

stump d

By T roy B anyan

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# **Stumped**

**By Troy Banyan**

## **Characters**

**Douglas Jarman (Englishman in his late 30s - late 40s)**

**Bruce Muldoon (Australian man in his late 30s - late 40s)**

**Sylvia Jarman (Woman in her late 30s – late 40s)**

**Janice Muldoon (Woman in her late 30s – late 40s)**

**Lilian (Spinster in her late 30s – late 40s)**

**Commentator (Microphone voiceover only)**

(The curtains are closed. A distant crowd noise is heard)

**Commentator:** So, with another wicket down the hosts will now be looking to Douglas Jarman to steady the ship...and what a place to be earning your debut cap...at Lord's, the home of English cricket, in an Ashes Test Series. He's no spring chicken but there's no substitute for experience. Here he comes now out of the pavilion and the first thing to note is that he is *wearing* that debut cap, not a helmet like the rest of the team...or indeed any batsmen ever these days...which is very odd indeed.

(From downstage left, in front of curtains, walks Douglas, wearing nothing but a cap, pads, boots, gloves and box but no actual clothing, except for his neckerchief)

**Commentator:** My word, do my eyes deceive me ? Well, not wearing a helmet *isn't* the strangest thing after all. He appears to have made a very basic error in his kitting up...in that he hasn't.

(Douglas, oblivious to everything, walks along - swinging his bat, twisting his torso and flexing his muscles as if all is normal – towards an imaginary crease)

**Commentator:** Well, lack of attire aside Jarman seems immensely confident, as if he's walked out to the crease on this hallowed turf a hundred times before. I can only assume he's trying to send out some sort of message with this somewhat cavalier approach.

(Douglas stops mid stage and looks all around him, imbibing the atmosphere)

**Commentator:** Well, I guess we should just be grateful he's wearing his protection, with his pads...

(Douglas adjusts his pads)

**Commentator:** His gloves...

(Douglas puts his bat under his arm and tugs his gloves on firmly)

**Commentator:** And, of course, his Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector, his box.

(Douglas squats down to stretch his leg muscles so that his widened legs face forward. Background crowd noise is heard in the form of audible gasps)

**Commentator:** My word...this Lord's crowd is seeing more of Jarman than they could ever have imagined...and I'm afraid that they don't seem to be taking kindly to his somewhat eccentric approach to his innings. W.G Grace would turn in his grave if he knew this was happening.

(The crowd noise turns to boos and Douglas's confidence visibly starts to wane)

**Commentator:** Here, in St John's Wood, the crowd is clearly used to the more orthodox dress code but Jarman is just ignoring all protocol as he takes guard...

(Douglas holds up two fingers to an invisible umpire showing the guard he wants)

**Commentator:** Who knows, perhaps he is trying to make some sort of statement here... "I've waited a long time for my call-up but now I'm here...I'm here to stay...and no clothing etiquette is going to restrict my style or stifle my creativity"...

(Douglas acknowledges the umpire then starts making the mark first with his bat then by back-scuffing the imaginary earth away, so that his bottom faces the audience. The booing grows in intensity somewhat. As Douglas turns back around to take guard the growing crowd unrest is clearly unsettling him)

**Commentator:** I have to say that Jarman...after striding out of the pavilion looking like – and dressed like – a gladiator about to slay a beast...now looks more like he is the one about to be slain, physically devoid of armour and mentally lacking in fortitude. Anyway, the bowler – thoroughly deserving of his nickname ‘The Tasmanian Tornado’ - has arrived back at his mark and will steam in from his long run-up to hurtle down a delivery at little short of a hundred miles an hour at the debutante...on a hat-trick...

(Douglas’s knees start to knock together)

**Commentator:** In he comes, locks flowing in the breeze off the Edgware Road, handlebar moustache screaming out menacing machismo – like some 70’s porno star on heat - and facing him is the near naked, fragile frame of jittery Jarman...

(The sound of the crowd intensifies)

**Commentator:** If only Jarman weren’t so exposed, I can see every bead of sweat, every hair stood on end, every taut sinew....and even every goose bump. Here comes the ball...and he’s out, cleaned bowled, wickets smashed all over the place...

(Douglas turns and starts trudging away downstage left, to the sound of the boos)

**Commentator:** And off he walks, a picture of pure dejection, cutting a rather sad and pathetic figure. The Aussies are, of course, taunting him...but this is no doubt tinged with disappointment, deprived of the chance, as they were, to sledge the new man. Well, with England now in dire straits... Mr Jarman departs with his golden duck.

(Douglas, about to exit downstage left, has one last mournful look around him)

**Commentator:** Who knows...for the second innings he might let us sample him in his crisp, bright cricketing whites...instead of his slightly wrinkled and crinkled lily-white birthday suit.

(Douglas exits downstage left. As he does, the curtains open)

(Centre right is the door that leads to the kitchen and hallway. Downstage left is the door which leads to the annexe and garden. There is a sofa in the lounge, with an armchair at the end of it. A TV set is downstage right. There is a sideboard with cricketing trophies on it up left, along the wall. Curtained windows centre back)

(Janice and Sylvia enter from centre right with their arms around each other)

**Janice:** Oh...it’s good to be here Sylv, I’ve missed England...and my older sister of course.

**Sylvia:** I’m so glad you could come, I’m just sorry we couldn’t come to pick you up from the airport.

**Janice:** Well, if Douglas isn’t well...(looking around)...where is he by the way ?

**Sylvia:** Um...he's in bed...but that's not exactly why he...

(Bruce appears in the centre right doorway, struggling with two big suitcases, which he virtually throws on the floor, puffing and panting)

**Bruce:** Don't worry about me...I'm only a hernia waiting to happen... (looking around)...where's Dougie ? I thought he could've at least leant a hand with the mother-in-laws...

**Sylvia:** The what ? What's that about mum ?

**Janice:** He means...

**Bruce:** I mean the old bags...general and plural...not about your precious mother, so chillax Sylvie. So, where is he then ? He can at least stump up for the taxi fare it cost us to get here.

**Janice:** (Snapping) Bruce. They're putting us up, isn't that enough ?

**Bruce:** You know we're on a tight budget Janny.

**Janice:** Well, you'll just have to lower your amber nectar intake a bit, won't you ?

**Bruce:** Half each then, how's that ?

(The sound of the taxi beeping its horn twice is heard off)

**Janice:** Bruce, go and settle it up at once.

**Bruce:** Oh...a bit of noise might liven this sleepy hamlet up a bit...

(The downstage left door slowly opens and Douglas appears in the doorway, in his pyjamas, with his hair stuck up)

**Bruce:** Oh here he is, the patient has risen from his deathbed.

**Douglas:** The what ?

**Sylvia:** (Jumping in) So, isn't this nice, the four of us all back together again ?

**Janice:** Sorry if our arrival woke you up Douglas.

**Douglas:** Um...that's okay, it was something else actually.

**Bruce:** You don't look very crook to me Dougie.

(The sound of the taxi beeping its horn thrice is heard off)

**Douglas:** Patient ? Crook ? I don't understand.

**Janice:** Well, Sylvia said you couldn't pick us up from the airport because you'd gone to bed early.

**Douglas:** Oh yes, that's quite true.

**Sylvia:** And that's because you weren't feeling so good...(pointedly)...wasn't it ?

**Douglas:** No, it's because I always turn in early the night before a game.

**Bruce:** (Indignantly) What ? We've got a taxi here - after a flight costing an arm and a leg – because you hit the sack early ?

(The sound of the taxi beeping its horn four times is heard off)

**Janice:** Bruce...will you please go out there and pay the taxi this minute, before the whole village wakes up ?

**Bruce:** Wakes up ? You don't think anyone else – even in *this* sleepy hollow – has turned in this early do you, especially on a Friday night ?

**Douglas:** Other players in the team will have. I'm the captain and I'm certain they follow my example...on and off the pitch.

**Bruce:** So, why are you up *now* then ?

**Douglas:** (Defensively) I...um...um...came in for a drink.

**Bruce:** Right, now you're talking, I could murder one as well.

**Douglas:** That goes without saying but, obviously, I'm just getting a non-alcoholic beverage.

**Bruce:** Hang on...you came in from over there...not upstairs.

**Sylvia:** Ah, now I can exp-

(The taxi horn just blasts continuously)

**Janice:** Aagh, I can't stand it anymore...(picking up handbag)...where's my purse ?

**Bruce:** Janny...I forbid you.

**Janice:** (Picking out purse) Tough.

(Janice runs out the centre right door)

**Bruce:** Happy now ?

**Douglas:** What have *I* done ?

**Bruce:** It's more what you haven't done that's the problem. We've travelled half way round the world to visit you and you won't travel half way across the county to pick us up.

(The taxi horn stops blasting)

**Bruce:** So...(smirking)...you two not bunking up together anymore ?

**Sylvia:** No, of course not, I mean...yes...I mean, it's just that...

**Bruce:** Heh, what you two guys do – or don't do – in the bedroom is no bizzo of mine. I'm just off to the dunny.

(Bruce exits centre right. Sylvia opens her mouth to speak to Douglas)

**Bruce:** (Shouting: off) Heh Janny...at least try to haggle with the guy.

(The sound of footsteps going upstairs is heard)

**Douglas:** Why do you give him the ammunition ?

**Sylvia:** Well...what are you doing up ? You said it would be best if you didn't see them until tomorrow.

**Douglas:** If you must know...I had a very disturbing dream and couldn't get back to sleep, so I thought I'd make a drink and...

**Sylvia:** What was it about ?

**Douglas:** Oh...um...it was nothing really.

**Sylvia:** Go on...what was it about ?

**Douglas:** Again...if you must know...it was about cricket.

**Sylvia:** I might have known. I thought the whole point of you sleeping in the annexe was to get a good night's sleep ahead of a game.

**Douglas:** Yes, but you can't account for dreams, can you ? Besides, it wasn't so much about the game itself that woke me up, it was...it was...

**Sylvia:** Was *what* ?

**Douglas:** (Grimacing) It's a bit delicate.

**Janice:** (Appearing in the centre right doorway) Ooh, sounds interesting. What have I missed ?

**Douglas:** Oh, it's nothing really.

**Janice:** Don't be shy Douglas. What's delicate ?

**Douglas:** Really...it's nothing.

**Sylvia:** He's had a disturbing dream.

**Janice:** (Salaciously) Really. What about ?

**Douglas:** Cricket. That's all. Cricket.

**Janice:** (Suspiciously) Mmm. Well, we can keep asking until Bruce comes back so that he can join in.

**Douglas:** I was batting in a state of...hm-hm...undress. There, that's it.

**Janice:** Mmm. Naked dream, eh ? I believe that can mean you have feelings of...

**Douglas:** I wasn't naked. I had on my cap, my neckerchief and....my protective gear.

(Sylvia and Janice both smirk and stifle laughs)

**Douglas:** Go on, lap it up.

**Janice:** Did you at least get a good score ?

**Douglas:** Not exactly.

**Sylvia:** How many balls...(pausing)...did you face ?

(Sylvia and Janice try to stifle their laughter)

**Douglas:** Oh...I'm going back to bed.

(Douglas swivels and walks towards the downstage left door. Footsteps are heard coming back down the stairs off. Bruce re-enters as Douglas is about to exit)

**Bruce:** Ah...that's better...the lake has been drained...(to Douglas)...turning in again Dougie ?

(Douglas cringes but doesn't turn back around)

**Douglas:** That's the general idea.

**Bruce:** Good thinking, get some shuteye, we don't want to see you get out for a golden duck tomorrow.

(Douglas turns around horrified)

**Douglas:** What ?

**Bruce:** You know...out first ball, because you're so tired that you can't focus and...

**Douglas:** No no, I'm fully aware of what a golden duck is, or any other sort of duck for that matter. My somewhat shocked retort was down to you saying that you would be there...watching me get how many runs I happen to accrue.

**Bruce:** Or not.

**Douglas:** Whatever.

**Bruce:** Well, of course we'll be there. We might be jet-lagged, having flown half way around the world – then ferried in a taxi – but we wouldn't miss your big game. I might even try to grab a few hours kip myself later on, if I'm allowed...eh Janny ?

(Bruce slaps Janice heartily on her rump. She cringes and closes her eyes)

**Bruce:** But...at the moment I'm buzzing, in fact...have you got any amber nectar I could neck down ?

**Douglas:** I don't drink beer.

**Bruce:** Something stronger then ? Perhaps an old malt stashed away somewhere.

**Douglas:** (Horrified) No, that's for special occasions only.



**Bruce:** Charming.

**Douglas:** Look, about tomorrow, I'm sure it will be better for you to just lie in and wake up in your own time, nice and relaxed, and just lounge here all day until we get back and then on the night perhaps we can all...

**Bruce:** I can't think of anything more relaxing than watching cricket, can you ?

**Janice:** Hang on, did you say 'When we get back' ? Do you go as well Sylv ?

**Sylvia:** Oh yes, I do the scorekeeping and generally help out.

**Janice:** Oh well then we have to come along, to lend support.

**Bruce:** Ripper, so that's sorted, we'll all go along. I can't wait to see you at the crease Dougie me old clobber...that's sure to relax me.

(Douglas cringes then traipses off through the downstage left door, slamming it behind him)

**Janice:** Why do you do that ?

**Bruce:** Do what ?

**Janice:** Goad him. We hardly ever meet but when we do you just have to...

**Bruce:** It's only a bit of gentle ribbing, don't you think Sylvie ?

**Sylvia:** I guess...but he has been on edge a bit lately, perhaps in anticipation of your arrival.

**Bruce:** Or perhaps in anticipation of an Ashes defeat on home soil.

**Janice:** Ah, perhaps *that's* why he was batting near naked at the crease.

**Sylvia:** (Cringing) Janice.

**Janice:** Oops.

**Bruce:** What ? What have I missed ?

**Janice:** Um...um...

**Sylvia:** If you must know...that's the dream he had that woke him up.

(Bruce's face gradually crumples until he can suppress laughter no more and then just bursts out laughing)

**Janice:** (Firmly) Bruce. Bruce...it's not that funny.

**Bruce:** (Wiping tears from eyes) Are you kidding me ? Dougie in the nuddy, it's ruddy hilarious.

**Janice:** Oh...I've had enough of this...(to Sylvia)...is it all right if I go up and have a shower...then I thought I'd turn in ? Unlike some I didn't get a wink of sleep on any of the flights.

**Sylvia:** Sure, you know where everything is up there.

(As Bruce's laughter starts to subside, Janice and Sylvia smile and hug)

**Janice:** Oh...it's great to see you sis. I can't wait to catch up properly, there's so much to talk about.

**Sylvia:** I know. Same here.

(The women pull apart then Janice looks disdainfully at Bruce, who is now just occasionally chortling)

**Janice:** And *you* bring those cases up when I'm in the shower, I need stuff out of them.

**Bruce:** Yes boss.

(Janice exits centre right and as her footsteps are heard going upstairs Sylvia looks at the now virtually calmed down Bruce)

**Sylvia:** If you still want that drink I did put some cans in the fridge earlier.

**Bruce:** Only if you'll join me Sylvie.

**Sylvia:** Yes, I could do with one actually.

(Sylvia exits centre right. Bruce then hurriedly pulls a breath spray from out of his pocket, from which he sprays two puffs into his mouth. He then pulls out his shirt, sniffs inside then sprays a few puffs under each armpit. He then looks at his trousers but shakes his head then puts the spray away. He then starts sprucing his hair up in the mirror. Sylvia re-appears carrying a can of lager and a shorts glass and he hurriedly stops his preening to look as natural as possible. She hands him the can then walks towards the sofa)

**Sylvia:** So...(slumping into sofa)...have you got tickets for the Series ?

**Bruce:** Yeah...(opening can)...I got time at Lord's...and because our flights back are open-ended...if we stay longer I might try for The Oval as I got mates there, although I'm sure we'll have clinched the urn by then.

**Sylvia:** Well, like I messaged Jan...you're welcome to stay as long as you want.

(Bruce smiles and furtively approaches the back of the sofa. Sylvia starts slowly rotating her head and rubbing her neck. Bruce's eyes light up, he puts his can on the side table and walks behind Sylvia)

**Bruce:** You look tired Sylvie.

**Sylvia:** How can you say that after travelling as far as you have ?

**Bruce:** Okay, you look tense then.

**Sylvia:** Oh, you know, life with Douglas is...is...., it has its....

**Bruce:** Why don't you just relax and tell me all about it ?

(Bruce tentatively puts his hands on her shoulders and as she doesn't object he starts kneading away. Sylvia closes her eyes)

**Sylvia:** I just wonder how different it would be if we'd been able to have had kids, to give us a joint focus.

**Bruce:** Yeah...but there has to be something between you, you know...for when the kids are growing up, and particularly when they've left...

**Sylvia:** Well, you and Jan have got that, haven't you ?

(Bruce stops massaging Sylvia. She then turns around to look at him)

**Sylvia:** Bruce ? You do, don't you ?

**Bruce:** I don't know Sylvie, I just think she might be having an affair...or something.

**Sylvia:** What ? My sister unfaithful ? Never.

**Bruce:** Now, don't go jumping the gun Sylvie...I only said I *thought* she *might* be having an affair.

**Sylvia:** What proof have you got ?

**Bruce:** It's just that I went on the PC at home after her, she was still logged in but I had to print off an invoice...I mucked up my copying and pasting and just pasted into it what had been copied last. It said something like..."I can't wait to see you"...and..."I think about you all the time", you know...sappy stuff like that.

**Sylvia:** But...might one of the kids have...?

**Bruce:** Nah, they never use the desktop, just their lappoes. It *had* to be her Sylvie.

**Sylvia:** Oh Bruce...I'm so sorry. Do you want me to speak to her ?

**Bruce:** No no...don't worry about it Sylvie. Besides, you saw how she winced at the thought of us having carnal relations later on.

**Sylvia:** Yes, but...how can I put this...some women – if not all – don't take kindly to be treated like cattle.

**Bruce:** I know, I know I can just come out and say things, and be a bit rough around the edges, but that's just my way, I've never been any different.

**Sylvia:** (Pointedly) No.

**Bruce:** (Quickly) But that's enough about me...(resting Sylvia back in sofa)... let's get back to you... (caressing Sylvia's shoulders again)...just rest your head back and relax...(massaging again)...and take it nice and easy.

**Sylvia:** (Closing eyes) Mmm. Look at *you* massaging *me*...when you're the one who's just travelled half way around the world.

**Bruce:** Ah...you know me Sylvie, I just blast on through...and I'll guess that's what I'll have to do with this whole Janny thing.

(Sylvia's head starts writhing around)

**Bruce:** A bit like I had to when you picked Dougie all those years ago.

**Sylvia:** Mmm...(realising)...what ?

**Bruce:** Oh come on Sylvie...we both know we chose the wrong 'un.

**Sylvia:** Wh...what...where's this coming from ?

(The front doorbell rings)

**Sylvia:** God, who's that at this time ?

(Sylvia pulls free of Bruce's hands and stands up. She walks to the centre right doorway then looks back)

**Sylvia:** This conversation's not finished...(exiting centre right).

**Bruce:** (Grinning and rubbing hands together) Good.

(The sound of the front door opening off is heard followed by female voices. A rather anxious looking Lilian enters centre right, followed by a weary looking Sylvia)

**Lilian:** Where is he then ?

**Sylvia:** Like I tried to explain to you...he's already gone to bed.

**Lilian:** He's always true to his word that man. He knows how important tomorrow's game is and he's determined to prepare in the most professional way possible – ie maximum amount of slumber equals optimum performance on the field of play.

**Bruce:** Huh...in his dreams...(chuckling)...get it Sylvie ? (Picking up can and cracking it open).

**Lilian:** (Frowning) Who...is *this* ?

**Sylvia:** Oh...this is my sister's husband Bruce. No doubt Douglas told you about his imminent arrival.

**Lilian:** Oh yes, he mentioned the brother-in-law from hell was coming to stay.

**Bruce:** Did he now ?

**Lilian:** Oh yes, he tells me absolutely everything.

**Bruce:** Does he now ? Um...with whom do I have the pleasure exactly ?

**Lilian:** Huh...that's in *your* dreams Mr Muldoon. No man has ever had the pleasure with me...I can assure you.

**Bruce:** And I can completely believe that...I can assure *you*.

**Sylvia:** (Jumping in) Um...what exactly is it you want Lilian ?

**Lilian:** Well, I was in the clubhouse earlier, getting things ready for the game and I was buffing up the pegs when...

(Bruce spits out his beer)

**Lilian:** Huh, did your beer go down the wrong way Mr Muldoon ? Although from what I've heard it doesn't normally have any trouble finding its way.

**Bruce:** (Coughing) Sorry about that Lily, or do you just prefer plain old Lil ?

**Lilian:** (Sternly) It's Lilian.

**Bruce:** Right, I get the picture. So, Lil – ian...tell us about these buffed up pegs.

**Lilian:** (Sighing heavily) Well, I always spruce up the changing-room – just *ours* of course – before a game and that involves shining up the clothes' pegs. When doing this I noticed – under Sir Galahad's bench – that there was...

**Bruce:** (Spitting out beer again) What ?

**Lilian:** I can see he was also right about you being a typical Australian: common and uncouth.

**Bruce:** Heh, hang on...I want the whole Galahad thing cleared up before I come back on that slur.

**Lilian:** Well, there's nothing to clear up. His middle name is Galahad, which you obviously must know...

(Bruce looks with bemusement at Sylvia)

**Sylvia:** Well, you didn't make it over for our wedding, did you ? So, you didn't hear it in the vows – which was probably just as well – so you...

**Bruce:** Okay...but why *Sir* Galahad ?

**Lilian:** Well, because he's our captain, he stands up to our enemies and he leads from the front.

**Bruce:** Blimey...it's a cricket pitch...not a battlefield.

**Lilian:** It's not the venue that's important, it's the man's demeanour, reminiscent of Gordon, Kitchener, Montgomery...

**Bruce:** But...they're old British generals.

**Lilian:** And what's wrong with that ?

**Sylvia:** (Jumping in) Anyway Lilian...you were saying about Douglas's changing-room bench.

**Lilian:** Yes...(holding up a coin)...I found this, his lucky coin. It must've fell out of his whites last week and rolled under. He always sleeps with it under his pillow the night before a big game.

**Sylvia:** Oh, he's probably in The Land of Nod by now.

**Bruce:** (Chuckling) Huh, Land of Nud more like.

**Lilian:** What's that ?

**Sylvia:** Oh, just more down under humour. Here, I'll take it and slip it under his pillow while he...

**Lilian:** But I hear you're not even sharing the matrimonial bed, so how can you...?

**Sylvia:** Hang on. Firstly, that is only on nights before matches. And secondly, how the hell do you know that ?

**Lilian:** Well, he told me of course. We are very close, I'm his right hand woman, he's told me that.

**Sylvia:** Has he now ?

(Janice totters in through the centre right door with a towel covering her breasts down to her thighs and one around her hair. She looks with disdain at the cases and then Bruce with the can in his hand)

**Janice:** Huh, I don't believe you. *One* thing I asked you to do...just *one* thing and...(seeing Lilian)...who's *this* ?

**Bruce:** Oh...this is Lily, Dougie's right hand woman.

**Janice:** What ?

**Bruce:** Yeah, she's right behind him on the field of battle.

**Janice:** Is this right Sylv ?

**Sylvia:** Well, she does tend to look up to and admire Douglas.

**Bruce:** Admire ? She likens him to Sir Galahad.

(Bruce then starts giggling)

**Lilian:** And what, pray, is amusing *this* time Mr Muldoon ?

**Bruce:** I've just realised...it's Sir *Galah* – ad.

**Lilian:** And ?

**Bruce:** Well, galah...it's a bit of a derogatory Aussie term for someone who...

**Lilian:** Mr Muldoon, I don't think anyone from the Isle of Convicts is in any sort of position to poke fun at the colonial masters who put them there, do you ?

**Bruce:** Now, wait a minute, that's the second slur you've made about the land of my...

**Janice:** Never mind that, I'm more interested in what sort of relationship this woman has with Douglas...(quickly to Sylvia)...on your behalf of course Sylv.

**Lilian:** There is no relationship - as you seem to be implying Mrs Muldoon – between Sir...I mean Mr Jarman and myself, it is purely platonic...based on my hero-worship of him.

**Janice:** (Flustered) Oh...oh I see...and what do *you* think about this...this infatuation Sylv ?

**Sylvia:** To be honest...I'm past caring.

**Lilian:** Well, this apathy at home might explain why his form has dipped a bit of late.

(Sylvia and Janice take deep breaths and go to speak)

**Lilian:** Which is why he needs to have the maximum amount of sleep possible... with this...(holding out the coin)...under his pillow, sending lucky vibes into his head so he is one hundred percent prepared for our mortal enemy tomorrow. In fact...(going to walk down left)...it might be best if I go in there now and slip it under his slumbering head as he...

**Sylvia:** (Firmly) Like I said Lilian...(snatching coin)...I shall ensure it gets there, I promise. Now, my *invited* guests here and I have a lot of catching up to do so I would really appreciate it if you left...and got *your* sleep for the night. Yes ?

(Lilian begrudgingly skulks away towards the centre right doorway)

**Bruce:** Hang on, I haven't come up with my ripostes to the anti-Australian onslaught I've just experienced.

**Lilian:** Mr Muldoon, if the best you can counter me with is a land of sweltering heat, deadly creatures, rampant misogyny, Ned Kelly, Kerry Packer and Rupert Murdoch then I should save your breath. I bid you all good night...(stopping in doorway)...oh, and for the record Mrs Jarman...he need only say the word and I shall be there for him, appreciative of everything he says and does.

(Lilian flounces out centre right, leaving the other three dumbstruck, until the front door is heard slamming shut)

**Bruce:** Wow, that woman has what we Aussies call spunk.

**Janice:** That's as maybe...but I think she's left in no doubt that you're the boss, eh Sylv ?

**Sylvia:** (Wearily) Whatever...(putting the coin on the table).

**Janice:** Yes, I know the feeling, I'm going back up now...(prodding Bruce)...so I'd appreciate it if the cases were brought up pronto. Capiche ?

**Bruce:** Yes my sweet.

(Janice exits centre right)

**Bruce:** (Under breath) As soon as I've finished my tinny.

**Sylvia:** And I think I'll join her...(walking towards centre right doorway).

**Bruce:** Aren't you forgetting something Sylvie ?