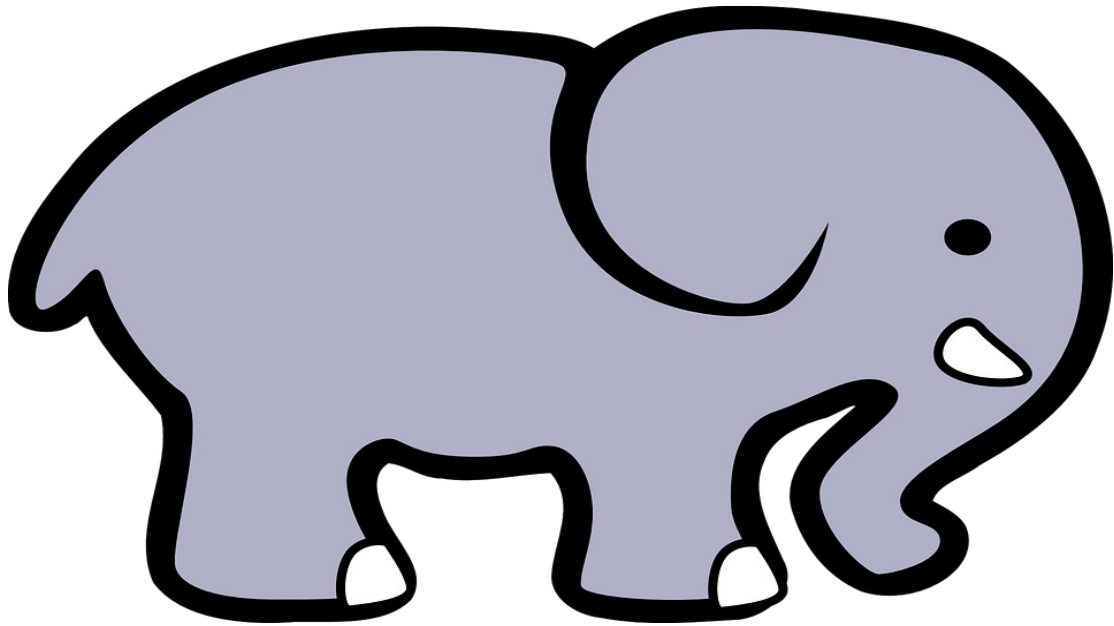


TAKEN TO TUBK



By Troy Banyan

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‘TAKEN TO TUSK’

A ONE ACT PLAY (approx 45 minutes in length)

Cast (F4 – M2)

(I)Rene	(early sixties-early seventies woman).....
Wanda	(late 30’s – late 40’s woman).....
Mikey	(mid 30’s - mid 40’s man).....
Ethel	(early sixties-early seventies woman).....
Hector	(early sixties-early seventies man).....
Sharon/Trunky	(late teens – early 20’s woman).....

The whole play takes place in one set, the front lounge of Rene McBean, on one evening.

Downstage right is a straw bedding area, behind which is a podium (on its side) and a long stick. The fireplace then runs up the right wall and on the mantelpiece are some framed photographs. Upstage Right is a hi-fi unit, under which are some jungle bongos. Along the back is a reclining lounge seat, next to which is a side table. Upstage left is the door through which all exits and entrances are made as it leads to not only the (unseen) front door but all other rooms in the house. Downstage left is a long sideboard, on which is an ornate howdah (elephant seat). Going vertical down centre right is a three- seater sofa and this is facing a cleared area in front on the bedding/fireplace. The décor is very jungle-like, with African markings on the walls, curtains etc and various artefacts dotted around the room. There is no TV in room.

SYNOPSIS

Rene McBean is a cantankerous, leaden-legged, old woman who fell out with her daughter Wanda some years back, which resulted in her granddaughter Sharon staying with her nan. At that time Sharon had an imaginary friend – Trunky The Elephant – which, unbeknownst to Wanda, has evolved since, to the point where she now thinks she is Trunky, made worse by the fact that Rene’s neighbours Ethel (computer savvy busybody) and Hector (amorous lothario) come around to watch her perform. There is no TV in the house and they like nothing better than to sit down and watch Sharon perform as Trunky.

Wanda’s *raison d’être*, however, is to try and ‘cure’ Sharon so that she leaves the home and Wanda can ‘inveigle her way back in’ so that Rene’s wealth will be re-distributed, she hopes, to help her and her new boyfriend - unfunny comedian Mikey Strange – set up a Comedy Club. To help her plan along, Mikey transforms into Dr Michael Strangue, an eminent doctor in the field of ‘curing people with imaginary friends etc’, using his ‘comic skills’ to ad lib to suit the ever-evolving situation. The plan, however, fails soon after it starts as Sharon’s own *raison d’être* soon surfaces, which makes everyone face up to their own existences.

Ultimately it is Rene who is made to face just what has made her the mean-spirited woman she is today and how her relationship with Wanda was coloured by her own marriage breakdown and, come the end, all three McBean women realise what has happened to their lives because of either the way men have treated them, or how their personalities have been without men around, which leaves Mikey, in a way, the chance of becoming a husband, a step-father and a son-in-law all in one fell swoop. There are several twists and turns in the plot as feelings and emotions surface.

THE SCENE - LOUNGE OF RENE'S HOUSE - EVENING

(RENE is asleep in her extended lounge armchair when the sound of an elephant's trumpet is heard. RENE starts from her sleep and climbs slowly out of the seat onto her feet)

RENE: *(Calling out)* It's okay, *I'll* get it.

(RENE trudges off upstage left. The front door is heard opening, followed by RENE'S mournful voice)

RENE: *(Off)* Oh, what do **you** want ?

(RENE trudges back in. The front door is heard closing then WANDA follows her in)

WANDA: Can't a daughter visit her mother without wanting something ?

RENE: *(Turning slowly)* Not **you**..*(slumping back in seat)*.

WANDA: Actually, I'm more here to see Sharon than you.

RENE: Who ?

WANDA: Sharon ? My daughter ? Your grand-daughter ? Who lives here with you ?

RENE: Oh, her. You gave up dibs on her years ago.

WANDA: I know..*(sitting on sofa)*..and there isn't a day goes by when I don't think about her.

RENE: Save it. She doesn't need you, neither of us do.

WANDA: No ? I can tell by the doorbell that she's..not grown out of it, and that's not normal for a girl..or a woman..her age, is it ?

RENE: I don't know what you mean, I'm sure.

WANDA: Ignore it all you want mum but something needs to be done..*(standing up)*..something **has** to be done..*(walking to mantelpiece)*..that's why, well..*(picking up a framed photo to look at)*..that's why I've found someone who's a specialist in this sort of thing.

RENE: **What** sort of thing ?

WANDA: God mum, just accept that it's not normal, unless of course..*(pausing)*...

RENE: *(Suspicious)* Unless **what** ?

WANDA: I keep in touch with people around here and, well, I've heard that perhaps **you're** not as 'aware' as you used to be.

RENE: What do you mean..'aware' ?

WANDA: Look mum, I'm here for Sharon, she *is* still my daughter after all, whether *you* like it or not, so let's just say the guilt has got the better of me. I've researched her 'condition' and found someone who's willing – at some expense to myself I might add – to look at Sharon, just to assess her, nothing more I swear.

RENE: (*Reluctantly*) So, who is this so called 'expert' ?

WANDA: I can go one better than that, I know *where* he is as well. His name's Dr Michael Strangue and he's here now, outside in my car. Can I bring him in ?

RENE: Oh, I don't know about that, I don't know if Sharon's going to be up to-

WANDA: Please mum, can I at least try to get back into my daughter's life and help her, if it's at all possible ?

RENE: (*Softening a bit*) Okay, I don't suppose it can do any harm...

WANDA: (*Excitedly*) Great, I'll go and-

(The elephant's trumpet doorbell goes off again)

That's probably him now, eager to make a start..*(running upstage left)*..I'll let him in...

(WANDA disappears up left. The sound of the front door opening is then heard followed by ETHEL walking urgently into the room up to RENE, followed by a disconsolate WANDA)

ETHEL: Are you all right Rene ? I heard the doorbell so thought I'd better check.

WANDA: (*Wearily*) She's fine Ethel, she's just being visited by her long lost-

ETHEL: Organ-grinder and monkey Wanda, capiche ?

(WANDA just shrugs her shoulders and peels away downstage left)

ETHEL: The wanda-rer returns, eh Rene ? **Are** you all right by the way ?

RENE: I'm fine Eth.

ETHEL: And Sharon ?

RENE: Well, Wanda has brought someone to –

(The sound of the front door slamming shut is heard, followed by MIKEY walking into the lounge looking rather trussed up in a 3-piece suit, wearing black-rimmed glasses, a balbo beard and with his hair parted. He also has a briefcase in his hand)

MIKEY: Hello..hello..*(stilted)*..am I in the presence of..Rene McBean ?

WANDA: (*Equally stilted*) Ah, Dr Strangue. Yes, that is my mother..*(to Rene)*..and..*(through gritted teeth)*.. this woman here..*(to Ethel)*..is her friend..Ethel...

MIKEY: Don't tell me..McBethel ?

RENE: Who is this wise guy ?

WANDA: This is the specialist I told you about mum, the one who can help Sharon.

ETHEL: Sharon ? What's wrong with Sharon ?

RENE: Nothing Eth, Wanda just wants to-

(The elephant's trumpet doorbell goes off yet again)

WANDA: *(Slumping into sofa)* I don't believe it.

RENE: Could you get that Eth ?

(ETHEL gives a salute and walks out upstage left. MIKEY and WANDA look at each other in bemusement at how the situation is panning out)

HECTOR: *(Off: bellowing out)* Never fear, the cavalry's here..*(walking into lounge)*..I came as soon as I heard.

RENE: Heard what ?

HECTOR: The second hoorah..*(in between RENE and ETHEL with a smile)*..**you** girls.

WANDA: *(Surveying the 3 oldies)* God, it's like a scene from Cocoon.

HECTOR: *(Noticing WANDA)* Hello, who have we got here ? Not **another** one for Hector's Harem ?

WANDA: *(Shocked)* WHAT ?

HECTOR: Don't worry my dear, despite being a hexagenerian I am no respecter of age, so don't feel any shame or remorse in joining my –

RENE: This is my daughter Hector.

HECTOR: *(Realising impropriety)* Oh..*(thinking of her reputation)*..oh-h-h, so this is Wanda, is it ? Or should I say..this is Wanda Off !

WANDA: Very funny 'Hector'. Now, if both you and Ethel could make your way back to your cosy little abodes we have some private family business to conduct...

RENE: Oh no. They're more a part of Sharon's life than you've been, so anything that you and Mr..Mr Whatnacall here have to 'conduct' will be done with me..**and** them..in the room.

HECTOR: Sharon ? What's wrong with Sharon ?

(RENE somewhat wearily pats HECTOR'S arm to calm him down)

WANDA: It's **Doctor** actually. Doctor Strangue. Remember ?

ETHEL: What sort of name is Strangue ? How's it spelt ?

MIKEY: Strang..but with a 'u..e'.

ETHEL: What's a yooey ?

MIKEY: No, the letters u..and e.

HECTOR: What..Stru-eng ?

MIKEY: No, on the end.

ETHEL: On the end of what ?

MIKEY: On the end of my surname.

HECTOR: I don't get it.

MIKEY: They're silent.

ETHEL: What are ?

MIKEY: The 'u..e'.

HECTOR: I still don't get it.

MIKEY: It's really not important.

ETHEL: Then why are they there ?

MIKEY: *(Trying to hide agitation)* My, is that the time ?

HECTOR: I think I've got it now: your surname's just a letter away from 'strangle'.

MIKEY: *(Through gritted teeth)* Yes, isn't it.

ETHEL: I only need to know for when I google it later on.

(MIKEY looks with panic at WANDA, who jumps in to save further interrogation)

WANDA: What is this, The Spanish Inquisition ? Michael's..I mean Dr Strangue's.. time is precious and he doesn't want to spend it having a ridiculous conversation about his name..
(walking to Mikey)..isn't that right Dr Strangue ?

MIKEY: *(whispering)* God, it was like being trapped in that Abbott & Costello sketch, 'Who's on first ?'

WANDA: What ?

MIKEY: No, he's on second, never mind..*(to group)*..so, now I'm past my initiation do I get to see the patient ?

RENE: Oh, she's not a patient doctor.

MIKEY: No no, of course not, I meant..., I mean..I'm just used to referring to them as-

WANDA: *(Jumping in again)* I know, why don't we just go upstairs and see her in her –

RENE: Oh no, any 'examination' of her will be done down here, where we can all see.

WANDA: Are you able to operate under those conditions Dr Strangue ? (*shaking head*)

MIKEY: (*Ignoring Wanda & embracing challenge*) I'll improvise. Let the show commence.

(*WANDA gives MIKEY a very pointed look*)

RENE: Fine. Will you do the honours Hector ?

(*HECTOR gives RENE a salute then walks to the upstage right corner of the room where there is a large jungle drum combo. As he goes to start hitting them RENE holds up her hand*)

RENE: Actually, perhaps we should let 'Sharon' make her grand entrance, as we have guests. It's all ready to start.

(*HECTOR looks instead to the left of the drums at the hi-fi unit and presses play. As he does, the introductory jungle drumming of TUSK, by Fleetwood Mac starts up. ETHEL walks up to MIKEY and moves him back to WANDA'S side – but his bag is on the heap of straw -, to ensure there is a walkway from the upstageleft doorway to the round mat centre/downstage right. WANDA and MIKEY look nonplussed at each other and just shrug*)

(*As the song's introduction continues, stirring from above is heard which makes RENE, ETHEL and HECTOR smile knowingly. This is then followed by the sound of clumping down stairs to the rhythmic drumming of the song's introduction. ETHEL and HECTOR then purposefully position themselves at RENE'S side, so that HECTOR is in the middle. As the stair clumping gets nearer they help RENE to her feet and she back-kicks in the reclining part of the seat so she can stand up straight in readiment*)

(*MIKEY and WANDA give each other darting glances at the strangeness of the situation while the other three start nudging each other in almost childish excitement. As the singing on the song starts they start swaying and waving their hands in front of themselves*)

VERSE LYRICS: # Why don't you ask him, if he's gonna stay ?

(*Just then SHARON enters. She is dressed in a one-piece grey elephant suit with a built in tail on the backside, wearing elephant feet slippers/shoes on all fours, with her facial features unrecognisable as she is wearing a trunk/ear/tusk combo. She is clumping very rhythmically on all fours to the music. She walks past ETHEL, RENE and HECTOR with an acknowledging nod of her head and they, in turn pat/smooth her on the head/back, then continue waving their arms to the rhythm of the song*)

VERSE LYRICS: # Why don't you ask him, when he's going away, hey ?

(*SHARON then clumps around the cleared circle area until arcing around in front of MIKEY and WANDA. Although she doesn't stop it's clear that she's expecting some sort of 'visitor acknowledgement', but MIKEY and WANDA are still too confused. SHARON then continues on another circuit*)

VERSE LYRICS: # Why don't you tell me, what's going on ?

(*As SHARON continues on around, RENE, ETHEL and HECTOR all look at MIKEY and WANDA with daggers-drawn at their lack of acknowledgement. They guiltily shrug back*)

VERSE LYRICS: # Why don't you tell me, who's on the phone, whoa ?

(As SHARON arcs back in front of MIKEY and WANDA they make sure that they pat/ smooth her on the head/back this time, to reassuring nods/smiles from the other three)

VERSE LYRICS: # Why don't you ask him, what's going on ?

(SHARON clumps around a little more jauntily after having received the acknowledgement)

VERSE LYRICS: # Why don't you ask him, the latest on his throne, whoa ?

(SHARON then does another circuit so that she is facing forward – at the audience – in time to launch into an intricate dance through the chorus. As she does, RENE, ETHEL and HECTOR also break into a choreographed dance movement in the background that involves blowing imaginary horns, leaning forward with arms waving outwards then straightening back up with their arms waving upwards)

CHORUS LYRICS: *(RENE & ETHEL reach down)* # Don't say that you love me, *(HECTOR reaches up)* ah-hah-hee.

(RENE & ETHEL come back up as HECTOR comes back down. WANDA and MIKEY are even more dumbstruck by this and fall back into the sofa to watch the rest unfold in front of their eyes, not knowing whether to look at SHARON'S intricate elephantine dance or the three geriatric backing dancers/mime artistes)

CHORUS LYRICS: *(RENE & ETHEL reach back down again)* # Just tell me that you want me, *(HECTOR reaches back up again)* ah-hah-hee.

(RENE & ETHEL come back up as HECTOR comes back down so that all three are in unison as the following title word – TUSK – is shouted on the record, as it is clearly pivotal to the unfolding strange/surreal situation unfolding. Then as the ensuing song title is shouted out SHARON goes up on her back two legs and points to her tusks)

CHORUS LYRICS: # TUSK !

(This time RENE and ETHEL look away from HECTOR, as if playing imaginary horns whilst he bends down then up to the ceiling, as if also playing a horn. SHARON continues with her choreographed moves)

CHORUS LYRICS: *(RENE & ETHEL then reach up this time)* # Just tell me that you want me, *(HECTOR reaches down this time)* ah-hah-hee.

(RENE & ETHEL come back down as HECTOR comes up this time WANDA and MIKEY give each other side glances at the ongoing, increasingly strange, spectacle)

CHORUS LYRICS: # Just tell me that you..*(drum madness)*

(During the berserk drumming solo that ends the chorus SHARON jumps around like a mad thing, before visibly tiring. RENE notices this and puts off the hi-fi (pausing the song). SHARON then lumbers over towards her straw bed, but stops when seeing MIKEY'S briefcase on it)

RENE: Your case is in her place.

(MIKEY jumps up and darts over to pick up his case. SHARON then slumps onto straw bed, lying in a position that recumbent elephants lie in)

RENE: That bit ***usually*** tires her out..**and** me come to think of it..*(slumping back in seat)*.

WANDA: *(Surprised)* **Usually** ? What's going on here ?

RENE: *(Surprised at question)* Nothing out the ordinary, why ?

HECTOR: Quite right, there was nothing wrong with that.

ETHEL: One of her best ever I'd say.

WANDA: You mean, you couldn't see anything amiss with what just happened ?

RENE: Not really, even our choreography was spot on I'd say.

HECTOR: Hear hear. They say practice makes perfect.

ETHEL: Of course it was spoilt a bit at the end when Doctor Strangue's case was in the way.

MIKEY: *(Trying to hide sarcasm)* Yes, **that's** what the problem was with it.

WANDA: You know, I think I've brought Doctor Strangue here in the nick of time.

(RENE, ETHEL & HECTOR all look at each other and shrug)

WANDA: When I last saw her she just had an elephant as an invisible friend.

RENE: Oh, there have been a few incarnations since then.....

WANDA: What do you mean ?

RENE: Well, after a while..having Trunky as an invisible friend wasn't...

WANDA: Hang on. Who ?

RENE: *(Matter of fact)* Trunky. The name she gave to her elephant friend. Anyway, after a while it wasn't enough to **imagine** Trunky, Sharon had to be Trunky's carer, her mahout.

HECTOR: Oh yes, that's right, I really enjoyed it when she was Sabu.

RENE: She wasn't Sabu, she was Shahib.

ETHEL: Yes, Sabu was Elephant **Boy**.

HECTOR: Well, that's what she was, wasn't she ?

RENE: Sharon was Shahib. Sabu **played** Elephant Boy in the movie years ago.

ETHEL: Yes, plus one was a girl and the other a boy.

HECTOR: So, who looked after Trunky then ?

RENE: Well, Sharon..as Shahib..was her mahout.

ETHEL: Yes, but when Trunky was only imaginary of course.

HECTOR: I'm still not sure I –

WANDA: Whoa whoa whoa. I know I waived my parental rights years ago but do you hear yourselves ?

(RENE, HECTOR & ETHEL again all look at each other in innocent bemusement)

WANDA: *(Incredulously)* Sharon, Shahib, Sabu, Mahout, Trunky...

RENE: Oh yes, that's the final stage. She tired of just being Shahib, the mahout, so a while back she actually **became** Trunky, and there endeth her evolution..we presume.

WANDA: Oh you're too right it's the end. Dr Strangue, it's time for you to start earning your money. I know it's more than I consulted you about but..*(shielding her face in mock upset)*..but do you think you can possibly save my daughter ?

MIKEY: I will certainly try..*(moving towards Sharon)*..luckily..psychological metamorphosis – or psychomorphosis as we call it in the trade – is more common than you might think, and is a specialism of mine..particularly into an elephant. In fact, you could call me a pachydermatologist.

(His 'joke' is met with stony silence)

MIKEY: Mmm. Sorry about that, I just thought I'd try to..you know..lighten the mood with a bit of..never mind..*(kneeling on floor at Sharon's side)*..now, Sharon I'd like you to-

RENE: It's Trunky. She's being Trunky tonight. Remember ?

MIKEY: For me to make any connection, Mrs McBean, I must treat her for who she actually is..and not feed the fantasy any further.

ETHEL: I don't think I can stay and watch this quack Rene..*(holding Rene's shoulder)*..I'll come back when they're gone.

WANDA: Don't rush Ethel, it'll take as long as it takes.

RENE: *(Patting ETHEL'S hand)* Don't worry Eth, I won't let them change her.

WANDA: You mean..you won't let us spoil your surreal cabaret entertainment, don't you ?

(ETHEL walks out the room and then out the house)

WANDA: And what about you Herman ?

HECTOR: It's Hector.

WANDA: Whatever.

HECTOR: Rene ? If you want me to stay..I'll stay.

RENE: It's all right Hector. I guess it is a family matter after all.

HECTOR: Well, if you're sure..*(walking away)*..you know where I am if you need me.

(RENE nods and HECTOR walks almost disconsolately out of the room, then the house)

MIKEY: That's better. The fewer people that are around for my initial consultation the better.

RENE: You mean, there might be more visits ?

MIKEY: It depends how things go tonight really. I am known for my quick results.

RENE: Oh, right. Do you mind if I ask where you hail from, Dr Strangue ?

MIKEY: Eh ? Oh, I.. Why ?

RENE: No reason, it's just that I'm usually good on accents..but yours has fluctuated quite a bit...

WANDA: *(Jumping in between them)* What is this ? First you grill the man on his name, now on his accent. I'm beginning to think you don't believe he's a doctor at all.

RENE: *(Ignoring Wanda)* I know, why don't I make us all a cup of tea ?

(RENE trudges out of the upstage left door. WANDA goes to speak to MIKEY but wonders if SHARON can hear, so she pulls him away downstage left)

WANDA: What are you doing ?

MIKEY: I'm really starting to get into my part.

WANDA: Well don't, they're going to google you as it is.

(SHARON'S uppermost ear goes up in the air, to signify she is listening in on the conversation)

MIKEY: Do you honestly think this lot know what googling is ? They don't even know what the internet is. Or a computer even...

WANDA: Okay, I get the picture. Let's hope you're right or they might find out who you really are. On that point, do you have to keep cracking gags ?

MIKEY: But..the situation is just dripping with humour, it's ripe..nay over-ripe with laughs. My desire to quip has to be quenched. There's a whole routine here, which is why..*(taking out small cassette recorder from pocket)*.. I'm recording it.

WANDA: WHAT ?

MIKEY: As a specialist doctor would.

WANDA: Mmm, just remember it's my daughter at the centre of all this.

MIKEY: Does that mean you're interested in her now ?

WANDA: Let's just make sure we keep our eyes on the prize and then see what happens.

MIKEY: Remind me what the prize is again.

WANDA : Very funny, and try to keep a hold of the accent, whatever it's meant to be.

MIKEY: Impersonations aren't my thing, remember ?

WANDA: I know, just jokes.

MIKEY: I prefer 'patter'.

WANDA: Whatever it is just keep it under wraps while we're here, and look like you know what you're doing with my daughter.

MIKEY: Yes boss.

(As MIKEY then does a salute, RENE trudges back in through the top left door. She sees his gesture, which he quickly turns into a brow mop. SHARON'S upright ear goes back down)

MIKEY: Phew, it's warm in here, isn't it ?

RENE: She likes it warm, equatorial even. Who wants tea and who wants coffee ?

WANDA: Well, as it *is* so warm in here perhaps we could have something cooler..and stronger ?

RENE: That's just for special occasions.

WANDA: Point taken. Two white coffees with one sugar..*(quickly)*..um..is that okay with you Doctor Strangue ?

(MIKEY nods and RENE trudges back out the door. When she's gone WANDA shakes her head then walks towards the still recumbent SHARON with MIKEY)

WANDA: She likes it equatorial indeed. She must be sweltering in that suit..*(kneeling by SHARON)*..can you hear me Sharon ? We're here to help you.

(SHARON slowly moves then gradually sits upright, facing the pair, but still in mask. MIKEY and WANDA look at each other, wondering what to do next)

MIKEY: Should we wait for your mum to come back ?

WANDA: No, she'll just query all your methods..as if you don't know what you're doing.

MIKEY: I wonder why. Okay..*(rubbing hands together)*..here goes nothing..*(to SHARON)*..hello Sharon, my name's Doctor Strangue...

WANDA: Accent.

MIKEY: *(Back to how he sounded on arrival)* So, Sharon, what do you say to removing your facial..um..um..

WANDA: Accoutrements ?

MIKEY: Yes, thank you Wand-.I mean I've got it all under control..Ms McBean. So, Sharon, what do you say ?

(SHARON looks down at her hands then takes off her elephant gloves. MIKEY and WANDA look on expectantly, thinking she's now going to remove facewear. Instead she pokes MIKEY in the eye, through his glasses – which have no lenses in them. He yelps, his glasses fall off and he jumps up holding his eye. Just then RENE walks in carrying a tray of three cups, a glass of water with a straw in it, a plate of biscuits and a plate with some buns on it)

RENE: What's going on here ?

MIKEY: Um..um..I was just doing a bit of preparatory work before you came back: I was wondering um..what sort of elephant she was, African or Indian ?

(RENE slams the tray down on the side table and walks over to the throng)

RENE: Can't you tell by the size of her ears ?

MIKEY: Um yes, yes of course, what was I thinking ? *(Panicking into joke mode)* I can see we have a mammoth tusk ahead of us.

(MIKEY grins, awaiting laughs – to lighten the atmosphere – that don't come. RENE just shakes her head then reaches behind the bedding and pulls out an elephant's 'performing podium', which she rolls onto the floor in front of SHARON between her and 'the guests')

RENE: If you're going to talk to her at least let her be comfortable.

(RENE also produces a thotti, the long stick that mahout's use, then proceeds to lead SHARON from her 'bed' to the podium, on which she sits, in a pose that performing elephants sit. RENE then notices that SHARON and MIKEY are staring at the thotti askance)

RENE: Oh, this is her thotti, or guiding stick, from when she was Shahib..the mahout.

(SHARON and MIKEY are still standing in astonishment as RENE brandishes the stick. Even RENE then sees the absurdity of the situation and throws the thotti on the bedding)

RENE: Anyway, the refreshments are here.

(RENE walks towards the side table, followed by WANDA and MIKEY. SHARON slowly looks up)

SHARON: *(Muffled by the mask)* Glasses.

(RENE, WANDA and MIKEY all stop and look back at SHARON)

RENE: What was that ?

(SHARON then slowly pulls off the mask of trunk, tusk and ears, to show her hot head beneath. She then slowly points up at MIKEY)

SHARON: There are no lenses in his glasses.

(WANDA and MIKEY look nervously at each other then WANDA rushes over to SHARON and crouches at her feet, holding her hands in her lap, to stop her saying more)

WANDA: There she is, my beautiful girl...

RENE: What did she say ?

MIKEY: *(Jumping in)* Mmm, that coffee smells lovely.

RENE: It's instant.

MIKEY: You mean..not ground bean..Mrs McBean ?

RENE: What did Sharon just say ?

MIKEY: And buns as well, you're spoiling us.

RENE: They're for Sharon, now..*(resoundedly)*..what did she just say ?

(The elephant's trumpet doorbell goes off. MIKEY and WANDA look relieved. RENE looks at them both then trudges out the upstage left door)

WANDA: *(Pointedly to MIKEY)* No lenses ?

MIKEY: They're the prop ones from my act. You're the one who said glasses would give me gravitas.

WANDA: Yes, glasses with glass in them. That's it now, we're done for.

MIKEY: Not necessarily. Some doctors are eccentric, you know..to provoke certain responses.

(ETHEL strides into the room with her laptop in her hand)

ETHEL: He's not a doctor, he's a comedian.

MIKEY: **Now** we're done for.

ETHEL: And his name's not Michael Strangue, it's Mikey Strange.

(RENE trudges wearily back into the room)

WANDA: I said you should have picked a name nothing like your own.

MIKEY: How did I know there'd be a googling geriatric here ?

(RENE reaches her seat and slumps into it)

RENE: *(slumping into seat)* I should've known.

WANDA: Known what ?

RENE: That your interest in Sharon wasn't genuine.

(SHARON spins around on her podium so that she's facing away from everyone)

RENE: See, now look what you've done. You've only been here five minutes and you've managed to spurn her again.

WANDA: Heh, at least I'm not the one making her perform for entertainment.

RENE: Nobody forces her, and if she didn't enjoy it she wouldn't do it.

ETHEL: Hear hear Rene.

WANDA: Oh, and I bet you couldn't wait to get over here with your news, to gloat.

ETHEL: I know what ***you're*** like from old, and Rene's my best friend in the world.

MIKEY: Sounds like she's trying to get a slice of the cake as well.

WANDA: *(Tersely)* Sssshhh.

RENE: What was ***that*** ?

(The elephant's trumpet doorbell goes off yet again. ETHEL walks back out of the upstage left door)

WANDA: *(Wearily)* I wonder who that could be.

MIKEY: *(Unpeeling false beard)* I may as well take this off as well, something else that didn't add to my 'gravitas'.

(HECTOR appears back in the room, followed by ETHEL and her laptop)

HECTOR: So, what have I missed ?

WANDA: Not a lot Herbert.

HECTOR: It's Hector, as you well know..you little tease.

(WANDA buries her shaking head into her hands. HECTOR then clamps eyes on the now de-spectacled and un-hirsute MIKEY)

HECTOR: Mmm, well I've clearly missed the arrival of this young whippersnapper, yet another fox in the henhouse.

RENE: *(Wearily)* It's Dr Strangue Hector.

ETHEL: Or rather it isn't. *(proudly)* I googled him like I said I would..*(opening laptop up in front of HECTOR)*..and lo and behold..*(tapping key)*..look what I discovered.

HECTOR: Amazing.

ETHEL: *(Self-congratulatory)* Thank you, it is..isn't it.

HECTOR: No, your hands, I've just realised how lovely and smooth they are.

ETHEL: *(Smiling coyly)* Oh Hector, you are a one

WANDA: *(Jumping up)* Oh really, I might not have had the right intentions in coming here but do you seriously think it's healthy for a young girl – with her whole life ahead of her – to be stuck in this house listening to all this demented drivel, this..this geriatric gobbledygook rather than being amongst people her own age..as a human being..not an elephant ?

RENE: What **are** your intentions by the way ?

WANDA: Eh ?

RENE: Well, you shushed..*(signalling to MIKEY)*..him a minute ago, when he was on the verge of revealing something.

WANDA: Okay, I'll tell you, although I don't expect you to understand.

RENE: Try me.

WANDA: Well, this man here..Mikey..**is** a comedian..but he's also the man I love..and as we are so serious about each other I thought I'd try to reconcile our differences..and also – hopefully – rekindle my relationship with Sharon..so that she might, well, move out and see us more, and..who knows, perhaps, in time, grow to accept Mikey as, well, a belated father figure in her life.

(SHARON slowly swivels back around on her podium to face everyone)

RENE: Now look what you've done, you've built her hopes up.

WANDA: I knew you wouldn't understand..*(jumping up)*..I can't win with you.

(WANDA runs out of the room upstage left with her hand covering her face, to mask feelings. Her footsteps are then heard running up the stairs, followed by a door slamming off)

RENE: *(Unrepentant)* Ooh, was it something I said ?

(All eyes fall upon MIKEY who feels embarrassed at the situation, so picks up his bag to put his glasses and beard back in)

MIKEY: I'll just..um..put these..um..um..

(MIKEY fiddles nervously with the clasp of the case then when he opens it a joke snake springs out, which he scrambles around to retrieve and rams into the case along with the glasses and the beard)

RENE: Huh, she did always go out with jokers, but this time..she's **literally** dating one.

MIKEY: Good one Mrs McBean, worthy of a..*(making sound and action of a drum being hit followed by a cymbal)*.

(Again MIKEY'S attempt at humour falls on stony ground)

