather's time There I was first cared for by a dear Nanny, and later sent to boarding-school. When a counter-coup restored my kingdom to me in recent years I felt the need for much-loved English tea-times and so there we are! (*Indicating the waitresses and musicians*) I do hope it makes you feel at home.

Mr. Maybecq: Oh indeed. How fascinating!

Reggie: Spiffing! (*snort!*) - (*MAYBECQ glares at REGGIE*)

Bertie: Coo! Smashing cakes! (*PADISAH laughs, MAYBECQ looks indulgently and REGGIE looks embarrassed*) Can I ask a question? (*REGGIE gives him a glare, as BERTIE'S mouth is full as he speaks*)

Padisah: Ask away.

Bertie: Are there forty thieves in those pots? (*Pointing to large pastel-coloured urns at the back of the set*)

Padisah: (*roaring with laughter*) I do hope not! They contain the riches of my kingdom - the unique spices which flavour our equally unique sweetmeats, renowned the world over!

Bertie: Coo!

Padisah: Now it is time for me to leave you. You will enjoy a stay in my palace. Fezzo will show you to your quarters. Tomorrow you shall visit our famous sweetmeat factory.

Bertie: Smashing!

Padisah: And in the evening you shall attend the Feast of the Bergamudi.

Bertie: I like parties - is it your birthday?

Padisah: How perceptive of you! You shall share my Bergamudi. (*He exits with only a fanfare, and everybody bowing*)

Bertie: Coo - that's my favourite! With chips and sauce!

Silvester: What are you talking about?

Bertie: Burger and chips!

Silvester: *(loftily)* The Feast of the Bergamudi is a rare, sweet delicacy, which is only served on His Magnificence's birthday. It is a unique type of pear.

Bertie: Oh well, that sounds tasty - bet we get sheep's eyes and chips first!

(All the travellers are being ushered out but REGGIE remonstrates with BERTIE before they leave the stage)

Reggie: Will you please stop trying to show us up! You're nothing but trouble! Stowing away, getting the writing box stolen, and now cheeking the Sultan! I've had enough of your nonsense! *(He stalks off after the others - BERTIE is unabashed he fishes in his pocket and pulls out the ink pot, but before he can summon the GENIE he hears someone coming and hides behind one of the pots)*

(FOREIGN MAN and FEZZO enter sneakily - FOREIGN MAN is dressed as one of the Palace Flunkies - they look about them to make sure the coast is clear)

Fezzo: At long last, the power is within our grasp! We shall gain control of this land once again, and it's sweetmeat empire. Your Grandfather shall be avenged. Quickly, open the box! *(FOREIGN MAN opens box, takes out ink pot and rubs vigorously. BERTIE is watching with bated breath. Nothing happens. He tries again. FEZZO snatches pot)* Give it to me you incompetent fool! *(He has no success, and so he rummages in the box, finds the sand container and rubs that. Nothing again)* So, yet again you have failed in your mission! You fool! You fool!

Foreign Man: Shhh! You are far too precipitate with your defeatism! I have a plan.

Fezzo: Your plans are worthless!

Foreign Man: Hear me out. Is not tomorrow night the Feast of the Bergamudi?

Fezzo: So? Our Padisah will be surrounded by his friends and servants.

Foreign Man: Exactly - and that includes you and me. I shall gain access to the kitchen and will secrete a few drops of deadly poison onto the Bergamudi, and mark the spot with a cherry. A little extra decoration will never be noticed.

Fezzo: *(panicking)* But I am Court Taster! How can I be sure that I shall be safe? I have to take the first mouthful!

Foreign Man: Trust me! Quickly, someone approaches. *(They exit and REGGIE walks through with MR. MAYBECQ and SILVESTER looking for BERTIE)*

Reggie: He doesn't seem to be here. Oh dear, what is he up to now?

Mr. Maybecq: Probably raiding the orchard - let's go and see. *(They exit)*

(BERTIE emerges from behind pot, rubbing ink pot)

Genie: Your wish - no! my wish has been granted! This dear, dear Palace!

Bertie: You've got me to thank for that. The writing box was stolen but your pot was safely in my pocket.

Genie: Ah, that accounts for the curious aroma of peppermints mixed with conkers.
Bertie: Never mind that. How am I going to stop old Fezzo and his friend from poisoning the Bergamudi and marking the spot with a cherry, so that Fezzo will know which bit to taste safely?
Genie: Simple - you place another cherry on the dish. Forgive me, all this excitement has given me dyspepsia - I must go and inhale that minty air again.
Bertie: Genius! I don't understand. (*GENIE has gone*) Or do I? (*He brightens*)
(*BLACKOUT*)

SCENE 3. (The same)

(The great birthday party, or Feast of Bergamudi, is in full swing. The dancing girls are just finishing their dance and as the applause dies down one of the servants announces the special birthday entertainment)

Servant: Your Magnificence. Ladies and gentlemen. All the way from the Metropolis, where they have topped the bill at the 'Alhambra', here now to entertain you with their latest comic song - The Two Jacks! (*Enthusiastic applause, and the two 'arty' types come bounding in wearing eccentric safari costumes*)

Jack 1: Hello, hello, hello - wonderful to be here on this very special occasion.

Jack 2: Very special occasion!

Jack 1: Yes, indeed, and you may wonder why we are called "The Two Jacks".

Jack 2: Because we're a couple of cards! (*Drum - boom, boom*)

Jack 1: I was going to say that, Jack!

Jack 2: Ah, but I HAD to say that, Jack!

Jack 1: Why's that, Jack?

Jack 2: Because - I'M - the - leader of the pack, Jack (*Boom, boom! Points to badge on shirt*)

Jack 1: What a lot of sand we've seen today!

Jack 2: I haven't seen so much sand since I cleaned out my budgie's cage! (*Boom, boom*)

Jack 1: They (*the audience*) don't wish to know that, Jack!

Jack 1: }

Jack 2: } But we'll NOT kindly leave the stage!

Jack 1: But seriously we do love sand.

Jack 2: Yes, we do, we do.

Jack 1: Let's let them into the secret of our favourite sand-game, shall we?

Jack 2: Do let's - (*to band*) thank you Maestros....(*They sing and gain audience participation*)

SONG: LET'S GO HUNTING FOR THE AARDVARK

Chorus: *Let's go hunting for the aardvark,
Let's go hunting for the aardvark,
With a shovel in the hand,
Go prodding in the sand, oh
Let's go hunting for the aardvark.*

*We love hunting for the aardvark,
We love hunting for the aardvark,
Oh the sport of kings is grand,
But give us lots of sand and
We'll go hunting for the aardvark!*

Chorus: *Let's go hunting for the aardvark,
Let's go hunting for the aardvark,
With a shovel in the hand,
Go prodding in the sand, oh
Let's go hunting for the aardvark.*

Jack 1: I'll bet half of them don't know what an aardvark looks like.

Jack 2: I just happens that I have a photograph of one right here (*He produces a piece of sandpaper*)

Jack 1: I can't see anything but sand!

Jack 2: (*looking hard at the sandpaper*) I know - the little tinker burrowed just as I snapped him - but he's there, somewhere!

2 Jacks: *Let's go hunting for the aardvark,
It's great fun hunting for the aardvark,
Though by desert sun you're tanned
Take a shovel in your hand, and
We'll all go hunting for the aardvark.*

Chorus...

(*MAYBECQ steps forward and during vamp music he attacks JACK 1, to the bemusement of the PADISAH*).

Maybecq: I say, my man, you've got it all wrong, you know! That song is quite MISLEADING!

Jack 1: Oh? How come, sir?

Maybecq: Well, the jolly old aardvark actually burrows in EARTH, not sand. When I was out in...

Jack 2: (*interrupting*) You tryin' to ruin our act?

Maybecq: Not at all - it's a catchy song, but MISLEADING.

Jack 2: For your information, guvnor, we're doin' our bit for conservation. Now it

wouldn't do for your poor old aardvarks to be dug up by the dozen, so we gets everyone diggin' the SAND as 'armless as bathin' beauties at Bognor.

Maybecq: Oh, I see! Well done! Carry on, chaps!

2 Jacks: *There's not much meat on an aardvark,
It's not at all a treat to eat an aardvark,
But the thrill is just the same
As the hunting of big game
Oh, we do love hunting for the aardvark!*

Chorus...*(plus audience participation)*

(Fanfares herald the arrival of the Bergamudi dish. Servants and officials head the parade and eventually the FOREIGN MAN enters carrying the all-important dish. BERTIE manages to trip him up as he goes past, and whilst the others are helping him up BERTIE slips a second cherry on to the dish, and hands it to FOREIGN MAN, all the confusion being the "cover")

Foreign Man: A thousand pardons, your Magnificence!

Padisah: *(smiling)* No harm done - Royal Taster, perform your duty! *(FEZZO steps forward rather reluctantly, he looks at the Bergamudi, sees two cherries, and looks appealing towards FOREIGN MAN, who rolls his eyes and shrugs)* Come on Fezzo, we are all waiting. My mouth is watering - take that delicious morsel with the cherry on it. *(There is a drum roll - FEZZO tentatively takes up the spoon and hesitates - almost choosing one cherry, then changing his mind and eats the other one. With great drama he expires. Consternation all round)*

Bertie: That was meant for you, sir, and there's the one who planned it. *(Pointing to FOREIGN MAN, who tries to make a dash for it. The TWO JACKS leap into action to grab him but he pulls out a gun. As he backs away he shouts:)*

Foreign Man: You shall not take me! *(He pulls off his false beard)*

Bertie: Look, Reggie, it's old Wee Willie Winkie!

Padisah: It's Sugar-Chops Yashti!

Yashti: How dare you! I'm Viso Yashti and I shall avenge my Grandfather. He claimed this island for his dynasty and I shall regain it and it's sweetmeat emporiums! *(Crash! he knocks over one of the pots, which reveals the twin GENIE. BERTIE manages to rub the ink pot and summon his GENIE at precisely the same time. The two GENIES, urged by BERTIE, go into action and, pointing at YASHTI, cause him to become stupefied)*

Bertie: Coo! You nearly had another coup!

Padisah: I feel the need for an explanation!

Bertie: *(very fast and getting pretty breathless by the end)* It's a long story, but because Genius 1 from this ink pot needed to find his twin *(GENIE 1 bows)* Genius 2 *(GENIE 2 bows)* who got lost in a coup, I had to stow-away with

Reggie and his uncle Horace so I could help look for Genius 2 when we got here. I overheard the plan between him (*points to Yashti*) and Fezzo to poison your beefburger, so I confused Fezzo by adding a second marker-cherry and he ate the wrong one - or maybe in the circumstances, the right one....

Padisah: Ink-pots, Genies - you've lost me, I fear.

Bertie: And the ink pot would have been lost too if I hadn't nicked it out of the writing box before those two stole it. (*Offstage there is a commotion. MISS GRIMCHECK is shouting and she struggles in*)

Miss Grimcheck: That's him. I'd know his prattle anywhere. (*Appearing*) I've caught up with you at last, you unscrupulous boy!

Bertie: Coo! Miss Grimcheck!

Reggie: }

Mr. Maybecq: } Miss Grimcheck!

Padisah: Nanny!

Everyone: Nanny?

Miss Grimcheck: Master Xerxes!

Padisah: (*leaving his throne and hugging her*) What a wonderful surprise! We lost touch so many years ago. You always used to call me an unscrupulous boy, when I had been bad.

Miss Grimcheck: And so you were an unscrupulous boy at times. But you've grown up none the worse for my scoldings - unlike this bad lad! (*Meaning BERTIE*)

Padisah: You do him an injustice - he has saved my life and foiled dark plans against my kingdom. (*MISS GRIMCHECK looks incredulous. The TWO JACKS have taken over FOREIGN MAN, holding him under arrest*)

Bertie: And you two were coppers all the time weren't you?

Jack 1: That's right, sonny. We've had our eyes on this character for some time.

Jack 2: He's wanted back home for subversive activities, and we've been tailing him in plain clothes.

Bertie: Well, if those are plain clothes, I'd love to see you in fancy dress!

Reggie: I've got it! You two were in the auction room, and in the antique shop.

Mr. Maybecq: And entertaining on the ship.

Jack 1: }

Jack 2: } That was us!

Padisah: Sugar Chops! You ought to spend the rest of your life close to your beloved sweetmeats - working in the factory, but I think British justice will deal more fairly with you - take him away! (*they lead him off and guards carry out the "Body"*)

Bertie: And you two Genies have found each other at last.

Genie 1: Indeed, and as everywhere there are now gas or electric lamps, we shall retire to the peace and tranquillity of an oil-lamp.

Genie 2: Tell me, brother, what happened to you during our last frantic assignment?

Genie 1: I should be asking what happened to YOU when I said “Let’s jump into the ink pots.”

Genie 2: (*sheepishly*) Oh!! I thought you said - “Jump into the PINK pots!!”

Bertie: You’re a right potty pair! Thanks, Genius, for all your help, and thanks both of you for wrapping up that villain. (*To PADISAH*) Your Mag., can you find a cosy old oil lamp for the Genies to live in? They’ll keep your kingdom safe for you always.

Padisah: It will be my pleasure - there are several suitable lamps down in the cellar. Perhaps you magical gentlemen....But where are they?

Bertie: Coo! They’ve both gone! Don’t worry, your Mag., old Genius has a habit of doing that. They’ll turn up if ever you really need them.

Mr. Maybecq: Your Magnificence, may I thank you for a sensational visit to your kingdom.

Reggie: Hear, hear! (*snort*) Rather!

Mr. Maybecq: (*with a perplexed glance at REGGIE*) Yes, indeed. As a result of this visit, in future I shall be abandoning travelogues.

Padisah: Oh surely not. You cannot turn your back on such a successful career.

Mr. Maybecq: Ah! your Magnificence, but I can! From now on it’ll be “Horace Maybecq, the celebrated mystery writer!”

Padisah: And I wish you all success. This has been a truly memorable birthday for me - thank you all for sharing it with me.

Bertie: ’Scuse me, your Mag.

Padisah: Bertie?

Bertie: As it IS your birthday....

Padisah: Yes?

Bertie: Would you mind if we all sang “Happy Birthday to you?”

Padisah: (*obviously thrilled*) Oh, please do! It will remind me of happy birthdays back in my nursery with Nanny and all my friends!

Miss Grimcheck: Bertie - now that’s an idea of a genius! (*taking charge of the singing*) Everyone! One, two, (*all sing*) -

Happy Birthday to you,

Happy Birthday to you,

Happy Birthday, dear

(*All pause, not knowing which name to use and MISS GRIMCHECK sings*) *Xerxes!*

All: *Happy Birthday to you!*

(*CURTAIN*)

THE END