

'Breakdown Point'

by

Troy Banyan

a comedy

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Characters

Ruth Mayer/Road Angel.....(woman in her late 50s – mid 60s)

Adolf Sproutt.....(man in early to mid 50s)

Stella Sproutt.....(woman in early to mid 50s)

Fee (Ophelia) Barnes.....(woman in 40s)

Bernice Grayson.....(woman in 30s)

Terry Tucker.....(man in 30s)

(The whole play takes place in one simple set, at the junction at the brow of a hill. There are trees on both sides of the point and bushes along the back of the set. A bench is positioned centre right)

(RUTH enters downstage right. She has a pronounced limp and looks all around her then starts reaching out in all directions, as if conducting airwaves and directing them towards the area. She then nods and sits on the bench at the intersection and reclines, as if waiting for events to unfold. In no time a bickering female and male voice is heard offstage right. RUTH gives a knowing smile)

ADOLF: (Offstage right) You silly woman, I told you to stop pedalling because we had the puncture..now the chain's snapped as well...

(ADOLF and STELLA - her pushing the front set of handlebars and him the back set on their tandem - approach the intersection from upstage right. They have rucksacks on their bikes. Rolled up and strapped to the back of the bike are camping wares and sleeping bags. The bike has a punctured front tyre and a dangling chain and because of their bickering with each other they don't see RUTH)

ADOLF: I mean..we're miles from anywhere, I can mend the puncture..but the chain...

STELLA: (Tersely) Yes, I get the picture, the broken chain is a problem...

RUTH: (Rubbing hands together excitedly) Right on cue, let the entertainment commence.

(ADOLF and STELLA push the tandem down the intersection, still unaware of RUTH, and discard their sacks)

STELLA: Besides..I didn't hear you say stop pedalling, if I had I can assure you I would have..stopped pedalling.

ADOLF: Are you saying you can't hear my voice ?

STELLA: Oh I hear your voice all right, the actual words are another matter.

ADOLF: Now what's that meant to mean ?

STELLA: (Spotting RUTH) Ssh, there's someone here.

RUTH: Good afternoon.

ADOLF: Mmm..afternoon, although I'm struggling to see what's particularly good about it I must admit.

RUTH: Had a bit of bad luck with your bike ?

ADOLF: How very astute of you.

STELLA: What my husband meant to say was yes..and then follow that up with..do you know how we could go about getting it fixed ?.

RUTH: You *do* know where you are, don't you ?

ADOLF: Yes, I'm painfully aware of the fact that we are midway between Parker's Ford and Treppington.

RUTH: No, I mean..(*spreading arms*)..what *this* place is called ?

STELLA: Now, let me think..**(to ADOLF)**..what was it you said as we strained every sinew in our ageing legs.. before you made us go over that singular shard of glass in the road ? Oh yes, I remember, it was..Will this flipping Brenshaw Hill never end ?, or words to that effect.

ADOLF: Oh yes, that's right..and that was closely followed by me saying, Okay, you win, we'll pull over here, the response to that being that you decide to pedal on and, oh yes that's right, snap the chain.

RUTH: No no no. Not the **towns**, not the **hill**, but this whole expanse of land at the summit.

(ADOLF and STELLA look perplexed at each other)

RUTH: You're at Breakdown Point. You were onto a loser from the moment you decided to start cycling up the hill towards it, on today of all days.

(As RUTH starts nodding and smiling, as if all is completely normal, ADOLF and STELLA look again at each other in bemusement)

ADOLF: Okay, well we'll just go over here and fix the puncture at least.

(ADOLF and STELLA start wheeling the tandem over towards the grass verge)

RUTH: Okay, you **try** doing that and I'll just sit here in the sun.

ADOLF: No, we're not going to **try** and fix it..we **will** fix it.

RUTH: Okay, you do what you must, you just carry on and don't worry about me here.

ADOLF: Don't worry..we won't.

(As they wheel the tandem to the grass verge STELLA pokes ADOLF in the shoulder)

STELLA: Don't goad her, she's clearly..**(whispering)**..you know.

ADOLF: What ?

STELLA: **You** know..**(contorting face)**..**special** in some way.

RUTH: You know..it's such a lovely day, that's why I decided to come here. In fact, it's so wonderful I wouldn't be at all surprised if others were to join us here..very soon.

(The sound of a car spluttering, followed by a final exhaust bang and the car dying, is heard offstage. This is followed by a few increasingly weak attempts to re-ignite the engine)

RUTH: Ah, right on cue, what a day this is turning out to be.

(The sound of car doors opening and slamming shut off is heard, but one of the doors keeps opening and shutting over and over again)

FEE: (Offstage: shouting) It's **shut** Bernice.

STELLA: She really **is** astute.

FEE: (Again shouting: offstage) Then just go up **there** out the way..while I have a look.

(The sound of the car door still opening and shutting is heard offstage)

FEE: *(Screaming: offstage)* For the last time Bernice..the door is shut, now go up there with Terry, out of my way.

TERRY: *(Shouting: offstage)* Parsnips.

(ADOLF and STELLA look confused at each other then at the smiling RUTH, who is just basking in the sun, nodding in a resigned way. Just then the mousey BERNICE and strident TERRY home into view from the downstage left part of the intersection)

TERRY: *(Seeing the others)* Hello..hello..hello..*(ticking: loudly)*..haricot beans..*(to BERNICE)*..we're not alone Berni.

(BERNICE stops in her tracks on seeing the other three then starts nervously wringing her hands together)

TERRY: It's okay, they look friendly. You are..aren't you ?

(STELLA looks at the other two then takes it upon herself to respond)

STELLA: Well, I'm quite sure that we...

TERRY: *(Ticking)* Curly kale..*(louder)*..Cabbage !

(ADOLF steps forward in a show of masculine exertion)

ADOLF: Now look here, you can't just come up here..shouting the odds.

BERNICE: He's not shouting the odds sir, he's..um..got a problem.

ADOLF: *Has* he now ? *(Putting arm across STELLA)* Leave this to me Stella.

STELLA: Leave *what* to you ?

RUTH: *(Excitably)* Ooh-ooh, the ingredients are coming thick and fast, it almost never happens this quick.

ADOLF: *(To RUTH)* Excuse me..*(pointedly)*..madam, but just what is your angle exactly ?

RUTH: No angle, I'm just a receptacle.

ADOLF: You lot are all mad..*(walking to the bike)*..come on Stella, let's get this bike fixed and get out of here.

STELLA: I'm having a rest anyway, you fix it all and give me a shout when it's done.

(ADOLF huffs and storms over to the tandem where he angrily tips it upside down then kneels by it to start working on it. STELLA moves towards RUTH)

STELLA: So..um..?

RUTH: Ruth. The name's Ruth.

STELLA: Oh, I'm Stella by the way..and that grouch over there is my husband...

(ADOLF goes to speak but FEE enters from downstage left, trying unsuccessfully to call out on her mobile phone)

FEE: *(Announcing fatalistically)* Well, as the Germans would say, Es ist kaputt !..and so's this phone.. there's no signal, there's no tone...

RUTH: *(Impishly under her breath)* And there's no chance...

FEE: So, what am I missing here ?

STELLA: Ah yes, we were just about to do introductions.

ADOLF: Oh, I don't think there's any need for that...

STELLA: Why not ? We could all be here for a long time. Right, I'm Stella Sproutt..and this man here is my husband..Adolf.

(There is a stunned silence from the rest. ADOLF then wearily climbs to his feet and sighs heavily)

ADOLF: (To STELLA) You *had* to, didn't you ? Now I'm going to have to – for the ten thousandth time in my life – explain it away..*(announcing)*..yes, you heard right, my name is Adolf Sproutt. My father, in his infinite wisdom – and total inebriation – when registering my birth decided to give me a forename that he thought would detract from my surname, to lessen the chance of bullying when young: that plan didn't work out at all well.

STELLA: But he resolutely decided against getting it changed by deed poll, either name, hence ensuring that I've carried his burden around during our married life.

ADOLF: I don't see why I should change anything that isn't my fault.

(STELLA rolls her eyes on hearing this and nods in resignation)

ADOLF: Besides..there are two t's in Sproutt.

TERRY: (Ticcing) Sprouts..*(ticcing again:loudly)*..Brussels sprouts.

ADOLF: Now look here, I've had just about enough of these outbursts.

FEE: Um..please let me explain about Terry...

ADOLF: Well..all right, but just know that I've got a short fuse.

STELLA: What my husband means is..please, go ahead.

FEE: Thanks. Well, Terry here has Tourette's...

TERRY: Tourette's *Syndrome*..to be precise..*(ticcing)*..ugly fruit, really ugly.

FEE: My name's Ophelia Barnes and I...

TERRY: (Ticcing) Banana..*(loudly)*..Banana Barnes.

FEE: Yes, Fee for short, now...how would I describe myself ? I guess I'm a chaperone – for want of a better word – To Terry here..and Bernice.

BERNICE: Yes, Bernice, that's me.

FEE: And Berni here has what is known as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, or OCD.

ADOLF: Huh.

(ADOLF walks back towards the tandem whilst the others all look at each other. STELLA fidgets awkwardly)

FEE: Oh, was it something I said ?

STELLA: Um..if I could just intercede yet again on behalf of my husband: he's what one might call.. *(air-quotting)*..old school..in that he likes things to be as they were..and this particularly applies to modern day so-called ailments and illnesses etcetera.

ADOLF: Disorders and syndromes to be precise.

FEE: Now look here Adolf..that is such a sweeping statement...

(RUTH jumps up and, spreading her arms wide, she starts summoning in from all directions then starts whirling her body around and making moaning sounds. All the others watch on dumbfounded)

RUTH: *(Singing out)* Oh spirits come to Breakdown Point

And on these people so annoint

For they have all just gone astray

And now they need to know the way.

(There is a bolt of lightning that makes everyone but RUTH shudder. BERNICE jumps and TERRY comforts her. RUTH then hobbles around in a circle, with her bad foot as her pivot, pointing to everyone in turn)

RUTH: *(To STELLA)* One..*(to FEE)*..two..*(to TERRY)*..three..*(to BERNICE)*..four, and finally...

(Before RUTH can point to ADOLF the clap of thunder comes and RUTH screams out)

RUTH: *(To Adolf)* It's **you**. The circle could not be completed before I got to **you**.

(RUTH then collapses onto the bench as if spent and looks like she's in a trance. STELLA turns slowly and looks derisively at ADOLF)

STELLA: It had to be you, didn't it ?

ADOLF: What did **I** do ?

STELLA: It doesn't matter if you did or didn't do anything, you heard what she said..it was **you**.

ADOLF: But, but..it's just the rantings of a mad woman.

FEE: Sounded like she knew her stuff to me.

BERNICE: *(Panicking)* Oh no, I don't like it, things aren't how they should be, not in the right place, where's my bag ? *(Hyperventilating)* My bag, where is it ?

TERRY: Bag..bag of potatoes..where's her bag ? Bag..bag of peaches..*(ticking)*..peaches, potatoes, punnet.. punnet of strawberries.

(FEE goes to BERNICE and TERRY and soothes the backs of their necks)

FEE: It's okay, it's okay, it's o..o..o..o..k..k..ay..ay.

(BERNICE and TERRY calm right down. ADOLF storms over to the bench and taps the prostrate RUTH firmly on the shoulder)

ADOLF: Excuse me madam but I must demand an explanation as to your recent behaviour.

(RUTH shakes herself out of her stupor and looks hazily at ADOLF, then looks at him in a different way)

RUTH: Your mother's here Mr Sproutt.

ADOLF: Wh..what ?

RUTH: What's that Mrs Sproutt ? *(pausing)* She says..Dolfo..don't keep hating your dad so because of your name.

STELLA: Who's Dolfo ?

ADOLF: It's..it's the name my mum used to call me when I was young..*(to RUTH)*..but...why did he christen me Adolf ?

RUTH: She says he meant well but his logic was a bit awry.

ADOLF: What logic for God's sake ?

RUTH: She says he thought that if you had been a John, or Bill, or Dave..all the emphasis would have been on the Sproutt. This way things got dissipated so the jokes were spread about a bit. Variety is the spice of life after all.

ADOLF: Yes yes, I know all that but...

STELLA: Never mind *him*..what about *me* ? Ask her why I had to suffer as well.

RUTH: She says you *knew* what his name was when you married him.

STELLA: Yes..but..I..I...

RUTH: She's drifting away.

ADOLF: No mum, don't go..Stella didn't mean it..you know how she is.

RUTH: It's too late, the mists are closing in.

ADOLF: But mum..I've got so many questions, the main ones being..why now..and why through this..this fruitcake ?

RUTH: She's gone but she wants you to listen to the things I say and to confront your feelings, no matter how painful they might be.

ADOLF: Huh, it's nothing short of megalomaniacal blackmail.

(Everyone looks askance at ADOLF, who then quickly starts on at STELLA)

ADOLF: Anyway, are you happy now ?

STELLA: What did I do.. Dolfo ?

ADOLF: Things were going fine before you butted in and asked about yourself.

(The clap of thunder then arrives. BERNICE shivers and FEE immediately comforts her)

ADOLF: And there it is, right on cue, no doubt my fault again.

(RUTH comes out of her trance with a start)

RUTH: Ah, sorry about that, I'm very affected by nature and its many manifestations.

ADOLF: Never mind all that you..you crazy crackpot, tell me what my dearly departed mother is doing inside of you.

RUTH: Oooh, someone came through did they ? I'm afraid I have no choice over my visitors..and I *did* tell you this was a very receptive area, where things happen.

ADOLF: Oh, I give up.

(ADOLF storms over to the tandem and starts feeling around the tyre, looking to prise it off. STELLA sidles closer to RUTH)

STELLA: Okay, he's off in a sulk. Now Ruth..you *are* Ruth now, aren't you ?

RUTH: I'm always Ruth, let's just say that some days I'm a homeowner and some a tenant, but on others – like today – I'm a landlady with lodgers coming and going...

STELLA: O-kay. Can I just ask something ? It was something you – or rather the deceased Mrs Sproutt - said right at the end, about my dear husband having to confront his feelings..no matter how painful.

RUTH: As I said earlier Mrs Sproutt..I am a receptacle, a conduit: it is not for me to interpret..merely to receive and pass on.

STELLA: What ?

RUTH: Let's just say that..whilst a landlady allows lodgers to stay..she can't be responsible for their actions, and sometimes she has to withhold a deposit. I'm guessing, however, that, perhaps, there's healing that needs to be done..and as you're at Breakdown Point, now, today of all days, at this moment in time, this is when amends can..and perhaps need..to be made.

STELLA: Mmm.

(STELLA looks across at ADOLF but can't bring herself to join him, so she peels away downstage right and looks at some flora)

BERNICE: *(Wringing hands)* I'm worried Fee, I don't like it here. I don't want...things revealed to me.

FEE: It's okay Berni, I'm sure Ruth here won't allow any of your demons to put in an appearance.

RUTH: Ooo..I'm sorry..that sort of guarantee isn't mine to make. When a ladle is hanging up in a kitchen does it have a choice whether it's used by the chef or not ?

(FEE looks perplexed by the response then decides to try something out with RUTH, sitting beside her)

FEE: Um..Ruth, you know..I'm not like old Adolf over there, I buy into all that stuff you said...

RUTH: What stuff's that exactly ?

FEE: You know, spirits, vibrations etcetera. I want to know more.

BERNICE: I don't want to hear this..**(putting fingers in ears and singing)**..la la la la la...

(TERRY jumps in and puts his arm around BERNICE, who covers into him)

TERRY: I'm with Berni, besides we must get that car started, I feel like a ticking time bomb..ticking. ..**(ticking)**..ticking..**(ticking)**..on the edge of a perilous precipice..and we wouldn't want me to go off, would we ? **(ticking and shouting)** Walnuts.

(Everyone looks at TERRY)

TERRY: Cracking walnuts Gromit.

RUTH: Can I ask..what is this conference about that you need to get to ?

FEE: It's where people with disorders and syndromes meet up, listen to speakers and generally try to unwind, well..as much as that is possible of course.

STELLA: It sounds great, can normal people go there as well ?

FEE: **(Shocked)** Mrs Sproutt.

STELLA: Yes, I know it sounds bad but even normal, married people like me need a break..and I mean..**(nodding meaningfully at ADOLF)**..a proper break.

(Everyone stares at STELLA and even RUTH is taken aback. STELLA looks at them all surprised then the penny drops as to how she's been talking and she covers her mouth)

STELLA: Oh my God, how dare I refer to you as...? Refer to us as... God..I am so sorry..I..I...

ADOLF: Don't apologise Stella..these people can't have it both ways, they're either..normal, or they're not, it's as simple as that.

STELLA: Shuttup Adolf.

FEE: No, let him carry on..I want to know what he means by that. Get it out in the open, once and for all.

ADOLF: Well, syndromes, disorders, they never existed in my day.

FEE: I'm still not with you.

ADOLF: I'm just saying..people get what they want to get, cloth gets cut accordingly. If there's a way to circumvent living a normal life..something will be found.

STELLA: Please excuse my husband, he...

RUTH: No, don't excuse him. It's vital to get everything out, out into the wide open. This is more than I..or any of us for that matter..could hope for.

ADOLF: Again..**(pointedly to RUTH)**..I'll ask you what..**exactly**..are you a receptacle of..or for ?

RUTH: You, all of you..because you're all powerless. Your modes of transport have conspired to fail you..at this time, on this date, at this place. Let your feelings flow, don't suppress them.

ADOLF: Madam – and I use the term loosely – I've had just about enough of your..

(RUTH goes off into a trance again)

RUTH: Ssh, I'm being visited again, this time by a Mr Walter Grayson.

BERNICE: Aagh, my father..**(getting aerated)**..where's my bag ?

RUTH: Your father says that his little birdy doesn't need the bag, she never has, it's just a crutch.

FEE: Who's birdy ?

BERNICE: It's how my name used to sound if you had a cold, so it became his pet name for me.

STELLA: *(Under breath)* It's still not as bad as Dolfo.

BERNICE: Has..has he got a message for me ?

RUTH: Yes, yes he has..**(pausing)**..you can only get things **so** clean, so why keep scrubbing ?

BERNICE: Is..that it ?

RUTH: No, also..turning a light switch on and off for hours on end will only lead to electrical damage.

BERNICE: Is he saying anything **not** to do with my OCD ?

RUTH: Yes, try to stop worrying about everything and allow yourself to get on with your life.

BERNICE: But..that's easier said than done.

RUTH: He says he knows, but it's the best he can offer you. What do you expect from someone who's been dead five years ?

BERNICE: I'm sorry father..if I contributed in any way to your..your..**(getting upset)**.

RUTH: He's sorry too, if he drove you to be like this..and for never saying he was proud of you, or that he loved you.

BERNICE: Father ? Dad ?

RUTH: He's going, he's going, he's gone.

ADOLF: Was he an auctioneer ?

BERNICE: I'm worried Fee.

FEE: Aw, don't be Berni. It's good that you've had this unexpected chance to hear from him..and put a few demons to rest.

BERNICE: It's not that. I can't remember closing the car door. Did I leave it open Fee ?

FEE: *(Sighing)* No, I don't think you did.

BERNICE: Are you sure ?

FEE: *(Snapping)* Yes, and even if you did..what difference would it make if it's conked out ?

(There is an embarrassing silence which RUTH decides to break)

RUTH: Why not unburden *yourself* Ophelia ?

FEE: Oh, I don't know about that, I'm not sure I really want to..go there.

TERRY: *(Ticcing gently)* Go on Fee..*(holding FEE'S shoulder)*..pomegranates..*(nodding reassuringly)*..
pomegranates.

FEE: Well, if I'm honest, my home life is a mess, my husband and kids just take me for granted and when I lost my job Bill just said, Oh, we don't need the money, you just stay at home, keep the house clean, tend the kids, have my meals ready..etcetera..etcetera. He..all of them..just made me feel so worthless, like a slave but not in manacles.

TERRY: *(Ticcing and squeezing FEE'S shoulder)* Mandarins, marrows, mangoes...

FEE: Anyway, around that time my mum died and I'm as sure as I can be that she came to me..whether it was in a dream..or as a ghost..and said..don't live for everyone else..do something for *you*, make a difference in *your* life..don't live for others.

BERNICE: *(Wringing hands)* What happened then Fee ?

FEE: That night I saw a documentary about people with conditions that stopped them doing things, so it just seemed like fate that I had to get involved, helping them at the same time as helping myself.

RUTH: And the very meaning of your name is..help.

FEE: The problem is..*(looking warily at BERNICE and TERRY)*..I..um..*(steeling herself)*..I love you guys..but..I..

BERNICE: Say it Fee.

FEE: You get on my nerves. I'm not like Adolf mind, I'm not doubting your conditions. It's just that..sometimes..on days where I'm with you both - all the time - I feel like I could..well..gladly throttle the pair of you. It's the bickering, nothing else, it's just too much like being at home. But..that's only occasionally, most days I love being with you..more than with my family sometimes..and I truly know I've made the right decision and am doing the right thing. After all, we do only live once...

RUTH: Well...

(STELLA releases all her pent up emotions and starts crying loudly. ADOLF looks over but can't bring himself to go and comfort her. Instead he carries on trying to fix the bike. Noticing this, FEE walks over to her – followed gingerly by BERNICE then TERRY – and give her solace. Just then there is a lightning flash and RUTH jumps up with her arms up and out. This is followed quickly by a thunder clap)

RUTH: Never before have the spirits been so delectably aligned. You must feel privileged, anxious, excited and scared, all in equal measure. Things will happen here in the coming minutes which will mean that lives will never be the same again. I have lived - and died - for this moment.

(RUTH screams out, runs around the crossroads with her arms sill up and out before exiting downstage left)

FEE: Ah well, I'd better do as my name suggests and see if she needs help.

(FEE runs off after RUTH downstage left)

ADOLF: *(Calling after)* Oh, she needs help all right..but not the sort **you** can give her..*(turning to STELLA: glibly)*..glad you befriended her now ?

STELLA: Oh...get back to your repairs.

ADOLF: I will..but why don't you – you know – try to keep a lid on things, you're showing yourself up.

STELLA: I'm showing **you** up you mean.

(ADOLF shrugs then ambles back to the bike. STELLA looks around the area)

STELLA: Huh, life will never be the same again, if only I could take her word for that.

BERNICE: Me too. I would give the world to be normal, to not give a damn..*(coyly)*..pardon my French..about routines..and germs..and, well, everything in my self-imposed prison.

TERRY: Same here..*(ticking)*..savoy..*(to BERNICE)*..at least your condition serves some sort of..*(ticking)*...satsuma..purpose. Without them..there'd be no..*(ticking sadly)*..swede..in your life.

(BERNICE holds TERRY'S hand as he sadly looks on)

BERNICE: It's all right Terry..*(squeezing his hand)*..we'll look out for each other. We might be a right pair..and we might not get to the conference...

TERRY: *(Ticking)* Conference pear.

(BERNICE'S and TERRY'S heads move closer and tenderly touch. ADOLF looks over with a smirk)

ADOLF: Actually that's a good one, your funniest yet.

BERNICE: He's not saying these things to be funny Mr Sproutt, are you Terry ?

ADOLF: Whether he is or whether he isn't he's starting to make me feel really hungry. Just think..if he eats as nutritiously as he curses he should be the healthiest man alive.

BERNICE: He's not cursing per se, he's..supplementing..for want of a better word. Aren't you ?

(TERRY smiles and gives BERNICE a hug)

STELLA: Aw, that's so sweet, how long have you two been a couple ?

(BERNICE looks away coyly and TERRY starts ticcig, but silently)

STELLA: Oh, have I put my foot in it again ?

ADOLF: Yes, the same one that pushed down on the pedal, no doubt.

(RUTH runs back on stage upstage left, still with her arms outstretched. FEE follows her somewhat breathlessly)

RUTH: This is it. The moment has arrived, quick..come form the circle.

(BERNICE and TERRY hold hands then FEE holds TERRY'S other hand. STELLA links BERNICE to RUTH then stares daggers at ADOLF to join the fold)

ADOLF: No way, I've had enough madness for one day.

STELLA: *(Growling)* Come on.

ADOLF: All right, if you say so..*(walking over)*..but I want you to know I do so under duress..and it's just to keep you quiet.

(STELLA nods at the gap between RUTH and FEE and ADOLF reluctantly fits into it, joining hands with them. No sooner does he do so RUTH slips out so that ADOLF joins hands with STELLA instead. With the other five now in a joined circle RUTH stands in the middle of it)

RUTH: I'm not in the ring..I'm the ring *leader*, the spirit *summoner*, the dream *maker*...

ADOLF: *(Under breath)* The complete nutter.

(STELLA grabs ADOLF's hand hard and he winces. RUTH then goes into a trance and starts making a high-pitched humming noise which makes the others grimace but they keep their hands joined instead of covering their ears. RUTH's eyes then open wide and she starts singing out)

RUTH: Spirits, please come and join us

Up here, on Brenshaw Hill

We shall have the best of times

We will, we will, we will

Ley-lines throb, vibrations pulse

Swirling clouds 'cross blue skies leap

And this mesmeric, concocted brew

Will send all of my guests to sleep

(After RUTH's crescendo final line there is a flash and a bang, the circle of five fall to the floor and everything goes dark. After a few seconds the light returns, the five are still on the ground but RUTH has disappeared from the stage. The five then all start coming around at roughly the same time)

FEE: My God, it's The Midwich Cuckoos.

ADOLF: What ?

FEE: The book by John Wyndham, made into a film called 'The Village of the Damned'. Everyone passed out at the same time..and when they came around...

BERNICE: *(Nervously)* What Fee ? What happened ?

FEE: Um..the women in the village were..you know..with child.

(BERNICE screams out)

TERRY: *(Ticking)* Babies. Baby tomatoes. Baby potatoes.