

LAST DAY OF TERM

A Short Play

by Charles Hemming

SchoolPlay Productions Ltd

THE SCHOOL-ROOM & LAST DAY OF TERM

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SchoolPlay Productions Limited,
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CAST

Mike Gregory

James 'Jimbo' Anderson

Del Staples

Old Joe *The Caretaker*

Bill Jenkins

Stephen 'Stinks' Carter

Darren Kent

Julie Bannister

Karen Sharples

Beano (Mr. Bean) *Form Teacher*

Froggie (M. Guy) *French Teacher*

LAST DAY OF TERM

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SCENE 1

A Classroom of Year 8 (12+).

Mike: What lessons do we have today?

Jimbo: Most of them I should think.

Mike: What! On the last day of term?

Jimbo: Yeah, well, it's not like Junior School, is it?

Mike: Well, why not? We never have time off for mucking about.

Del: What about Sports Day?

Mike: That's not mucking about!

Del: It is for me.

Mike: I mean, we used to have Games and parties and music and stuff.

Jimbo: But that's for kids.

Mike: Well, we're kids.

Del: I'm not.

Mike: What are you then?

Del: I'm an obsolescent.

Mike: A what?

Del: An obsolescent - it's another name for a teenager.

Mike: You're not a teenager - yet.

Del: I'm thirteen minus 2 weeks!

Mike: Well then!

Del: Well, I'm ahead of my time.

Mike: Anyway, grown-ups have games and parties and music and stuff - and booze.

Del: We can get some Pepsi from the tuck-shop.

Mike: I said booze. I mean whisky and beer and stuff.

Jimbo: That costs money.

Mike: The point is, we'll be doing rotten French or stinking Maths. when we could be having a lark about.

Del: Well, we can still have a lark about.

Mike: When? With old Crumbles? I can see that happening! Come to 2.4's Maths. lesson and have a riotous half hour with Stoneface Crumbles.

Del: What about Creative Studies though?

Mike: Have we got that today?

Jimbo: Of course we have! It's Thursday, remember?

Mike: All I remember is that it's the last day of term and I don't want to do any work.

Del: Well, don't! Report sick!

Mike: Who to?

Jimbo: To whom?

Mike: That's what I said.

Del: To the office.

Jimbo: They'll probably send him home.

Mike: But I don't want to go home. I want to have some fun.

Del: Why not volunteer to help Old Joe?

Mike: That's work!

Jimbo: But it's not academic work.

Del: What was that word?

Jimbo: What? 'academic'?

Del: Yeah! What's it mean?

Jimbo: Oh, like French and Maths.

Del: I thought it sounded like a swear-word.

Mike: Well, it is, isn't it? Academic maths and academic French.

(Enter JULIE and KAREN, who ignore the BOYS and go to their desks).

Del: Look who's here.

Mike: It's Princess Twitty and her Lady of the Chamberpot.

Julie: Oh shut up you!

Karen: Take no notice of them, Julie.

Del: *(Imitating KAREN).* Take no notice of them, your Highness. Would you like the pot now, or later?

Julie: *(To KAREN).* I'm looking forward to the holidays, aren't you? So we don't have to mix with rubbish every day.

Mike: Who are you calling rubbish?

Del: *(Still imitating KAREN).* Take no notice of them, Michael. Shall I help you with your manicure?

Mike: What?

Del: Your manicure.

Julie: He doesn't know what a manicure is. Any more than he knows what a bar of soap is. Grubby-handed little erk!

Mike: 'Ere watch it, you! I'll thump you if I have anymore of your mouth.

Del: Careful, Mike, she's got a vicious uppercut. It would lay Mike Tyson out.

Mike: I'll have you know I'm looking after the dirt under my finger nails with some care. I'm thinking of growing mushrooms there.

Karen: Ugh! Disgusting.

Mike: It's not disgusting. It's initiative. I live in a flat and we haven't even got a window-box so I'm cultivating my own personalised garden. Instant food. Gnaw your fingernails and have a snack.

Jimbo: You'd better not let Old Ma Grankie see your hands in cookery then. She'll make you scrub them.

Mike: Oh hell! I'd forgotten it's her today. Why do boys have to learn to cook? It's a girl's job.

Karen: You're a M.C.P.

Mike: I'm a what?

Karen: *(To JULIE)*. Oh isn't he ignorant, Julie?

Mike: *(To DEL)*. What did she say I was?

Del: I dunno. Something like 'an empty pea'. Perhaps she's got that chamber-pot on the brain. *(Realising what he has just said)*. Hey! That's good, en't it? A chamber-pot on her brain! Right place for it!

Julie: You boys ARE rude. I'll tell Miss Sturges of you.

Mike: Oh don't do that! She'll tell us off and then I'll die of shame, won't you Del?

Del: I'll be prostate. It'll be the end. The terrifying Sturges has only to frown and I go weak at the knees - from laughter.

Julie: Oh come away from them Karen.

(The GIRLS move into a corner and turn their backs on the BOYS).

Jimbo: Anyway, we won't be cooking today. We'll have to clean all the cookers and that, won't we?

Del: Yeah, that's what happened last year.

Mike: We're just like slaves. We're either doing that swearword French or swearword Maths. or cleaning out cookers.

Del: Right! Let's report sick.

Mike: I'm not sick.

Del: Doesn't matter. It'll waste half an hour.

Mike: Hm! When's the best time to go?

Jimbo: What do you want to miss?

Mike: Assembly!

Del: Oh yes! It'll drag on forever today while Pug-ugly hands out Bibles and sustificates and medals and things.

Mike: And we'll have that lecture on helping our Mums during the holidays.

Del: I help my Mum.

Mike: Do you? How?

Del: I go out after breakfast and I don't go back except to eat.

Jimbo: You call that helping?

Del: Of course it is. My mum doesn't want a noisy, dirty oaf like me hanging about, does she?

Mike: Del's doing her a favour, en't he?

Del: Right. Same as I am when I bunk off from school. The teachers are much happier when I'm not there - so they tell me.

(BILL, STINKS and four other PUPILS enter).

Bill: Hullo you lot. Beano's coming!

(There is a general movement to sit down and the FORM MASTER enters with three other PUPILS).

Beano: Good morning, 2.4. Please sit down and answer your names. Anderson.

Jimbo: Sir.

Beano: Carter.

Stinks: Sir....

SCENE 2

Beano: Right. Listen everybody. There is no Assembly this morning. *(ALL cheer)*. Apart from that there will be normal timetable to-day *(ALL groan)* until 2.00 p.m. Then there will be a special end-of-term Assembly. After that all forms will return to their rooms for final clearing up and then dismissal will be by forms.

Del: Sir?

Beano: Yes, Derek?

Del: How long will clearing up take, Sir?

Beano: Well, that rather depends on you. Since you generally make more mess than you clear up it could take forever. *(General laugh)*.

Del: Very funny, Sir, but I got to see me Gran.

Beano: Really. And has she got to see you?

Del: Eh? Well, 'cos she has.

Beano: Poor old lady. Pensioners ought to get more protection, I feel. *(Another*

laugh).

Del: Can I go early then, Sir?

Beano: Certainly not!

Del: But my Gran

Beano: Have you got a note from your mother OR your GRANDmother?

Del: No, Sir.

Beano: Then the matter is closed. Get your books ready for lesson one. Where do you go now?

Jimbo: Here, Sir.

Beano: Oh yes. Right. Well. Wait here for your Maths teacher.

Jimbo: French, Sir.

Beano: What? Oh yes. Your French teacher. (*BEANO exits*).

Mike: (*To DEL*). Well, you didn't get far.

Del: Worth a try.

Stinks: Do you think Froggie will make us work?

Jimbo: Oh, he'll probably make us play some French word game in the belief that it's a relaxation and we'll enjoy it.

Mike: 'Ere, do you think Froggie's as boring at home as he is at School?

Stinks: Of course he is. Look at the way he does his hair.

Julie: Have you ever seen his wife?

Del: Yeah! She's worse! She looks like a stuffed cucumber.

Mike: All green, wrinkled and bent.

Karen: They've got two kids, you know.

Julie: They'll be courgettes then.

Del: Be what?

Julie: Oh you Wally!

Jimbo: Fancy being the son of old Froggy. I suppose you'd be a tadpole. Do you think they speak French at home?

Karen: Well, they ARE French, aren't they?

Mike: I don't think teachers live at all after school.

Jimbo: You mean, like, the Headmaster pops them into the fridges in the D.S. room to keep them fresh until the next day's lesson?

Mike: Who said they're fresh?

Del: Yeah, and at week-ends they're wheeled into the Motor Mechanics shed and plugged into the battery charger so that they're all fizzed up for Monday.

Jimbo: But what about the holidays? Where do teachers go in the holidays? Where do flies go in winter? The unanswerable questions that puzzle the wisest men!

Del: When will West Ham win away?

Jimbo: Exactly! Does Margaret Thatcher wear braces?

Mike: Who pulls the Queen's strings?

Stinks: Who services Terry Wogan?

Bill: Where IS Froggy?

(This last question stops the play-acting. The CHILDREN realise that the TEACHER should have arrived by now).

Julie: Jimbo, you're supposed to go to the office to report his absence.

Stinks: But he's here. I've seen him. In fact, I helped push his car into the playground this morning.

Mike: Why?

Stinks: Well, he broke down about twenty yards from the School gate.

Mike: You should have pushed it the other way.

Karen: Perhaps he's trying to fix it now.

Del: Yeah, but what about my French?

Julie: What about it? You don't want to do French.

Del: I do now! It's my right! What do I come to School for? I come to learn. I don't come to sit about all day talking to a load of rubbish.

Karen: Who's rubbish?

Del: I pay my taxes. Well, my old man does. Well, sometimes. He pays through the nose - so he says.

Jimbo: I'd like to see him do it.

Del: It is my right to be eddicated into a posh, cosmopolitan man of the world, able to speak fluently in several languages, known by the head waiters of Europe, sought after by smooth-thighed lovelies -

Mike: What for?

Del: My autograph. I'll be famous. After I've got my 14 GCSEs and 5 'A' levels I'm gonna get a job on the Tele.

Julie: What sort of job?

Bill: Tea boy.

Del: I'm gonna be a host on the chat-shows. Wogan, Aspel, Del Travers!

Stinks: How you gonna do that?

Del: It's easy. You just have to sit there asking them questions and that.

Karen: But you have to have charm and good looks and brains and be able to talk proper.

Del: Well? *(Enter M. GUY).*

M. Guy: Bonjour mes enfants. Je suis desolé que je suis en retard ...

SCENE 3

(The French lesson has just ended).

Mike: I can't believe it!

Bill: What?

Mike: Here we are, it's the last day of term and we've had a foreign language stuffed down our ears for 30 minutes. It's criminal!

Jimbo: Well, another foreign language coming now - Maths!

Stinks: What do you mean? Maths ain't a language.

Jimbo: Can you do it? When Crumbles asks you a question, can you answer it? Does what it says in the text book make sense to you?

Stinks: No, and No, and No.

Jimbo: Well, then! A language is a system of signs and codes and the expert has to know the signs and codes.

Stinks: God! You ARE boring!

Bill: Someone's coming!

(The CHILDREN half settle. Enter MR. BEAN).

Beano: Right 2.4 Listen to me. The Deputy Head wants 6 boys to help the Caretaker get the Hall ready for the End of Term Assembly. *(Immediately nearly all the BOYS put their hands up).*

Beano: *(Continuing).* I've already asked Mr. Crumbles to excuse certain boys and HE has suggested Michael Gregory, Derek Staples, James Anderson, William Jenkins, Steven Carter and Darren Kent.

Del: *(Loudly).* Oh why us, Sir?

Beano: Well, I expect Mr. Crumbles thought you'd prefer to use the muscles in your arms instead of the cells in your brains.

Mike: But Stinks hasn't got any muscles, Sir.

Stinks: Shut up, you!

Karen: Or manners!

Julie: Or brain cells!

Stinks: Oi! What's everybody getting at me for?

Beano: It's because you are universally popular, Steven, good-looking, well - groomed, witty, debonair.

Bill: What was that last one, Sir?

Beano: 'Debonair'.

Bill: What's that mean?

Beano: Dignified and sophisticated, nonchalantly negligently casual.

Bill: (*Not understanding a word*). Thanks.

Beano: It means smart, man - and smooth.

Bill: Why didn't you say so first time?

Beano: Because I was attempting to extend your vocabulary, Williams, to widen the possibilities of articulate expression.

Bill: Huh!

Beano: Quite! Right, that's enough now. Come on you six.

Mike: Sir, what are the rest of the class going to do?

Beano: Maths. Mr. Crumbles is just coming.

Mike: Right, come on you lot, let's muscle in on the Assembly Hall.

SCENE 4

(*At the end of the Assembly Hall*).

Old Joe: Come on then, you weak-kneed Willies. I want all those stacked chairs arranged across the 'all.

Mike: What! ALL of them?

Old Joe: Well of course, 'all of them'! What d'you think? Four?

Del: Flippin' 'eck, there's a lot.

Old Joe: Aye, well, that's why you're 'ere to 'elp me.

Jimbo: But you get paid for this, don't you?

Old Joe: Now then, none of your lip, lad.

Del: Lip-Lad.

Old Joe: What's your name?

Del: Leslie Lip-Lad.

Old Joe: Now listen, either you button your mouths and get on with these chairs, or I'll tell the Deputy Head you'd rather be in lessons.

Mike: Here, take these chairs, Del.

Del: Right Mike. To you, Jimbo.

Jimbo: O.K. To you Stinks.

Stinks: (*Not ready*). Ouch! That hurt!

Bill: How could it? It only hit your head.

Stinks: Very funny.

(*The BOYS make a lot of noise and movement to suggest fruitful activity. After a few moments OLD JOE exits*).

Mike: Slow down everybody, we don't want to finish too quickly.

Del: Why don't we stack a few up again then?

Bill: Good idea, we could miss Creative Studies too.

Mike: Yeah well, Darren, you do it.

Darren: Why me?

Mike: 'Cos you don't want to be crippled, do you?

(DARREN starts slowly to stack some chairs up. The OTHERS start scooting chairs to and fro across the floor).

Bill: 'ere, let's have a look on the stage.

Darren: It's not allowed.

Bill: 'Course it's not allowed. Nothing's allowed at this place. They'll stop us breathing soon.

Jimbo: That's a thought! Suspended animation.

Del: What's that?

Jimbo: No breathing. We come to school, lively, willing, bouncing with enthusiasm

Bill: 'oo does?

Jimbo: and when we get here we are deflated, our balloons of joyous life are pricked

Del: Eh?

Jimbo: and we are packed away into cubicles, nay, cells, flattened, with no opportunity to express ourselves, waiting simply for the time when we are released into the air again, to float away to freedom, and fish fingers.

Mike: What are 'naycells'?

Jimbo: In fact, pupils are the reverse of teachers.

Bill: Well, of course we are. We're human and they're not.

Del: Yeah. We learn and they learn us.

Mike: Or not, as the case may be.

Jimbo: I mean, during school hours, they are alive and kicking, literally, and we are made into zombies and after school they're shoved into the D.S. fridges and we come gloriously, wildly, excitingly, to life.

Mike: And go home to watch Sooty and Co.

Bill: And Neighbours.

Del: And Coronation Street.

Stinks: And Eastenders.

Bill: And Top of the Pops.

Jimbo: And Panorama.

Stinks: What's that?

Mike: And This is Your Life.

Del: And The Bill.

Stinks: And Crime Watch U.K.

Jimbo: You see my point?

Bill: All I said was, let's 'ave a look on the stage.

Stinks: Look out! Here comes Old Joe.

(The BOYS begin noisily to unstack the chairs again as the CARETAKER returns).

Old Joe: Strewth! You 'aven't done much, 'ave you?

(The BOYS work on).

SCENE 5

(Break time).

Del: Well that was better than Maths, even if Old Joe watched us for the last ten minutes.

Bill: 'Watched us'? He practically whipped us.

Stinks: Slave-driver.

Mike: Yeah! Like being on a chain gang.

Jimbo: Well, that's what we are, en't? Slaves, convicts.

Del: I'M not! I'm a tele-person in the making. I'm an apprentice-star!

Mike: I thought an apprentice was supposed to learn his trade.

Del: Right!

Mike: So what are you learning?

Del: I'm learning to be charming, to talk with style and wit, to put the guests on my show at their ease.

Karen: *(Passing by and overhearing DEL).* I'm going to be sick.

Del: Oh push off back to your knitting group! *(KAREN goes).*

Mike: That girl needs a thumping.

Bill: You can't thump girls.

Stinks: Why not?

Bill: They tell!

Jimbo: We could bring her down a peg or two though.

Mike: How?

Jimbo: Well

Del: Come on, Brains, out with it! How do we get her done, without copping it ourselves?

Mike: Brilliantly put, Del.

Stinks: Shut up and listen to Jimbo.

Jimbo: If we were to write a note pretending she wrote it and make sure that Beano found it.

Mike: Hey! Would that work? Wouldn't Beano know?

Jimbo: I reckon I could make it look like her writing. I've got a sample of her work in my rough-book from that joint story we had to write in English.

Stinks: But why should that 'do' her?

Bill: 'Cos in the note we say that Beano is a slug and a

Jimbo: No, no, that won't do. Beano would know that was a fake.

Bill: Well, what then?

Jimbo: What could be more natural than a love-letter?

Del: 'Ere, you talk just like Melvyn Bragg.

Stinks: Does he write love-letters?

Jimbo: I expect so.

Del: He's a tele-person!

Mike: A love-letter to Beano! It's absurd. Why, that's like me falling in love with Margaret Thatcher! Or Stinks fancying a baboon with an orange backside!

Stinks: Shows I've got better taste than you anyway.

Jimbo: If you will allow me to explain

Del: There he goes again! Robin Day!

Jimbo: It's a love-letter to Peter Pastors.

All: What! Him!

Del: But he's a burk.

Bill: He does his homework!

Stinks: He's got brains.

Jimbo: There's nothing wrong with brains, my man!

Del: Marvellous! I'm learning all the time.

Bill: I can't imagine anybody writing a love-letter to Peter Pastors. He's so small! That's why he's called Wee-Wee.

Mike: Well, Karen's small too.

Stinks: Not all over, she's not.

Del: Is that why he's called Wee-Wee? I thought it was because

Jimbo: Well, you're wrong.

Bill: 'Ere, I hadn't noticed that Karen wasn't small all over.

Mike: Well, that's because you're retarded.

Stinks: And blind.

Del: And football crazy.

Mike: To get back to the main point: the idea of Karen Sharples writing a love-letter to Peter Pastors is so incredible that Beano will know it's a fake.

Jimbo: But it isn't incredible, you see. It's always said that love is blind.

Stinks: It would have to be deaf as well. Wee-Wee's got a voice like a constipated mouse.

Mike: And limbless! Who'd want to touch him? His skin is all corrugated and greasy - like a well-oiled roller-coaster.

Jimbo: Now Mike, you are being unkind and your desire for cruel remarks is producing excessive and contrived imagery.

Del: Say it again! Please say it again! I want to remember that to put on my show!

Jimbo: Look! Girls fall for the most weird-looking idiots. Don't you remember when Jane Freeman had a crush on Stinks?

Bill: Hey! Yeah, that's true!

Stinks: She didn't.

Mike: Yes she did. She used to lie in wait when you hid in the bog.

Del: Well, I guess that proves it. Jimbo's right. So when do we do it?

Bill: Now.

Jimbo: Well, ideally we need pale pink notepaper with flowers and angels on.

Mike: Crikey! How do you know that?

Jimbo: My sister's got some.

Del: It sounds revolting.

Jimbo: It is. And it's got to have some sappy poetry on it too.

Bill: Well, we haven't got anything like that.

Mike: No, it'll have to be a bit out of Darren's rough book.

Darren: Why mine?

Mike: 'Cos you don't want a kick in the head, do you?

(DARREN tears a page out of his rough-book).

Mike: Right. What do we say?

Bill: "Dear Wee-Wee."

Del: Don't be daft! It's got to be romantic, like "My dearest darling sweetie-pie. "

Bill: Yuk!

Jimbo: Now, we mustn't over-do it. I think 'Dear Peter' will do to start with.

Stinks: Nobody calls him 'Peter'.

Mike: His mum does.

Del: Has he got a mum? Poor woman! She must suffer daily.

Jimbo: Because she's got to look at what she's produced?

Del: Yes. I get queasy when I look at my woodwork model, but I only see it once a

week. She has to look at Wee-Wee every day - and he moves.

Bill: Not very gracefully, but it's true, he does twitch from time to time.

Jimbo: "Dear Peter, I know this will come as a surprise to you"

Stinks: "but I fancy yer somethin' rotten."

Jimbo: "but I want to tell you before the holidays start"

Bill: "that you're a bit of orl right!"

Jimbo: That I have admired you from afar for a long time."

Del: Come on Jimbo, pep it up a bit.

Mike: Jimbo's doing it O.K. It's got to be believed by Beano.

Del: But it's got to make her feel a fool and look silly, en't?

Mike: It will! Simply to be talked to by Beano, or even to know that he doesn't automatically believe her denials, will be enough. Especially since it's to Wee-Wee!

Del: Oh well, O.K. Carry on Jimbo.

Jimbo: "I wish I could"

Bill: "be clasped in your manly arms."

Stinks: "Manly arms!" Strings of jelly!

Jimbo: "do French translations like you."

Bill: What?

Jimbo: "And it would be wonderful if we could"

Stinks: "Get together when my parents are out."

Jimbo: "do them together so that I could learn from you."

Del: Whoopee! Now we're getting somewhere. She wants him to teach her.

Bill: But Jimbo, it's not very exciting is it? I mean, it's not, well, sexy, is it?

Jimbo: Ah well, there you see, I have an inherent and apparently insoluble problem as a result of our particular scenario.

Bill: Oh well, that's all right then.

Jimbo: The problem is, Bill, how to get sex into anything connected with Wee-Wee!

Stinks: Well, that's what we all said ages ago.

Jimbo: So we have to dwell upon the academic.

Del: That swearword again!

Jimbo: She has fallen in love with his brains.

Bill: Impossible!

Jimbo: It is not! I'm surprised more girls don't do it.

Stinks: Fall in love with Wee-Wee?

Jimbo: With blokes with brains!

Mike: Let's get on, it's nearly the end of Break.

Stinks: Finish it, Jimbo.

Jimbo: "If you feel as I do"

Bill: "Feel as"?

Jimbo: "I do".

Bill: Oh!

Jimbo: "I hope that you will"

Stinks: Will he?

Jimbo: "Write back to me, suggesting a tête-a-tête."

Del: Hey, what's that? I thought you said there wasn't going to be any sex?

Jimbo: It means a get-together. It's French.

Del: Ah! It's acaaca

Jimbo: Right.

Bill: Is that the end then?

Jimbo: Apart from the signing-off, yes.

Stinks: Not much to that.

Bill: It wouldn't turn me on.

Mike: What would Bill?

Jimbo: We haven't got time!

Del: Come on! Sign off.

Jimbo: "Your loving and expectant friend, Karen Sharples."

Mike: Hey! Doesn't "expectant" mean?

Jimbo: Not in this case.

Stinks: O.K. What now?

Mike: Now we put the note in Karen's English exercise book which is sitting on Beano's desk in our homework pile. You know he marks the work every Thursday while while we are doing Creative Studies.

Del: But will he? Today? I mean it's the last day of term.

Jimbo: Course he will. He'll want to return the books this afternoon 'cos it's the last English lesson.

Del: What a boring old twit he must be, working on the last day of term.

Bill: But I thought Wee-Wee was supposed to get it?

Mike: It's addressed to him, Stupid, but she hasn't got it to him yet, see? And she's forgotten she's slipped it in her English book.

Bill: Cor! Careless of her.

Mike: Come on, it's nearly time.

(They run off).

SCENE 6

(Near the end of the English lesson).

Beano: Right. We have ten minutes left, so here's the last thing. I've marked your books and I will return them to you now. I want you to pay close attention to my comments and to learn from them.

Del: Can I hand them out for you, Sir?

Beano: I've no doubt that you CAN, Derek, since you are reasonably able-bodied, and I know that your reading has improved considerably since you got that part-time job at the back of the Betting shop.

Del: MAY I hand them out, Sir?

Beano: No, Derek, I want to throw them at people as I usually do. You wouldn't rob me of my simple pleasures, would you?

Mike: Have you given us any marks this time, Sir?

Beano: Michael, you know well that I refuse to satisfy your competitive urges by awarding specific marks. Let your Saturday afternoon tribal wars be sufficient in that field.

Bill: But I'd like to know if I've improved at all, Sir.

Beano: William, as soon as that happy day comes I shall rush into your Creative Studies class and interrupt your lesson in how to deal with nappy rash in order to tell you.

Karen: That's "Family Life", Sir.

Beano: Oh! Thank you, Karen.

Julie: Any House Points awarded today, Sir?

Beano: No Julie, not today. I was tempted to give one to Stephen because he spelt "Carter" correctly but I overcame the spirit of generosity which moved me.

Stinks: (*Whisper*). It didn't move you far enough.

Beano: I heard that Stephen, but with my usual benevolence and tolerance I will pretend that I did not.

Jimbo: (*Looking at his returned book*). Sir, I can't read your writing.

Beano: Nonsense James, my handwriting is beautiful. There may be something wrong with your eyes.

Jimbo: This word sir?

Beano: "Discombobulate".

Jimbo: What does it mean, Sir?

Beano: I don't know. I was hoping you'd look it up for me.

Bill: How many words don't you know, Sir?

Beano: I don't know, William.

Bill: Cor! and you're supposed to be teaching us!

Beano: Yes, there's not much chance for you, is there?

Jimbo: I can't find that word in the Dictionary, Sir.

Beano: Oh well, I expect I made it up.

Bill: Made it up! You can't do that!

Beano: Why not William? You do it all the time. When I mark your book I find many words which I, with all my years of learning and reading, have never seen before.

Mike: (*Worried that nothing has been said about the note which BEANO should have found*). Er, Sir?

Beano: Yes, Michael.

Mike: Er was there anything in our work you are going to talk to us about, Sir?

Beano: I'm not sure what you mean

Mike: Er well sir apart from the comments in our books, you often deal with some points to the whole class.

Beano: Oh I see. Yes I do. Well, as, on this occasion I don't think there was anything special.

Mike: Oh. (*MIKE gives up*).

Del: (*Decides to try another approach*). Sir?

Beano: Yes, Derek.

Del: Sir, there was a letter in my book when I handed it in and it's not there now.

Beano: Oh dear! It must have fallen out.

Del: But it's important, Sir.

Beano: Perhaps so, but what was it doing in your exercise book?

Del: Well, I'd been checking on some spellings in it.

Beano: Really, Derek! How commendable! I take it then that you wrote this lost letter?

Del: (*Wary*). Yes, Sir.

Beano: Not your grandmother?

Del: No, Sir.

Beano: Was it in an envelope and addressed already?

Del: (*Wishing he hadn't started this now*). Er yes, Sir.

Beano: Has anybody seen an addressed envelope in Derek's handwriting? (*Nobody answers*). Well, it seems to be lost for the moment. Perhaps it'll turn up when we clean up after Assembly. Get ready to go to the Hall now.

(*General movement*).

Beano: Girls lead out. Oh! James stay behind a moment will you? Boys follow on.

(When the Class have all gone).

Beano: James. You're a clever boy. Has Peter Pastors ever done anything to harm you?

Jimbo: No, Sir.

Beano: Do you wish any harm on him?

Jimbo: No, Sir.

Beano: What about Karen Sharples?

Jimbo: What about her, Sir?

Beano: I spoke to M. Guy at lunch-time.

Jimbo: *(Puzzled).* Sir?

Beano: He says that you and Peter Pastors are way out in front of the rest of the class in French.

Jimbo: Oh!

Beano: Further, he is of the opinion that you are the only two who would know what tête-a-tête means AND know that circumflexes are necessary.

Jimbo: *(Blushes).* I

Beano: Don't bother to say anything, James. I know that you are not a malicious or unpleasant boy. I'm fairly sure that you are the brains behind a certain note I've found - that I was meant to find. I'm not accusing you. I don't want you to confess or deny. I'm not going to do anything about it. I would just like you to think again about your action and what prompted your action. Do you understand me at all?

Jimbo: I think so, Sir.

Beano: Right. Nip after the others, then. Look sharp.

SCENE 7

(After Assembly. In the Form-Room. The clearing-up Session).

Del: 'Ere Jimbo, what did Beano want you for?

Jimbo: *(Quietly preoccupied).* Oh! He just wanted to talk about my work.

Del: Cor! On the last day of term! He never talks to me about my work.

Mike: That's 'cos you never do any.

Del: What about that poem what I wrote?

Mike: When?

Del: Last January. It was all about snowflakes and how they look like Christmas

decorations.

Bill: Hey! Why didn't we put some poetry in the letter?

Stinks: Where IS the letter anyway? Didn't Beano find it?

Mike: I dunno. He didn't say anything, did he? (*He looks at JIMBO, who remains silent*).

Del: No, well, I think he probably just gave it to Wee-Wee anyway, without reading it. It's just the sort of thing he would do, gentlemanly an' that.

Mike: What do you know about gentlemen?

Del: Everything. I've been studying etickety for my career.

Bill: What's "eticky-tacky"?

Del: It's manners and what to do and what fork to use.

Bill: I use the one in front of me.

Del: It's how to behave towards ladies.

Stinks: Do you know now then?

Del: 'Course I do. You have to say 'please' and 'thank-you'.

Stinks: Is that all?

Del: Basically.

Beano: Come on you lads, are your lockers cleared?

(*STINKS, DEL and BILL move off with BEANO to inspect their lockers*).

Mike: (*To JIMBO*). What do you think happened to the letter, Jimbo?

Jimbo: (*Lost in thought*). What? Oh, I dunno. I expect it's like Del said. Beano didn't react, that's all. Let's just say our plan misfired and forget it, shall we?

Mike: Oh, O.K., if you say so.

Beano: Right. It's time (*Small cheer*). Off you go everybody. Have a good holiday. Don't hang about now. Get off the School premises quickly. Off you go. (*PUPILS exit*).

Bill: 'Bye, Sir. Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

Beano: There must be a funny answer to that.

Stinks: 'Bye, Sir.

Del: Are you going to help M. Guy push his car, Sir?

Beano: Well yes, I was going to do that, Derek.

Del: Well, come on then, Sir. I'll give it a shove too.

Beano: Your muscles will be useful. Can you persuade Michael to help too?

Del: Yeah, come on Mike, we're going to push Froggy's car into the pond.

Mike: O.K. Let's go. (*Most of the CLASS have left*).

Jimbo: (*Who has been deliberately hanging back*). Er Karen?

Karen: (*Who was just leaving*). Yes?

Jimbo: Um could I have a word with you?

Karen: (*Suspicious*). Well?

Jimbo: Er alone? (*Looking at JULIE*).

Karen: I'll catch you up, Julie.

Julie: Oh, O.K.

(*She leaves. JIMBO and KAREN are the only two left in the Classroom*).

Jimbo: (*Embarrassed*). I was wondering

Karen: Yes?

Jimbo: Well, you see, it's the holidays now

Karen: I know.

Jimbo: I mean, well, are you going on holiday at all?

Karen: You mean, away somewhere?

Jimbo: Yes, like with your Mum and Dad?

Karen: Oh yes, we always go away every year.

Jimbo: Yes, so do we, but I don't like it much, do you?

Karen: What, going away?

Jimbo: Yes, I mean, being with my parents - it's so boring. I'd like to be with someone my own age.

Karen: You don't like going on holiday with your parents?

Jimbo: No, and I was wondering, you see

Karen: Yes?

Jimbo: Well, if we are on holiday at the same time....

Karen: Yes?

Jimbo: Well, could we write to each other?

Karen: Write to each other? What for?

Jimbo: Well, to tell each other what we're doing, what our holidays are like.

Karen: Well, that won't be much fun for me, will it?

Jimbo: Why not?

Karen: Well, you've said you'll be bored, so you'll just be telling me how bored you are.

Jimbo: Oh no, it'll be better if I've got you to write to.

Karen: Oh will it? Why? We hardly ever talk at school and then you and your mates are usually nasty.

Jimbo: Oh that's all over.

Karen: Is it? Since when?

Jimbo: Look! What I mean is, I'd like to take you out, to the pictures or something. When we're not on holiday, I mean.

Karen: Oh!

Jimbo: Well, what do you say?

Karen: I don't like the pictures.

Jimbo: You don't oh What do you like?

Karen: Never mind. I don't think I can come out with you.

Jimbo: But Why not?

Karen: I don't think I want to. I don't think we're much alike. You see, I like going on holiday with my parents. We go with two other families and it's great fun.

Jimbo: But here when you're back from holiday.

Karen: Then I'm usually doing something or other with my friends or with my boy friend.

Jimbo: Oh! I didn't know you had a boy friend.

Karen: Yes, well, I'm sorry Jimbo, but you see, it's no good.

Jimbo: O.K.

Karen: Cheerio then.

Jimbo: Cheerio. (*KAREN begins to go out*). Karen

Karen: Yes?

Jimbo: Do I know your boyfriend?

Karen: Oh yes! It's Peter Pastors.

(She leaves JIMBO with his mouth gaping).

THE END