

# PLAYING MATHILDE

by

Philip Ayckbourn

---

## Characters

**Harold Carter** – mid-forties

**Nina Carter** – fifteen

**Tommy Robbins** – sixteen

**V.O. Madame Lapierre** – twenty-seven

*Place* – The living room in the Carter residence.

*Time* – A weekday. 8.00 p.m.

*The SR exit leads to the kitchen and front door and the SL exit leads to the remainder of the house.*

*The significant furniture in the living room is a sofa, an armchair and a coffee table. There is a music player SR and near to the SR exit a coat stand, upon which hang a raincoat and trilby hat. Nina's old stuffed doll, 'Mandy', sits prominently in the room and the significant picture (framed photo) is that of Veronica (Harold's late wife and Nina's mother). Other objects in and about the room are: a large potted plant, CD's by the music player, a remote control, a house phone, Harold's wallet, car keys, house keys and mobile phone. There is a wall mirror in the room and a window looks out to the outside of the property.*

*Lights up. Nina is sitting on the sofa reviewing her school exercise books. She is dressed casually in jogging bottoms, casual top and slippers.*

**Nina** French – boring! Mathematics – boring! English – boring! German – excruciatingly boring! Why can't I just do Art? I'm an artist. All I want to do is paint, can't they understand that? Why do I have to study these other boring, boring subjects?

*Harold enters SL. He is dressed smartly.*

**Harold** Because you're fifteen years old and you have some very important exams coming up, young lady.

**Nina** I hate exams.

**Harold** We all hated exams but we all had to do them and, like me, I expect you to get A A A A A in every subject.

**Nina** I will not.

**Harold** Yes you will. I'm responsible for you and, as a father, I have a duty to see that you complete your education to the highest standard and to give you the best possible start in life. I'm serious.

**Nina** I know.

**Harold** Look, Nina, have you seen my old school tie? I had it, but now I can't find it anywhere.

**Nina** Is it red with green stripes?

**Harold** Yes.

*Nina plucks Harold's tie from his pocket.*

Oh, yes, right. And your room is an absolute mess, I want

**Nina** you to tidy it before Madame Lapierre arrives tomorrow.  
**Nina** Isn't that her job as an au pair, to tidy my room? Isn't that what you're paying her for?

**Harold** No, your room is your own responsibility.

**Nina** I still don't understand why we need an au pair, none of my friends have au pairs.

**Harold** I've told you, I need some help in the house here now, now you're concentrating on your studies. And it will be beneficial for your French too. It will be good for me too to have some... company again.

**Nina** Dad!

**Harold** It's been two years now. I can't grieve forever, can I? I think I'm ready to enjoy the charms of a woman once more.

**Nina** No, Dad. Anyway, Madame Lapierre is too young for you.

**Harold** She's twenty-seven years old.

**Nina** Exactly, she's too young for you. You're forty-four. You're too old, Dad. Sorry.

**Harold** Nonsense. Women love the mature man. Besides without my glasses I could pass for thirty-nine.

*Harold removes his glasses.*

**Nina** Yes, but you can't see without your glasses.

**Harold** Of course I can.

**Nina** Catch.

*Nina throws an exercise book in Harold's direction. Harold misses the catch.*

See.

**Harold** You took me by surprise. Do it again.

**Nina** No. All right then, if you can have a young woman about the house, it's only fair that I can see more of Tommy.

**Harold** No. I've said you can see him Saturdays until nine o'clock.

**Nina** But –

**Harold** While you're studying. Which I think is very lenient of me.

**Nina** But, Dad –

**Harold** No arguments.

**Nina** I –

**Harold** That's final. Okay, I think I'm just about ready. How do I look?

**Nina** Your tie's crooked.

*Nina adjusts Harold's tie.*

**Harold** An old school reunion. It's been a long time. Everyone will have changed, including me. It will be very strange.

**Nina** Yes. That's better. So you'll pick her up in the morning then on your way back?

**Harold** Yes. I hope I remember some of my old school French. It's a bit rusty.

*Nina has gathered Harold's belongings. She passes them to him.*

**Nina** Portefeuille. (*Wallet*)

**Harold** Portefeuille.

**Nina** Les clefs de la voiture. (*Car keys*)

**Harold** Les clefs de la voiture.

**Nina** Portable. (*Mobile phone*)

**Harold** Portable.

**Nina** Les clefs de la maison. (*House keys*)

**Harold** Les clefs de la maison. Right.  
**Nina** Now, don't drink too much and don't smoke any big cigars. You know they make you ill.  
**Harold** Yes, yes, yes. Study, no television and don't be late for school tomorrow.  
**Nina** I won't.  
**Harold** Well, that's me, I'm ready. Here I go.  
**Nina** A bientôt, monsieur. Bon chance.  
**Harold** Precisely. Wish me luck.  
**Nina** Good luck, Dad.

*Harold exits SR. Nina watches at the window. There is the sound of car starting up. Car horn. Nina waves.*

Bye, Dad.

*Sound of car pulling away.*

Party!

*She picks up the remote control and turns on some upbeat music. She removes her jogging outfit to reveal a short skirt and top underneath. She puts her exercise books under the sofa, gathers her clothes and exits SL. After a moment she enters putting on shoes. She texts a message on her mobile and then goes to the mirror and applies make-up. Tommy enters SR. He is dressed casually and carries a sports bag. Nina turns off the music.*

**Tommy** You're sure he's not coming back tonight?  
**Nina** No, not until tomorrow, don't worry.  
**Tommy** Good.

*Tommy holds out a bottle.*

**Nina** What is it?  
**Tommy** Whisky.  
**Nina** Whisky!  
**Tommy** Yes. We need glasses.  
**Nina** Okay, I'll get a couple.

*Nina exits SR. Tommy removes the bottle top and sniffs the contents.*

**Tommy** Ah.

*He checks himself in the mirror. Nina enters with glasses. Tommy pours.*

**Nina** Cheers.  
**Tommy** Cheers. Oh.  
**Nina** You like that?  
**Tommy** I think so.  
**Nina** Come here.  
**Tommy** What?

*Tommy attempts to kiss Nina. She pulls away.*

**Tommy** What? Your dad's gone, hasn't he?  
**Nina** I know. Let's just enjoy the freedom.  
**Tommy** Yeah.

*Tommy attempts to kiss her again.*

**Nina** Let's talk.  
**Tommy** Talk?  
**Nina** Conversation, you know.  
**Tommy** Okay.

*Slight pause.*

**Nina** Hello, Mandy. How's Mandy?  
**Tommy** Mandy's very well.  
**Nina** *(In Mandy voice)* Hello, Mandy.  
**Tommy** *(In Mandy voice)* Hello, Tommy.  
**Tommy** *(In Mandy voice)* Hello.

*Slight pause.*

**Nina** I've got an au pair coming tomorrow, a genuine French au pair. Her name's Madame Lapierre. Mathilde.  
**Tommy** Why?  
**Nina** To help with the housework and with my French apparently.  
**Tommy** But you're good at French.  
**Nina** I know, but Dad thinks I could be better.

*Slight pause.*

**Tommy** Here, do you want to see my new knife?  
**Nina** Knife!  
**Tommy** I got it today.

*Tommy takes the knife from his bag and removes the sheath.*

What do you think?

**Nina** *(Sarcastically)* It's lovely, Tommy. Why do you need a knife?  
**Tommy** Hunting.  
**Nina** Hunting! Hunting what?  
**Tommy** Rabbits.  
**Nina** Rabbits!  
**Tommy** Fish. You never know when you might need one.  
**Nina** I'm sorry, Tommy, but I don't find knives very beautiful.

*Tommy puts the knife away.*

**Tommy** Hey, I know a good game.  
**Nina** What?  
**Tommy** Okay, what you have to do is this. You stand on one leg, right. You put the other leg like this. *(Foot on side of knee)* Then you take a drink, close your eyes, put your arms out like this. The first to lose their balance and put their foot down loses. Which means you have to drink again.  
**Nina** I don't like drinking games.  
**Tommy** That's only because you know you'd lose.  
**Nina** No.  
**Tommy** Yes.  
**Nina** No, I'd win.  
**Tommy** You'd lose.  
**Nina** I'll win.  
**Tommy** You'll lose. Lose, lose, lose, lose, lose.  
**Nina** Okay then. After three.  
**Tommy** After three.

*They both get into position.*

**Both** One, two, three. Drink.

*They drink. After a few moments Tommy loses his balance.*

**Nina** Yes, I win.

**Tommy** You had your eyes open. You cheated.

**Nina** No I didn't. You lost. Drink, drink, drink, drink, drink.

**Tommy** All right, I'll drink, I'll drink.

*Tommy drinks.*

**Nina** Champion!

**Tommy** Best of three.

**Nina** All right.

*House telephone rings.*

**Tommy** That's probably Dad. Okay, you're not here, okay?

**Tommy** I'm not here.

**Nina** No sound. Right?

**Tommy** Right.

**Nina** Shhh!

**Tommy** Shhh!

**Nina** Shhh!

*Nina answers.*

*(To phone)* Hello, Dad... Yes I'm fine. Is something wrong?... Ah, that's nice. Where are you?

*Tommy pulls a face.*

Yes, everything's fine, fine, quiet...

*Nina hits Tommy.*

No, I'm not watching TV, I'm studying.

*Tommy belches. Nina covers the phone.*

*(To Tommy)* I'm warning you. *(To phone)* What Dad? That noise. It's the cat. The cat from next door. I let it in. It wanted some food, so I fed it.

*Tommy impersonates a cat.*

I think it's just been sick... Yes, I'll clean it up.

*Tommy scratches at Nina's legs. She steps on his fingers. Tommy squeals.*

Yes, it's that cat again. I just stood on his tail by accident... Yes, okay, Dad, don't worry... No... No.... All right, have fun. Bye.

*Nina hangs up.*

I'll kill you! You were supposed to be quiet. You promised.

**Tommy** I'm sorry.

**Nina** No you're not. You can be so annoying.

**Tommy** I am, honestly.

*Tommy picks up Mandy.*

**Nina** *(In Mandy voice)* Honestly. I am.  
Give me that.

*Nina snatches Mandy from Tommy and sits sulking. Pause.  
Tommy throws a cushion at Nina playfully. Nina throws it back.  
Tommy throws it again.*

Oi!

*Pause.*

**Tommy** Nina...?

**Nina** What?

*Slight pause.*

**Tommy** What?  
I was thinking... tonight... now we're alone... that you  
might want to... you know... tonight.

**Nina** No, Tommy... not tonight. After the exams. Promise.

*Slight pause.*

**Tommy** Let's go out then.  
**Nina** I can't. Dad might call again.

*Tommy investigates the CD collection.*

**Tommy** There's nothing there. That's just Dad's old rubbish. I'll  
go get some of mine.  
Wait, this is a good one.

**Nina** What is it?  
**Tommy** An old classic.

*Tommy puts on CD. He mimes along.*

**Nina** You're mad, Tommy.

*Tommy falls to his knees and seizes Nina about the waist.*

Tommy! Let go! You're crazy. Stop it. Crazy boy.  
Enough!

*She pushes him away and turns off the music.*

**Tommy** Oh, I was enjoying that.

**Nina** I wasn't. I'll get some good music.

*Nina exits SL. Tommy notices the trilby hat on the coat hook. He  
puts it on and looks in the mirror. He hums the James Bond theme  
tune.*

**Tommy** 'The name's Bond, James Bond 007'.

*He sings the beginning of 'New York, New York', in a Sinatra  
style. He puts on the coat. This suggests Humphrey Bogart.*

'Of all the gin joints in all the towns you had to step into  
this one.'

*As a gangster meeting his rival.*

'Okay Charlie, this is it'. *(As Charlie)* 'No, no, please,

don't shoot me. Please, don't shoot, please.'

*Imitating sound of a machine gun.*

'Help, help. They got me, they got me.'

*There is the sound of a car returning in the driveway. Tommy looks through window.*

Nina! Nina! NINA!

*Nina enters with her portable music player.*

**Nina** What is it?  
**Tommy** Car.  
**Nina** What?  
**Tommy** Your dad, I think he's back.  
**Nina** Dad? He can't be.

*She looks through window.*

**Tommy** Oh my God! What's he –  
I'll go.  
**Nina** No, he'll see you.  
**Tommy** The window.  
**Nina** No, he'll see you there too.  
**Tommy** What do I do?  
**Nina** Hide in my room.  
**Tommy** But...  
**Nina** Go! Hurry, Tommy! Tommy?  
**Tommy** What?  
**Nina** Your bag.

*Tommy exits SL. Nina hangs up coat and trilby. She looks at her clothes and hurriedly exits SL. She enters putting on her jogging bottoms, top and slippers. She retrieves her exercise books, sits on the sofa and opens them. Harold enters SR.*

Dad? You're back.  
**Harold** Yes.  
**Nina** But why?  
**Harold** I had a call... the hotel... there was a fire.  
**Nina** A fire in the hotel!  
**Harold** Yes, started in the kitchens apparently.  
**Nina** How terrible. But what about the reunion?  
**Harold** Postponed. Rescheduled for next Thursday.  
**Nina** Thursday, I see.  
**Harold** Oh well, looks like a quiet night in instead.  
**Nina** Yes.  
**Harold** Hard at study?  
**Nina** Oh, yes, yes.  
**Harold** Good, good.

*Harold notices the whisky bottle.*

And what's that?  
**Nina** It's German, Dad.  
**Harold** No, that!  
**Nina** Ah –  
**Harold** Are you drinking, Nina?  
**Nina** Ah – yes... just a little.  
**Harold** NINA!

*Harold takes the bottle and sniffs it.*

**Nina** It's WHISKY! You're drinking whisky, Nina.  
**Harold** A small drop, Dad, very small.  
**Harold** And who with, Nina?

*Harold holds up both glasses.*

**Nina** Ah, yes it's... it's...  
**Harold** Yes?  
**Nina** It's Madame Lapierre.  
**Harold** Madame Lapierre!  
**Nina** Yes. She's arrived.  
**Harold** Here!  
**Nina** Yes... here.  
**Harold** Madame Lapierre?  
**Nina** Madame Lapierre?  
**Harold** When?  
**Nina** Oh... just after you called me.  
**Harold** But –  
**Nina** She's arrived early.  
**Harold** Extremely early.  
**Nina** Yes.  
**Harold** An entire day early.  
**Nina** Yes... she got the... days confused. We've been talking a little... She's very nice... She brought some whisky... from France. French whisky. We've just been having a little... drink.  
**Harold** My goodness, she's... Where is she?  
**Nina** Where?  
**Harold** Yes.  
**Nina** Oh – um, upstairs... getting unpacked – and changed, Dad. Better not go up.

**Harold** Did you show her her room?  
**Nina** Yes... yes I did.  
**Harold** Good. Well well well well well, this is unexpected.  
**Nina** Yes... it is.  
**Harold** Well... I'll... I'll just put the car in the... garage and then...  
**Nina** You do that, Dad.  
**Harold** Tell me, Nina –  
**Nina** Yes?  
**Harold** What's she like? Is she...  
**Nina** Oh yes... she is.  
**Harold** (*Calling off*) Bonjour, Madame Lapierre.  
**Nina** She'll be down in a minute, Dad. The car.  
**Harold** Yes. Right.

*Harold exits SR.*

**Nina** Oh God! Oh God! (*Calling off*) Tommy! Tommy!  
Tommy, come here!

*Tommy enters SL.*

**Tommy** Has he gone?  
**Nina** No.  
**Tommy** NO!  
**Nina** No, he's putting the car away.  
**Tommy** What!  
**Nina** Listen Tommy, I've told him Madame Lapierre has arrived.  
**Tommy** Who?  
**Nina** Madame Lapierre... the French au pair... the woman who's coming here tomorrow, remember?

**Tommy** She's arrived?  
**Nina** No! Dad saw the whisky glasses. I couldn't tell him you were here, could I. So...  
**Tommy** So?  
**Nina** Tommy?  
**Tommy** Yes?  
**Nina** You will have to pretend to be her.  
**Tommy** What!  
**Nina** You can do it, Tommy. I know you can do it.  
**Tommy** Me, pretend to be –  
**Nina** You want to be an actor don't you, Tommy?  
**Tommy** Yes, but –  
**Nina** Here's your big chance.  
**Tommy** But I –  
**Nina** We've no choice. If you love me. Go upstairs to my dad's room. Look in his wardrobe – listen, Tommy.  
**Tommy** Your dad's room.  
**Nina** Yes, there're still some of Mum's old clothes in there and a wig that she used to wear. Put them on. Listen, Tommy! Then go into my room and put on some make-up. Try to be convincing.  
**Tommy** But –  
**Nina** And when you're ready, come down.  
**Tommy** I –  
**Nina** Go! Go!

*Tommy exits SL.*

Oh God!

*Nina prepares herself. Harold enters.*

**Harold** She's not come down yet?  
**Nina** Not yet, Dad.  
**Harold** You know, I'm actually a little nervous.  
**Nina** So am I – for you. It's important to make the right first impression.  
**Harold** Yes, first impressions are everything.  
**Nina** Everything.  
**Harold** You don't think she'll mind if I have a little drop of her whisky do you?  
**Nina** No, you do that, Dad. I'm sure she'll be delighted.  
**Harold** There's no label on this bottle.  
**Nina** Ah... yes, Madame Lapierre was explaining that in France the better the quality of the whisky the smaller the label. This whisky is so good apparently it doesn't need a label at all.  
**Harold** Really?  
**Nina** Yes.

*Harold pours himself a glass and drinks.*

**Harold** Yes that is good. Tell me, Nina, how does she dress, elegant and chic? I always imagine French women to be elegant and chic.  
**Nina** Well...  
**Harold** No?  
**Nina** Oh yes.  
**Harold** Skirt?  
**Nina** Er...  
**Harold** Trousers?  
**Nina** You know, Dad, it's funny, I really didn't notice.  
**Harold** Oh, that's not like you, Nina, not to notice what people are

wearing. You're always so observant when it comes to my clothes.

**Nina** Yes. I suppose I was just so taken by her face, that's all.  
**Harold** Her face?  
**Nina** Yes it's... quite... mesmerising.  
**Harold** Really?  
**Nina** Yes.  
**Harold** What about me? How do I look?  
**Nina** Good... but I'm thinking you're right, Dad, you do look younger without your glasses.

*Nina removes his glasses and slips them into his jacket pocket.*

**Harold** Yes, there we are, thirty-nine.  
**Nina** Perhaps I'll have another little glass. Just a little one.  
**Nina** Why not.

*Harold pours himself another and drinks.*

**Harold** Oh yes. *(Calling off)* Madame Lapierre. I'm trying some of your lovely French whisky. I hope you don't mind. It's very good. Madame Lapierre? Do come down.  
**Tommy** *(Off. In Madame Lapierre voice)* Coming. Just a petit moment.  
**Nina** *(To herself)* Oh God!  
**Harold** Have you been practising your French with her?  
**Nina** What?  
**Harold** Practising your French – with Madame Lapierre.  
**Nina** Oh yes... a little... but she speaks excellent English.  
**Harold** Yes, perhaps, but –

*There is a crashing noise from upstairs.*

*(Calling off)* Madame Lapierre? Are you all right? Madame Lapierre?

**Tommy** *(Off)* Oui, oui, tout va très bien... ça va... c'est juste un petit accident.

**Harold** *(Calling off)* Do you want any assistance? Is there anything I can do? *(To Nina)* Maybe I should go and see if she needs any help.

**Nina** No Dad, I'm sure Madame Lapierre can manage on her own. Relax, sit down and have another little drop of this.

**Harold** Well, all right, but just a little one. Enough! *(Practising)* Madame Lapierre, enchanté. Je m'appelle Harold Carter. Comment allez vous, madame? Très bien. Moi? Je suis très bien aussi. Grazie.

**Nina** Merci. Thank you is 'merci'.

**Harold** Yes, yes, of course. Merci.

**Nina** Otherwise it's very good *(seeing Tommy)* ... Dad.

**Harold** Je suis très bien aussi, merci. Je suis très bien aussi –

*Tommy has entered SL unseen by Harold. He is wearing an outfit of Veronica's, but no shoes. He wears Veronica's old wig and carries his bag, which Nina gestures for him to lose. Tommy throws the bag beneath a chair.*

*(Seeing Madame Lapierre)* Ah.

**Tom/Mme L.** Enjoying my whisky, monsieur?

**Harold** Madame Lapierre, I...

**Tom/Mme L.** Is something wrong, monsieur?

**Harold** No... I'm sorry I just imagined you to be – from your description –

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, monsieur?

**Harold** Shorter perhaps, more... petite.

**Tom/Mme L.** If you do not like my height, monsieur, I can go now.  
**Harold** No, please, madame, your height is perfect. So, welcome, madame to my – our humble home. You got the days confused?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Yes, monsieur, very confusing.  
**Harold** Well, no matter, you're here now.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Yes, monsieur, I am here now.  
**Harold** Well then, formal introductions. Je suis Harold Carter et cette ma... daughter?  
**Nina** Fille.  
**Harold** Fille, Nina, whom you've already met and shared a drink with. Not that I approve of your giving whisky to my daughter, Madame Lapierre. Tut tut tut.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Oh, tut tut tut to you monsieur. Nina, une belle nom et une belle fille. Congratulations, Monsieur Carter.  
**Harold** Harold, please.  
**Tom/Mme L.** 'Arold.  
**Harold** Harold.  
**Tom/Mme L.** 'Arold.  
**Harold** Ha, Ha, Harold.  
**Tom/Mme L.** 'A, 'A...  
**Nina** Dad!  
**Harold** Yes sorry. Well Mathilde – you are happy to be called Mathilde?  
**Tom/Mme L.** That is my name 'Arold... is it not?  
**Harold** Yes –  
**Tom/Mme L.** Then I am 'appy.  
**Harold** Good, well, Mathilde, enchanté. Do we kiss?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Kiss! No, monsieur, we certainly do not kiss. In France on one's first meeting one shakes hands.  
**Harold** Right.

*They shake hands.*

You have strong looking arms, Mathilde.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Oui monsieur? That is because I lift weights, monsieur.  
**Harold** Weights?  
**Tom/Mme L.** You know, monsieur, weightlifting.  
**Harold** I see, well that explains it. That perfume, that's – haven't you got something very similar to this, Nina?

*Nina sniffs.*

**Nina** Christian Dior?  
**Tom/Mme L.** I think – yes.  
**Harold** It certainly pervades the room.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Oui it is very fragrant.  
**Nina** Yes and also very expensive.  
**Harold** And you know that dress is very familiar too. I'm sure Veronica – my late wife – had something similar, didn't she, Nina?  
**Nina** Perhaps.  
**Harold** Yes, the same, I'm sure.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Ha, coincidence.  
**Harold** Yes. Ha!  
**Tom/Mme L.** Ha ha... Harold.  
**Harold** That's it. Now, Mathilde, no time like the present, I want you to have a little conversation with Nina, in French.  
**Nina** Dad!  
**Harold** Before you go to bed. Just a little one. She's very good, the best in her class – apparently.  
**Nina** No I'm not.

**Harold** Yes you are, don't be modest, Nina. But I want you to be very strict, Mathilde, and correct her on any slightest mistake.

**Tom/Mme L.** I'll do my best.

**Nina** Dad, can't it wait until tomorrow?

**Harold** Two minutes. Well, ask Mathilde a question. Go on, this is your chance to learn from a genuine French person. She's shy. Go on.

**Nina** Avez-vous fait bon voyage? (*Did you have a pleasant journey?*)

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, merci.

**Harold** (*To Nina*) More.

**Nina** Vous êtes partie d'où ce matin? (*Where did you come from today?*)

**Tom/Mme L.** Je viens ici en Angleterre aujourd'hui. (*I come here to England today.*)

**Nina** Combien de temps allez-vous rester chez nous? (*How long are you staying here with us?*)

**Tom/Mme L.** Vous avez une très jolie maison, oui. (*You have a very nice house, yes.*)

**Nina** Quel temps fait-il en France en ce moment? (*What is the weather like in France at the moment?*)

**Tom/Mme L.** Le temps en France est dix heures. (*The time in France is ten o'clock.*)

**Nina** Vous avez d'autres amis en Angleterre? (*Have you any other friends in England?*)

**Tom/Mme L.** Non, Angleterre a pas d'amis. (*No, England has no friends.*)

**Nina** Voulez-vous quelque chose à manger ou à boire? (*Would you like anything to eat or drink?*)

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, j'adore bien manger et beaucoup boire. (*Yes, I enjoy eating very much and I also like to drink.*)

**Harold** Bravo! Bravo! Excellent, Nina. Well, Mathilde, she's good isn't she, not bad. The accent perhaps...but – be honest.

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, oui, very good indeed. She made a few petit erreurs, mais très petit. And her accent is... well, c'est bon.

**Harold** (*To Nina*) Do you hear that, Nina, very encouraging.

**Nina** Very.

**Harold** I think you're going to be very good for her, Mathilde.

**Tom/Mme L.** Je pense aussi, 'Arold.

**Harold** Yes, well, Nina, time for bed.

**Nina** But, Dad, perhaps I –

**Harold** You have school tomorrow, young lady. She never wants to go to bed.

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, oui, I understand. I must go too.

**Harold** To bed, already?

**Tom/Mme L.** Non, home.

**Harold** Home, what do you mean?

**Tom/Mme L.** It's late.

**Harold** Yes, but you're staying here, with us.

**Tom/Mme L.** I am?

**Harold** Yes, of course.

**Tom/Mme L.** Ah... Well, then I must go to bed too. Do I sleep with Nina?

**Harold** No, you have your own room, the room Nina showed you to.

**Tom/Mme L.** Ah, oui. Bonsoir.

**Harold** No, wait, wait, let us have a little glass of your whisky together to celebrate your arrival.

**Tom/Mme L.** But –

**Harold** No buts, Mathilde.

**Tom/Mme L.** I mustn't.

**Harold** You must, I insist. Nina, say goodnight now to Madame

**Nina** Lapierre. En français.  
**Nina** Bonsoir, Madame Lapierre.  
**Tom/Mme L.** I –  
**Nina** A demain.  
**Tom/Mme L.** J'espere non. Qu'est ce que je fais? (*I hope not. What do I do?*)  
**Nina** Continue le jeu. Tu te débrouilles très bien. Tu es très convaincant. (*Just play along. You're doing great. You're very convincing.*)  
**Harold** Goodnight, Nina.  
**Nina** Goodnight, Dad.

*Nina gathers her books.*

**Tom/Mme L.** Bonsoir.  
Bonsoir.

*She exits SL.*

**Harold** Well.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Well, well... well  
**Harold** I hope your stay here is a happy one.  
**Tom/Mme L.** I hope so too, monsieur.  
**Harold** Yes, you are a little different to how I imagined you to be, Mathilde. But I am not disappointed, let me say that now.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Bien.  
**Harold** What about me?  
**Tom/Mme L.** You, monsieur?  
**Harold** Harold, please. Am I different to how you imagined me to be?  
**Tom/Mme L.** No, 'Arold, you are exactly the man I imagined you to be.  
**Harold** I am?

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, monsieur.  
**Harold** And how is it you feel about that, Mathilde?  
**Tom/Mme L.** I am neither happy nor sad, monsieur.  
**Harold** A diplomatic answer. You know I usually wear glasses.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Good.  
**Harold** You like a man in glasses?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Non, je deteste a man in glasses.  
**Harold** Ah. Well, it's good to have a woman in the house again – apart from Nina of course – what I mean is a – well, I think you know what I mean, Mathilde.  
**Tom/Mme L.** I do, monsieur?  
**Harold** Good. Please, please sit down, make yourself at home. After all it is your home now too, Mathilde. Top up?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Well I –

*Harold fills Tommy's glass and then his own.*

**Harold** A quality whisky if I may so, Mathilde.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Er – yes, monsieur, the best.  
**Harold** No label. Now, Mathilde, tell me all about you.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Moi?  
**Harold** Yes, I want to know everything.  
**Tom/Mme L.** There is very little to know, monsieur.  
**Harold** Surely not.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Believe me, 'Arold, practically nothing.  
**Harold** I don't believe that, Mathilde.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Trust me, monsieur.  
**Harold** You have never been married?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Non.  
**Harold** Are you single, now?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Non, monsieur.  
**Harold** I see. Is it serious?

**Tom/Mme L.** Ah...

**Harold** No?

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, it is serious.

**Harold** I see. What's his name?

**Tom/Mme L.** His name is er...

**Harold** Surely it can't be too serious if you can't remember his –

**Tom/Mme L.** Pierre. His name is Pierre.

**Harold** Is it?

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, it is. Pierre.

**Harold** I understand. You know there's a lot about you that reminds me of Veronica, Mathilde – when she was a little younger of course.

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui?

**Harold** Yes. Your hair reminds me so much of hers.

**Tom/Mme L.** I can assure you, Monsieur Carter, that my hair is all mine.

**Harold** Of course. But with that dress, you could easily be her.

**Tom/Mme L.** Perhaps I could easily be her, monsieur, but I do not wish to be her, I want to be me.

**Harold** Yes, yes, I know, I know, it's just a... well a coincidence, that's all.

**Tom/Mme L.** So you have said, monsieur. Well, well, Monsieur Carter, it is very late. I'm very tired and I must go to bed.  
Bonsoir.

**Harold** No, not just yet. Look, Mathilde, I've got some brandy, some excellent French brandy, Special Reserve. Do you like brandy, madame?

**Tom/Mme L.** I –

**Harold** Of course you do, you must, you're French. You'll love it, it's very expensive. I want you to have some.

**Tom/Mme L.** Well, I er –

**Harold** Just a little one, madame.

*Harold pats Tommy on the bottom.*

**Tom/Mme L.** Oh... monsieur!

**Harold** Now please, sit down, sit down. I'll get the brandy. Won't be a moment.

*Harold exits SR.*

**Tommy** What am I doing? This is crazy, crazy! I have to get out of here. Shoes.

*Tommy retrieves his bag. He takes out his trainers and puts them on. Nina appears SL in her dressing gown.*

**Nina** Pssst! What are you doing?

**Tommy** I'm going home.

**Nina** No, you can't do that, not yet.

**Tommy** This is stupid. Just look at me.

**Nina** I know. But you're doing brilliantly, Tommy, you're very convincing.

**Tommy** He won't let me go to bed.

**Nina** Where is he?

**Tommy** In there, getting some brandy.

**Nina** Okay, that's good.

**Tommy** Is it!

**Nina** Yes, the more Dad drinks the sooner he'll fall asleep.

**Tommy** I just want to go home.

**Nina** Shhh! Not yet. Trust me. Once he drops off, you take your things and leave.

**Tommy** He doesn't look like he's going to drop off.

**Nina** He will, he always does.

**Tommy** But what's going to happen when the real Madame Lapierre arrives tomorrow?

**Nina** Don't worry, I have a plan.

**Tommy** What?

**Nina** I'll tell you later. Kiss me.

*Nina kisses Tommy. Harold enters with two glasses of brandy.*

**Harold** Nina! What are you doing?

**Nina** Sorry Dad, I'm just giving Mathilde a final goodnight kiss.

**Harold** Bed!

**Nina** Goodnight.

*Nina makes a drinking gesture to Tommy and then exits SL. Tommy manages to kick his bag under the chair.*

**Harold** Here we are. See what you think of this one it's a –

*Harold notices Tommy's shoes.*

Are you going somewhere?

**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur? Oh... no, monsieur, my feet were cold.

**Harold** I see. A very modern style.

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui.

*Harold gives a glass to Tommy.*

**Harold** This will warm them up. It's beautifully mellow I think you'll find. Slight hint of oak. Mmm that beautiful aroma.

*Unseen by Harold, Tommy pours his brandy into the nearby potted plant.*

Lovely. Finished it already?

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, monsieur. In France, 'Arold, this is how we drink our brandy.

**Harold** Surely not.

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, monsieur. Very quickly and afterwards, whisky.

*Tommy fills up Harold's whisky glass.*

**Harold** But a good brandy is to be savoured slowly and lovingly, isn't it?

**Tom/Mme L.** This is what you English always say, monsieur.

**Harold** But surely –

**Tom/Mme L.** Do you question my authenticity, 'Arold?

**Harold** No but –

**Tom/Mme L.** Then please, drink like a Frenchman and do not offend me, monsieur.

**Harold** No no, I wouldn't want to do that. It does seem a waste.

**Tom/Mme L.** Please, monsieur.

**Harold** So as not to offend you, Mathilde.

*Harold finishes his brandy. Tommy offers Harold his whisky glass.*

**Tom/Mme L.** Good, monsieur. Now whisky.

**Harold** Mathilde I think you are being a little naughty with me.

**Tom/Mme L.** It is our first night together. Let us drink and be merry.

**Harold** How could I refuse that charming smile. But you must join me, Mathilde.

**Tom/Mme L.** Oui, of course.

*Harold pours whisky for Tommy and gives it to him.*

**Harold** Well, here's to our first night together, madame.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur.  
**Harold** Nina's right, you do have a very engaging face. And lovely eyes too.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Ah – well... let us talk about your wife, 'Arold.  
**Harold** My late wife.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Perhaps, but not forgotten, surely, monsieur.  
**Harold** No, of course not, I could never forget Veronica.  
**Tom/Mme L.** You must never, never forget her. Tell me about her.  
**Harold** Veronica was a very beautiful and intelligent woman. I could always talk to Veronica, I could always tell her everything. There are not many husbands who can tell their wives everything. That's the beauty of true love, one can always say what one thinks. It's important to say what one thinks, I think. Don't you, Mathilde?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Er... sometimes, perhaps, monsieur.  
**Harold** Always. Nina takes after her mother. She has her mother's beauty and intelligence, although she has benefited brains-wise from my side of the family too, I won't be modest. Yes. So now I feel it is time, Mathilde.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Time, monsieur?  
**Harold** To cease grieving. Two years is enough. Life goes on and... well I feel I am ready now to embrace love once again with another woman.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Oui?  
**Harold** Yes, but not just any woman, Mathilde, I'm quite particular.  
**Tom/Mme L.** I am happy to hear that, monsieur.  
**Harold** This woman will have to be quite special, oh yes. She will need to look after this house, myself and Nina. She will

however have many benefits too: a loving man – husband perhaps – in me; a loving daughter in Nina; companionship, security and money; the occasional gift or two of expensive jewellery and of course our annual holiday in the sun.

**Tom/Mme L.** Have you tried the internet, monsieur?  
**Harold** The internet?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Yes, to meet a woman. I have heard that people often find their perfect partner that way.  
**Harold** I – I don't have a computer.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Then I suggest you invest in one, Monsieur Carter. You will not regret it.  
**Harold** No, no, I'm very sceptical of such things.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Well you shouldn't be, monsieur, they are very easy to operate.  
**Harold** Yes perhaps but –  
**Tom/Mme L.** More whisky, monsieur?  
**Harold** Is that wise?  
**Tom/Mme L.** Pah, wise! Who wants to be wise, 'Arold, all the time?

*Tommy pours whisky into Harold's glass.*

**Harold** Yes, quite right, who wants to be wise all the time, Mathilde?

*Harold takes Tommy's empty glass. (He has at some point managed to tip his last drink into the potted plant). Tommy pours again.*

Sometimes we must allow ourselves a little foolishness, mustn't we, eh? Steady now. A beautiful hand.

**Tom/Mme L.** Well, monsieur, please drink.

**Harold** I think your delicious French whisky is making me feel quite – what shall I say...?

**Tom/Mme L.** Sleepy, monsieur?

**Harold** No, not that.

**Tom/Mme L.** Then you must continue to drink, monsieur.

**Harold** Amorous perhaps.

*Tommy hold up the framed photo of Veronica.*

**Tom/Mme L.** So... let us talk about Veronica again, 'Arold.

**Harold** No, let us not talk about Veronica again, Mathilde.

*Harold takes the photo and replaces it face down.*

Let us talk about us.

**Tom/Mme L.** Us, monsieur?

**Harold** You and me.

**Tom/Mme L.** Do not forget Pierre, monsieur.

**Harold** There is no Pierre is there, Mathilde?

**Tom/Mme L.** Pierre would not be happy to hear you say that, monsieur.

**Harold** Mathilde. Please don't be nervous of me.

**Tom/Mme L.** Then you must please stop following me, monsieur.

**Harold** Are you frightened you might like it, Mathilde?

**Tom/Mme L.** Like what, monsieur?

**Harold** Mathilde.

**Tom/Mme L.** What is it you want, Monsieur Carter?

**Harold** Perhaps what we both want, Mathilde.

**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur, please.

**Harold** Mathilde. A little kiss.

**Tom/Mme L.** A kiss!

**Harold** A little innocent goodnight kiss.

**Tom/Mme L.** Non monsieur, there is no such thing. You will want more

and more... and more, I know it.

**Harold** Please, let's not fight it.

**Tom/Mme L.** I want to fight it, monsieur. Tomorrow, I promise, I will give you everything, everything you desire.

**Harold** But why wait, when tonight we are full of passion, longing.

**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur!

**Harold** Ah ha!

**Tom/Mme L.** Help!

**Harold** Shhh, you'll wake Nina.

**Tom/Mme L.** *(Calling)* Nina wake up!

**Harold** Ha!

**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur!

**Harold** Ah ha!

*Harold seizes Tommy.*

Got you, my beauty.

*Harold attempts to kiss him.*

**Tom/Mme L.** Non, non. Monsieur! Monsieur! Monsieur!

*He places his hand on one of Tommy's breasts.*

**Harold** What?

**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur! How dare you!

**Harold** What's this?

*Harold feels the other one.*

**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur!

**Harold** Your breasts, they do not seem quite... right.  
**Tom/Mme L.** What is wrong with my breasts, monsieur?  
**Harold** They're soft, too soft.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Nonsense, they are parfait.  
**Harold** No, not right, not right at all.  
**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur, I am insulted, monsieur.  
**Harold** What's this?

*Harold pulls the stuffing from Tommy's bra.*

**Tom/Mme L.** Monsieur!  
**Harold** Wait...

*Harold feels Tommy's face.*

**Tom/Mme L.** Are you a...? You're a... a –  
**Tom/Mme L.** A man, you think I am a man?  
**Harold** Who are you?  
**Tom/Bern.** *(In a man's voice)* Yes, you're right, I am a man.  
**Harold** What!  
**Tom/Bern.** I'm a man, I'm a man, I'm a MAN!  
**Harold** But, I – I – I –

*Harold takes his glasses from his pocket and puts them on while  
Tommy pulls the knife from his bag.*

**Tom/Bern.** What! I don't understand. Who are you? Who are you?  
**Harold** WHO ARE YOU?  
**Tom/Bern.** Bernard.  
**Harold** Bernard?  
**Tom/Bern.** Yes.  
**Harold** Bernard who?

**Tom/Bern.** It doesn't matter. Just Bernard, okay.  
**Harold** But –  
**Tom/Bern.** Bernard, Bernard, BERNARD. That's all you need to know.  
**Harold** I'm –  
**Tom/Bern.** SHUT UP!  
**Harold** What do you want Bernard?  
**Tom/Bern.** Your money. Give me your money.  
**Harold** My money?  
**Tom/Bern.** You heard me.

*Nina enters SL. She screams.*

*(To Nina)* You, shut up. Stay there.  
**Harold** Stay there, Nina.  
**Nina** What's going on?  
**Harold** This is Bernard.  
**Nina** Who?  
**Harold** Bernard.  
**Nina** Bernard?  
**Tom/Bern.** Bernard.  
**Nina** I don't understand.  
**Harold** It seems Bernard has been pretending to be Madame Lapierre.  
**Nina** Really.  
**Harold** Yes.  
**Nina** I see. What does Bernard want?  
**Harold** Money, apparently.  
**Nina** Oh?  
**Tom/Bern.** Yes, and your jewellery too, young lady.  
**Nina** I don't have any jewellery.  
**Tom/Bern.** What's that?

**Nina** It's a cheap watch.  
**Tom/Bern.** Give me it.  
**Nina** I really don't think you want this.  
**Harold** I think you'd better do as he says, Nina.  
**Tom/Bern.** He's right, do as I say, Nina.  
**Nina** Okay.

*Nina gives her watch to Tommy.*

**Tom/Bern.** You, your wallet

*Harold takes out his wallet.*

**Nina** Are you sure you know what you're doing, Bernard?  
**Tom/Bern.** Bernard always knows what he's doing. Give it me.

*Harold passes his wallet to Tommy.*

Right. I'm going to take this and this and this.

*Tommy seizes some portable items from the room. And Mandy.*

**Nina** Not that, not Mandy. You can't take her.  
**Tom/Bern.** If I want to take Mandy, I'll take Mandy. I can take what I want, I'm Bernard.  
**Harold** You won't get away with it, Bernard.  
**Tom/Bern.** Stay there. *(To Nina)* It's his fault, he tried to kiss me.  
**Nina** Dad!  
**Harold** I'm sorry, I didn't know you were Bernard. I thought you were Mathilde.  
**Tom/Bern.** Well I'm not... I'm Bernard.  
**Harold** Yes, but how on earth did you know we were having a

French au pair coming here to stay with us?

*Slight pause.*

**Tom/Bern.** Bernard knows everything. It's Bernard's business to know everything.  
**Harold** But –  
**Tom/Bern.** All right, enough talking, I'm going. Don't try to follow me. *(Knife)* I'll use this if I have to. Well, thank you for a pleasant evening, 'Arold.  
**Harold** Now wait a damn minute you –

*Harold attempts to tackle Tommy, but Tommy elbows him in the stomach. Harold falls to his knees.*

**Nina** No!  
**Tom/Bern.** *(To Nina)* Sorry.

*Tommy exits SR with his bag.*

**Nina** Dad, are you all right?  
**Harold** Call the police.  
**Nina** The police?  
**Harold** Yes.  
**Nina** Is that necessary, Dad?  
**Harold** We've been robbed.  
**Nina** A couple of things, that's all. Nothing major.  
**Harold** He's got a knife, he's a dangerous man.  
**Nina** Well, hardly dangerous.  
**Harold** Why are you defending him, Nina?  
**Nina** I'm not, I just don't think we need to involve the police.  
**Harold** Call them.

**Nina** I'm not doing anything, Dad, until I know you're all right.  
**Harold** I'm all right.  
**Nina** You're breathing heavily, maybe I should call an ambulance instead.  
**Harold** I don't need an ambulance.  
**Nina** Here. Have some of this.

*Nina pours a whisky and gives it to Harold. He drinks.*

**Harold** Okay. Are you going to call the police, Nina, or am I going to have to do it myself?  
**Nina** But what are we going to say to them?  
**Harold** The truth, what else.  
**Nina** What, that a man called Bernard entered our house, pretending to be our new French au pair, spent the evening with us, drinking... and then robbed us.  
**Harold** Yes, that's the truth isn't it?  
**Nina** Don't you think the police might find that just a little amusing, Dad?  
**Harold** I don't care.  
**Nina** They might think you've been hallucinating after all this whisky, Dad.  
**Harold** I'm perfectly sober.  
**Nina** Well –  
**Harold** I am. Besides I've got you for a witness haven't I?  
Haven't I?  
**Nina** Yes. But don't forget you did try to kiss him, Dad.  
**Harold** Her.  
**Nina** Him, Dad.  
**Harold** That's not important.  
**Nina** Well the police might –  
**Harold** Nina! Look, give me the phone, give me the phone.

**Nina** All right, I'll call them. If you really want me to. Do you?  
**Harold** Yes.  
**Nina** Nine, nine, nine?  
**Harold** Yes.  
**Nina** Hardly an emergency, Dad.  
**Harold** Look –  
**Nina** Okay... okay.

*The doorbell rings.*

**Harold** Oh God, it's him again.  
**Nina** I doubt it, Dad, I don't think Bernard would ring the doorbell, do you?  
**Harold** Call, call the police.  
**Nina** I'll see who it is.

*Nina exits SR.*

**Harold** Nina! Nina!

*Slight pause.*

*(Calling)* Who is it? Nina? Nina?

*Nina enters.*

**Nina** It's Tommy, Dad.  
**Harold** Tommy? Your Tommy?  
**Nina** Yes.

*Tommy enters SR with bag. He is dressed in his own clothes.*

**Tommy** Hello, Mr. Carter.  
**Harold** Ah, hello, Tommy. What are you doing here at this time? It's half past eleven.  
**Tommy** I know, but I was cycling back from a friend's house, Mr Carter, going home and I was passing by here when I saw someone running from this house.  
**Harold** Yes, well...  
**Tommy** A woman, I thought.  
**Harold** No, that was Bernard, he –  
**Nina** Dad, please! Let Tommy speak. Go on, Tommy.  
**Tommy** She looked very suspicious and I noticed she had a knife in her hand, so I cycled after this 'woman'. I stopped her and asked her what she was doing. I then noticed that this she was in fact a he. She was a man.  
**Harold** Yes, Bernard. I've told you it was Bernard. Now, Nina –  
**Nina** Dad, let Tommy finish. Yes, Tommy, and then?  
**Tommy** He was furious, he ran at me with his knife, but I was too quick for him, oh yes. I hit him hard and then hit him again and then again. Well, he eventually ran away leaving his bag behind. I looked inside the bag and found some things that you may recognise.

*Tommy produces the stolen items from his pocket.*

**Nina** This... this... and this, your watch, perhaps.  
**Tommy** Yes.  
**Harold** (*Harold's wallet*) And, Mr Carter, perhaps this is yours?  
**Tommy** Yes it is. Thank you, Tommy.  
**Tommy** And...

*Tommy takes out Mandy from the bag.*

**Nina** I think I know who this belongs to.  
**Harold** Mandy. Brilliant! You're so brave, Tommy, isn't he, Dad? Isn't he brave to fight with that man, that Bernard?  
**Tommy** Yes you are, Tommy, very brave. I'm – we're very, very grateful. Thank you. (*Taking out money*) I must... I must reward you.  
**Harold** No, Mr Carter, I won't accept money.  
**Tommy** But I must give you something, something for your Bravery, Tommy. I insist.  
**Harold** Well, Mr Carter, if you insist on giving me something, perhaps I could ask you for a little favour.  
**Tommy** Yes?  
**Harold** Perhaps it may be possible for me to see Nina more than just on Saturdays. Perhaps I could see her on Sundays too and maybe also the occasional night – s during the week.  
**Nina** Well, I...  
**Harold** Dad, show some gratitude after all he's done. He could have got himself killed.  
**Tommy** I'm sure we can come to some 'arrangement', Tommy.  
**Harold** Thank you, Mr. Carter. Well, I'd better be going. School tomorrow.  
**Tommy** Yes, quite right. Thank you again, Tommy.  
**Tommy** Don't mention it, Mr Carter. Goodnight, Nina. (*To Harold*) May I?

*Tommy kisses Nina modestly on the cheek.*

**Nina** I'll see you tomorrow, mon brave.  
**Tommy** Yes.

*Tommy picks up his bag and turns to go.*

**Harold** Tommy wait. The bag, Bernard's bag. Where are you going with that?

**Tommy** I... er –

**Harold** I'll take that.

*Harold takes the bag from Tommy.*

**Tommy** But –

**Harold** We'll need it as evidence for the police.

**Nina** The police! But, Dad, surely we don't need to involve the police, not now that Tommy has sorted it all out. I don't think Bernard will be returning, Dad, not when he...

*Harold opens the bag and pulls out the dress and wig etc.*

knows that... he'll... be... Oh God!

**Harold** What's this?

**Tommy** Ah...

**Harold** What?... So it was you! You! Bernard... and... Ma-da-me La-pi-erre...

**Tommy** Oui, monsieur. Désolé.

**Harold** *(Horror of his own behaviour)* Oh!

**Nina** Tommy!

*Doorbell.*

**Mme Lap.** *(Off)* Hello, Monsieur Carter? Oh, Monsieur Carter? C'est moi, Madame Lapierre.

**Nina** Madame Lapierre! But she's early!

**Harold** Oh no!

*Harold slumps into a chair and places his head in his hands.*

**Nina** Dad?

**Tommy** Shall I?... *(Get the door?)*

**Nina** Wait. *(Alcoholic evidence)* We ought to get rid of these. She might think you've got a problem, Dad.

*Harold looks up at Nina in disbelief.*

*(Sheepishly)* Désolé.

*Everyone's attention is suddenly caught by the potted plant drooping (due to the effect of the added alcohol).*

**Mme Lap.** *(Off)* Oh, Monsieur Carter? Monsieur Carter? Coucou!

*Lights down.*

## Props List

Raincoat (*set on stage*)  
Trilby hat (*set on stage*)  
'Mandy' a stuffed doll (*set on stage*)  
Framed photo of Veronica (*set on stage*)  
CD's (*set on stage*)  
Sound system remote control (*set on stage*)  
House phone (*set on stage*)  
Harold's wallet (*set on stage*)  
Car keys (*set on stage*)  
House keys (*set on stage*)  
Harold's mobile phone (*set on stage*)  
School books (*set on stage*)  
Cushion (*set on stage*)  
Harold's tie (*Harold*)  
Spectacles (*Harold*)  
Two brandy glasses (*Harold*)  
Nina's mobile phone (*Nina*)  
Make-up (*Nina*)  
Whisky glasses x 2 (*Nina*)  
Portable music player (*Nina*)  
Sport's bag (*Tommy*)  
Whisky bottle (*Tommy*)  
Knife in sheath (*Tommy*)