

# **DRINK?**

A Short Farce

**by Michael Thomas**

**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd**

MURDER AT ST. BARNABAS'  
*and* DRINK?

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## CAST

<b>Derek</b>	<i>Stuck in the mud, cardiganed type</i>
<b>Jeremy</b>	<i>Similar, but is wearing jacket and tie</i>
<b>Samantha</b>	<i>Sixth former, chic and sexy</i>
<b>Policeman</b>	<i>Standard uniform</i>
<b>The Religious Nutter</b>	<i>Raincoat, thick glasses, placard</i>
<b>The Dog</b>	<i>Big, hairy, barks a lot.</i>

## PRODUCTION NOTES

*This play calls for quite a complex pattern of sound and staging effects but these can be as simple or as elaborate as the company's resources permit.*

*Many of the sounds of Derek struggling in the kitchen with taps and pans could be produced live and the howling of dogs could be kept to a minimum. The noise of the train passing can be obtained fairly easily from sound fx recordings / CD's and the shaking of the scenery could be restricted to certain pieces. It is, however, quite important that the picture falls off the wall.*

*The main thing about the performance is that the play should start in a slow, staccato manner and build up to a fast and furious routine with the entrance of the NUTTER.*

*The best part to play is, of course, the DOG, who may wear a stylised mask and lounge suit or full "pantomime" costume; producers will want to unleash [sic] their own imaginations here!*

M. G. T.

## **DRINK?**

**A Farce**

**by Michael Thomas**

*When the curtains open DEREK and JEREMY are sitting opposite each other in an utterly conventional semi-detached room. Boring paintings on the wall, tasteless ornaments, characterless wallpaper. A sofa to one side, and a drinks table. Door left leading to the kitchen, right leading to the hall.*

*(Pause. JEREMY makes a show of looking round the room. DEREK stares before him. JEREMY shifts, crosses and uncrosses his legs, takes out his diary, consults it, puts it back, looks round the room again. DEREK coughs. JEREMY looks towards him expectantly).*

**Derek:** I'm terribly sorry, I don't remember your name.

**Jeremy:** That's all right, I'm afraid I can't remember yours.

*(Pause).*

**Derek:** Drink?

**Jeremy:** Thank you. Scotch.

**Derek:** Ice?

**Jeremy:** No, thank you.

*(DEREK gets up and pours drink, brings it to JEREMY).*

**Jeremy:** Water.

**Derek:** Beg pardon?

**Jeremy:** Water.

**Derek:** I thought you said Scotch.

**Jeremy:** Water in the Scotch. If it's possible. Not too much trouble.

**Derek:** Not at all. Plenty of water. No ice?

**Jeremy:** No ice.

*(DEREK returns to drinks table).*

**Derek:** Water in the kitchen. Get some for you.

**Jeremy:** Not if it's any trouble.

**Derek:** No trouble at all. Plenty of water.

**Jeremy:** No drought round here then?

**Derek:** Drought?

**Jeremy:** No drought round these parts, eh? (*Laughs uncertainly*). Plenty of rain, I suppose?

**Derek:** Water in the tap. Don't put rainwater in Scotch.

**Jeremy:** No, of course.

**Derek:** (*A little puzzled*). Tapwater all right?

**Jeremy:** Fine.

**Derek:** Half a minute.

*(Exit DEREK to the kitchen. Sound of tap turning on, rush of water, glass being dropped and breaking, sound of tap being turned off. Pause).*

**Derek:** (*Off*). Damn and blast.

**Jeremy:** Everything all right?

**Derek:** (*Off*). Fine, fine. Damn and blast.

**Jeremy:** Don't worry about the water if it's any trouble.

*(Sound of DEREK sweeping up the broken glass).*

**Derek:** (*Off*). No trouble at all. Plenty of water.

**Jeremy:** It's a funny thing. Sometimes I take water in Scotch. Sometimes I'd rather have it neat. Sometimes I just don't care. What about you .... er ....?

*(Re-enter DEREK obviously splashed with water, and bringing a fresh glass).*

**Derek:** Sorry about that. That tap's a bit sudden, you know. Turn it on just a bit and whoosh, Niagara Falls.

**Jeremy:** You can never tell with taps, can you?

**Derek:** Got you a new glass.

*(He goes to the drinks table and pours a Scotch, filling the glass with soda).*

**Jeremy:** Great. Sorry to be any trouble.

**Derek:** Not at all, plenty of Scotch, plenty of water, all the time in the world.

**Jeremy:** Time for a drink. Let the world go by. Have a break from it all.

**Derek:** My sentiments. An Englishman's home, and all that. Whisky and soda.  
*(Offers glass to JEREMY).*

**Jeremy:** No soda, please.  
**Derek:** Did I give you soda?  
**Jeremy:** You just have. Can't drink it with soda. Absolutely can't.  
**Derek:** Fine, no problem at all. Scotch with water, wasn't it?  
**Jeremy:** A little water.  
**Derek:** Fine, no problem. Get you another glass.  
**Jeremy:** If it's absolutely no trouble.  
**Derek:** Couldn't be easier. Sit down, relax. Feel at home.  
**Jeremy:** (*Making a point of relaxing himself in the chair*). I'll try.  
**Derek:** Pretty comfortable here. Don't see much of the neighbours. There's just Mrs. .... er .... Mrs. .... er .... lady across the road.  
**Jeremy:** What's the matter with her?  
**Derek:** Says hello.  
**Jeremy:** That a problem?  
**Derek:** No, no. She just says hello. Not all that often.  
**Jeremy:** Can't object to that.  
**Derek:** No, wouldn't think of it. Otherwise, good neighbourhood round here.  
**Jeremy:** Quiet?

*(Sound of car engine revving, screeching of tyres, crash, scream, police siren in the distance).*

**Derek:** Pretty quiet.  
**Jeremy:** Get many callers?  
**Derek:** Not many. Milkman sometimes.  
**Jeremy:** You need a milkman.  
**Derek:** Can't be helped. The odd religious nutter.  
**Jeremy:** What do you do with them?  
**Derek:** Set the dogs on them.

*(Sound of dogs howling and baying for blood).*

**Jeremy:** That must be one now.  
**Derek:** No, next door going shopping. Different sort of bark.  
**Jeremy:** We get double glazing men coming round. And gas conversion men. Real nuisance.  
**Derek:** No call for them here. Triple glazed already. So's everybody round here. No hawkers, no callers.  
**Jeremy:** Triple?  
**Derek:** Englishman's home and all that. Keep out undesirables. God knows plenty

of them about. Don't you agree .... er ....?

**Jeremy:** Absolutely .... er ....?

*(Awkward pause).*

**Derek:** Can't remember your name.

**Jeremy:** I've misplaced yours, for the moment. Don't tell me, it'll come back to me.

**Derek:** Drink?

**Jeremy:** Please. Whisky.

**Derek:** Whisky, splash of water. Got it. Make yourself at home, be straight back.

*(He goes out to the kitchen again. The doorbell rings. Dogs immediately start to bark furiously).*

**Jeremy:** There's somebody at the door.

**Derek:** *(Off).* Religious nutter, bound to be. The dogs will see him off.

*(The telephone starts to ring).*

**Jeremy:** Telephone. Shall I answer it?

**Derek:** *(Off, calling over the combined noise of dogs, door bell and telephone).* Nobody ever rings here.

**Jeremy:** Somebody is, though.

**Derek:** *(Returning with new glass).* This time of day probably selling home improvements. Nothing to improve. *(He picks up the phone and shouts straight away down it).* No, we don't want anything, why can't you people take no for an answer? *(He slams the phone down).* That's the way to deal with them. *(Doorbell rings again).* You can ring as much as you like, we're not religious here. *(Dogs start barking again).* Well trained, those dogs. Drink?

**Jeremy:** Whisky, if it's not too much bother.

**Derek:** No bother at all, nobody here to bother us, quiet afternoon drink.

**Jeremy:** The dogs are quite ....

**Derek:** What?

**Jeremy:** The dogs are quite loud.

**Derek:** You get used to them. Ice?

**Jeremy:** No ice.

**Derek:** Soda?

**Jeremy:** No. Water, please, just a little.

**Derek:** As much as you like. Got plenty of water. *(Going to the kitchen again).*  
Back in a minute. *(Exit).*

*(JEREMY makes a point of strolling casually around the room, pretending interest in the pictures etc. Looks slightly concerned off to where DEREK is in the kitchen. Listens. Silence).*

**Jeremy:** *(Calling).* Everything all right?

**Derek:** *(Off).* Fine. Did you want anything?

**Jeremy:** Just a little water in the Scotch.

**Derek:** *(Off).* I know that. Did you want anything else? *(Coming in wielding a large wrench).* Trouble is, I did that tap up so tight last time, I can't turn it at all now.

**Jeremy:** Oh, dear. They can be a nuisance, taps.

**Derek:** Need a plumber. Not a plumber are you?

**Jeremy:** No. I mean if I could help ....

**Derek:** Any good with taps? Don't want to get a blasted plumber out. Get them in the house, they stay all day. Never get any peace.

**Jeremy:** What would you like me to do?

**Derek:** Get a wrench on that tap. Give me a hand will you?

**Jeremy:** Sure, just show me what .... *(He starts to take off his jacket as he leaves).*

*(They both go out to the kitchen and the conversation continues off).*

**Derek:** Can't get a grip on it. Got some tools somewhere.

*(Suddenly sound of passing train going from left to right. The whole room shakes, the drinks rattle and a picture falls off the wall).*

**Derek:** That's better, tighten that up, and now, heave.

**Jeremy:** Heave. *(Sound of tap turning, followed by massive gush of water).*

**Jeremy:** Oh no, I'm soaked, I'm getting soaked, turn it off.

**Derek:** Sorry about that. Trouble is you get all or nothing.

*(Sound of tap being turned off, water slows to a drip. DEREK and JEREMY re-enter, DEREK as before, JEREMY without his jacket and tie, but with his shirt obviously wet through).*

**Derek:** Trouble is, if you don't mind my saying so, you went too far with it.

**Jeremy:** Too far with it? You said heave and I heaved.

**Derek:** Fair enough, but too far. There's a knack to it, you see. People often don't quite get it right at first.

**Jeremy:** I shouldn't think they do. *(He notices the picture)*. What happened here?

**Derek:** 16.21 to Victoria I shouldn't be surprised. It has all the hallmarks *(He picks up the picture and replaces it on the wall)*. That look right to you?

**Jeremy:** *(Taking his shirt off)*. Soaked to the skin.

**Derek:** I say, that look all right to you? Level? The picture.

**Jeremy:** Pretty level.

**Derek:** I like it exact. Get the spirit level. Won't be a minute. Make yourself at home.

*(DEREK exits to the kitchen, sound of him rummaging around, banging things, opening cupboards etc. JEREMY looks round for somewhere to hang his shirt - maybe over the goldfish bowl or budgie cage if one is available).*

**Jeremy:** Soaked to the skin. Can't even pour out a glass of whisky.

*(He eyes the drinks and is about to pour out his own drink when DEREK re-enters with a spirit-level).*

**Derek:** Got it. Be prepared, my motto. Always have the right tool for the job. That right?

**Jeremy:** Sure.

**Derek:** *(Levelling the picture)*. Now, I thought so, a degree or two out. Now that's spot on.

**Jeremy:** It looks wrong.

**Derek:** What do you mean?

**Jeremy:** It looks wrong.

**Derek:** It can't do, it's level. It's level. Level is level. There's only one gravity. That right?

**Jeremy:** Then the room's wrong. Come back to here, you can see, the picture looks wrong.

*(DEREK steps away from the picture and together they view it, screwing their heads to one side to judge more clearly).*

**Derek:** Yes, I see what you mean, it's down a little to the right.

**Jeremy:** To the right? I'd say it was down a little to the left.

**Derek:** Don't be ridiculous.

**Jeremy:** Don't be absurd. It's down on the left.

**Derek:** (*Deliberately*). I know my pictures. It's down on the right.

**Jeremy:** I know what's straight and what isn't. It's down on the left.

**Derek:** Be careful. It's on the right.

**Jeremy:** You're mad. It's on the left.

**Derek:** If I'm mad you're moronic. The right.

**Jeremy:** If I'm moronic you're.... moribund. The left.

**Derek:** How dare you. Right.

**Jeremy:** Left.

**Derek:** Stupid.

**Jeremy:** Stubborn.

**Derek:** Obstinate.

**Jeremy:** Obsessive.

**Derek:** Obsessive? Me?

**Jeremy:** (*Suddenly furious*). Can't you see it's down on the bloody left? What's the matter with you? You can't even pour a man a drink of whisky or turn a tap on, and you can't tell whether a picture's up or down. This is a madhouse.

(*Pause*).

**Derek:** Why aren't you wearing a shirt?

**Jeremy:** Because you got me soaked with your stupid tap.

**Derek:** Ah well, there you are. Too enthusiastic.

(*Sound of doorbell. Dogs whining pitifully*).

**Jeremy:** Sounds like you've got a visitor. Maybe somebody has come round for an afternoon drink.

**Derek:** Funny, people don't do that very often.

**Jeremy:** I wonder why.

(*Doorbell and dogs whining again*).

**Jeremy:** Are you going to answer it?

**Derek:** Maybe. Have a drink first.

(*Sound of letter box being rattled and knocks on the door*).

**Voice:** (*Off*). Open in the name of the law.

**Derek:** Bound to be a nutter of some sort. Keep out undesirables. (*Calling*). Are

you the religious nutter?

**Voice:** (*Off*). No, sir I am a police officer. Open in the name of the law.

**Jeremy:** I didn't think they said that any more.

**Derek:** (*Calling*). Got your identity ready, have you?

(*Enter SAMANTHA from the hallway*).

**Samantha:** Honestly, Dad, I'm trying to study for my A levels upstairs and there's such a racket going on. Why can't you open the door?

**Derek:** There's no deed to take that tone, my girl. An Englishman's home and all that.

**Samantha:** Sometimes I think I'm looking after children. (*She goes out to open the door*).

**Jeremy:** Nice girl.

**Derek:** My daughter. Name of .... Samantha

**Jeremy:** Nice name.

**Derek:** Yes. Can't think what the copper wants. Making enquiries maybe. Thinks we can be of assistance.

(*The POLICEMAN enters during this last speech*).

**Policeman:** You could have been of assistance by opening the door, sir.

**Derek:** Thought you were the religious nutter.

**Samantha:** Dad, don't be stupid, there is no religious nutter.

**Policeman:** I have been mistaken for many things in my time, sir, but rarely have I been cast in the role, so to speak, of a religious lunatic or fanatic.

**Derek:** Or nutter.

**Policeman:** Quite. I regret to say, sir, I am here about a complaint.

**Derek:** I didn't make a complaint. Not this week.

**Policeman:** No, sir. A complaint has been made about you. Mrs. Adams, sir, the lady who lives just across the road.

**Derek:** Lady who says hello?

**Policeman:** She does say hello from time to time, sir, and in fact quite a few other words as well. For example, and I quote: (*He reads rather laboriously from his notebook*). "He's a very weird type if you ask me, never speaks to anybody, won't let anybody in the house and keeps those poor dogs starving I shouldn't be surprised, they go on howling and barking at all hours of the day and night, we can't get a moment's peace, there ought to be a law". Well I'm glad to inform you, sir, that there is a law and I represent it. Those dogs of yours are a public nuisance.

*(DOGS suddenly start howling and barking).*

**Policeman:** You take my point, sir?

**Derek:** You've upset them.

**Policeman:** I'm afraid I shall have to inspect the offending animals, sir, and subsequent to that make my report on the suitability of your premises for the maintenance of canines at the present moment.

*(Dogs continuing to howl).*

**Derek:** What?

**Samantha:** He wants to look at the dogs and tell you whether you can keep them.

**Policeman:** That is correct, young lady.

**Derek:** Well, always ready to oblige the law. Come this way, officer.

**Policeman:** Thank you, sir.

*(They both go into the kitchen and we hear DEREK off).*

**Derek:** Down .... er .... down .... er.

**Policeman:** *(Off)*. Do they have names, sir?

**Derek:** *(Off)*. Can't remember them all at the moment.

**Samantha:** What's your name?

**Jeremy:** Er, Jeremy. Your father invited me round for a drink.

**Samantha:** I suppose there's some reason why you've taken your shirt off.

**Jeremy:** I nearly drowned in the kitchen.

**Samantha:** Uh huh. Well, these things happen. Did my father get you a drink?

**Jeremy:** No, we never quite got that far. It was supposed to be a whisky with a drop of water, but honestly, there's no need.

**Samantha:** No problem. Sit down. Make yourself at home.

*(She pours him a whisky and goes out to the kitchen, returning almost immediately with some water in a jug. She pours some water into the glass. JEREMY watches astonished).*

**Jeremy:** How did you do that?

**Samantha:** What?

**Jeremy:** How did you .... get the water?

**Samantha:** Look, I've got A levels to revise for. Water comes out of a tap in this house.

**Jeremy:** How come you're so intelligent if your dad is such a ....

**Samantha:** Nutcase? Yes, I've often wondered about that.

*(A tremendous crash from offstage: buckets falling over etc).*

**Derek:** *(Off)*. Careful officer. Traps for the unwary here.

**Policeman:** *(Off)*. Are you all right, sir?

**Samantha:** Poor dad. He can't help being accident prone.

*(Enter DEREK with his foot through a bucket which he clangs around on for the rest of the play).*

**Derek:** Had a bit of trouble with a bucket. Soon sort it out. Copper's still out there checking the dogs. Funny business if you ask me.

**Samantha:** Dad, you haven't been looking after Jeremy properly.

**Derek:** Who's Jeremy?

**Samantha:** Your guest. This is Jeremy. Jeremy, this is my father, Derek.

**Jeremy:** Pleased to meet you, Derek.

**Derek:** Jeremy. It's been a long time. Drink?

**Jeremy:** I've got one, thanks.

**Derek:** That was quick. You might have waited for me.

**Samantha:** He would have waited till Christmas.

**Derek:** There's no need to take that tone, my girl. An Englishman's home and all that.

*(The telephone rings).*

**Derek:** *(Picking up the receiver)*. I told you before, we don't want anything, why don't you listen? What?

**Samantha:** Dad, it's for me. *(She takes the phone from him)*. Hi, Ben, how are you? Yes, that was my father. He's a little .... yes. How was the holiday with the parents? As bad as that?

**Derek:** Jeremy.

**Jeremy:** Derek.

**Derek:** Boyfriend. Ben. Boyfriend Ben. Try to stop him calling, you see. No use. Keep out undesirables. What's the use.

**Samantha:** He's not undesirable. No, I was talking to Dad.

*(Enter POLICEMAN).*

**Policeman:** I have completed my investigations and I regret to say ....

**Derek:** Drink, officer?

**Policeman:** Never on duty, sir.

**Samantha:** We've got a policeman here ....

*(The doorbell rings and the dogs start to howl).*

**Policeman:** Those dogs will have to go.

**Derek:** I'm having a Scotch, do you mind?

**Jeremy:** Should I get the door?

**Samantha:** Oh, it's nothing serious, but there's a man called Jeremy who's had to take his shirt off and Dad's got a bucket on his foot.

**Policeman:** Be my guest, sir.

**Derek:** I can't give up the dogs. Englishman's home and all that.

**Policeman:** Not necessary with modern anti-intruder devices properly installed, sir.

**Samantha:** Don't be silly, he's Dad's age, and I didn't take his shirt off. He took it off himself.

**Jeremy:** I'll get the door.

**Samantha:** Mmmm, I love you darling, you're very desirable.

**Derek:** Enough of that. That boyfriend's not coming round here. Set the dogs on him.

**Policeman:** The dogs will have to go, sir. *(Takes DEREK to one side, confidentially).* If I may say, sir, you can't expect to be your daughter's keeper for ever, sir. These are modern times, sir.

**Derek:** Not in this house they're not.

*(Enter the RELIGIOUS NUTTER closely followed by JEREMY from the hall. The NUTTER carries the usual placard announcing the end of the world etc.).*

**Derek:** Oh no! I don't believe it!

**Nutter:** Prepare to meet thy doom! The end of the world is nigh!

**Derek:** It's the religious nutter! Get him out!

**Policeman:** *(To all generally, including the audience).* We live in a tolerant society. There is room for all shades of opinion.

**Jeremy:** I couldn't stop him. One more lunatic for the asylum.

**Nutter:** Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord! Turn, repent, save your souls!

**Samantha:** O hell!

**Derek:** I'll sort him out. *(He squirts the NUTTER with the soda syphon)* There, take that, clear off.

**Nutter:** Blessed are the miserable!

**Derek:** I'll set the dogs on you.

**Policeman:** Can't allow that, sir. Infringement of public order.

**Nutter:** Repent, repent! Sinners! Fornicators! *(He grabs JEREMY'S shirt)*. Put on the garment of purity.

**Jeremy:** Excuse me, that's my shirt.

**Nutter:** Put on the garment of purity, young man, and the hairshirt of repentance, and be new baptised.

**Jeremy:** I can't, it's still wet.

**Derek:** This is a respectable family home. I am a respectable family man in the bosom of my family. It is men like me who made England great.

**Samantha:** Dad, will you shut up, I'm trying to talk to my boyfriend.

**Derek:** No need to take that tone, my girl. I'm your father, remember.

**Samantha:** Could I ever forget it.

**Jeremy:** I'm going, I've had enough. Will you give me my wet shirt so I can go back to an ordinary house where you can get a drink without being drowned and people have sensible conversations about shopping or the weather, or their holidays, please?

**Nutter:** *(Seriously to JEREMY)*. Do you reject Satan?

**Jeremy:** I've never even met him.

**Nutter:** You must reject Satan and all his works before you can don the garment of purity. Down on your knees.

**Jeremy:** What? Give me my shirt.

**Nutter:** No.

**Derek:** This is ridiculous. Never in my life ....

**Nutter:** Pray first, shirt after.

**Policeman:** I must warn you, sir, that confiscation of a shirt is an offence.

**Nutter:** An abomination to the Lord!

**Policeman:** Not quite what I had in mind.

**Nutter:** No shirts for the wicked! Repent! Repent!

*(The NUTTER leaps gleefully around the room with the shirt in one hand and his placard in the other. JEREMY makes a grab for it, trips and ends up spreadeagled over SAMANTHA on the sofa who is still on the telephone. She screams).*

**Samantha:** Get off me!

**Jeremy:** I can't help it. That lunatic's got my shirt!

**Samantha:** Darling, it's awful, I've got this half-naked man right on top of me.

**Derek:** *(To the POLICEMAN)*. Can't you get rid of the nutter? What do we pay you for?

**Policeman:** *(To the NUTTER)*. Move along now, sir, move along.

**Derek:** What are you doing on my daughter?

**Jeremy:** Trying to get up.

**Samantha:** No, he's still got his trousers on.

**Derek:** I'm going to get my dogs.

*(He goes clanking off to the kitchen).*

**Samantha:** *(To JEREMY).* My boyfriend says you've got five seconds to get out of this room or he's coming to sort you out.

**Jeremy:** *(Desperate, tearful).* I never meant any harm. I just want my shirt back.

**Policeman:** *(To the NUTTER).* If you would just step outside, sir.

**Nutter:** Here I stand, strong in the Lord.

*(Enter DEREK with a dog howling, barking etc. He attacks the NUTTER who escapes with his placard and throws the shirt over his shoulder. As he goes he knocks into the POLICEMAN who spins round and collides with JEREMY who has now stood up with the result that the POLICEMAN ends up crashing onto the sofa where SAMANTHA is still telephoning so that she falls on top of him on the floor. JEREMY lands on the floor on the other side after making a final successful grab for his shirt. The DOG then jumps up with his front paws on the back of the sofa and wags his tail [if this is possible]. During this the following lines are heard at appropriate moments):*

**Nutter:** The hound! The hound of Satan is loose!

**Policeman:** Keep calm! Don't show them any fear! Help!

**Jeremy:** Got it! *[The shirt].*

**Samantha:** Oh my God, it's the policeman! Ben, I'm all over him!

**Policeman:** Excuse me, miss. That's my truncheon.

**Samantha:** Whatever you say, officer.

**Derek:** At him Fido, get your teeth into him, show him who's boss.

*(Thus at the end of this sequence, the NUTTER has left in haste through the door to the hall, SAMANTHA is still on the phone to BEN sitting on the POLICEMAN on the floor beside the sofa, JEREMY is standing near the door clutching his shirt, jacket and tie, the DOG has his paws up on the back of the sofa surveying the scene, and DEREK has gone back to the drinks table).*

**Dog:** Woof, woof, woof.

**Policeman:** That dog's a menace.

**Samantha:** Just relax, darling.

**Jeremy:** I'm going. I'm getting out of here before I get savaged or drowned or arrested or something.

**Dog:** Woof.

**Derek:** Drink before you go? Now that we've got rid of the undesirable? I'll see to the copper in a minute.

**Jeremy:** NO! Just let me out of the madhouse!

**Dog:** Very wise, if I may say so.

*(Pause).*

**Jeremy:** What? That dog .... it talked.

**Dog:** Woof.

**Jeremy:** I'm going mad. I'm going mad! Help! Help!

*(He rushes out of the door and we hear the sound of the front door being slammed shut).*

**Derek:** Never said goodbye. Typical these days. Drink, officer?

**Policeman:** Never on duty, sir. Speaking of which, if you will allow me, miss, I will resume my normal position.

**Samantha:** Whatever you like.

*(The POLICEMAN stands up, adjusts his uniform. SAMANTHA sits back on the sofa).*

**Policeman:** *(To the DOG).* There, there, good boy.

**Dog:** I wouldn't if I were you.

**Policeman:** *(Does a 'double take').* This is a more serious matter than I thought and I had better report it to headquarters. *(Takes out his notebook).*

**Derek:** Off you go.

**Policeman:** Good day to you, sir. Good day, miss. *(He leaves).*

**Samantha:** Ben? Ben? He hung up.

**Derek:** Sensible lad.

**Samantha:** Oh dad, you've ruined my afternoon and probably the rest of my life as well. Thank you very much.

**Dog:** Woof, woof.

**Derek:** Now, now, my girl, no need for that.

*(SAMANTHA leaves by the hall door).*

**Derek:** Just the two of us left then, Fido. *(He pats the DOG'S head. DOG growls menacingly).* Might make a cup of tea, old boy. Just the thing after all that excitement.

*(He leaves and goes to the kitchen).*

**Dog:** Fido, honestly, I ask you. After all these years we've been together and he still doesn't even know my name. What is the use, that's what I often wonder. Years of scaring off his undesirables, though if you ask me, they're all much the same, him included, and what do I get for it? A patronising pat on the head, a stupid name and a bowl of Winalot. I can tell you, it's a dog's life, and no mistake. Look at him now, making tea. If he gets the water in the pot it'll be a miracle.

*(Sound of water, taps, kettle falling over etc., from the kitchen).*

**Derek:** *(Off).* Samantha, help!

**Dog:** See what I mean? Useless. Ah well, might as well help myself as he'll be busy for a while. *(He pours himself a whisky and soda from the table and comes and sits down comfortably on the sofa).* Cheers.

**THE END**