

REDRESS

Characters:

Gloria, the wife – mid- / late-60s ?

Tony, the husband – mid- / late-60s ?

Setting:

Gloria & Tony's bedroom

Properties:

Gloria's novel

Tony's clothes

Lights up

Gloria is lying in bed, reading a book. Tony, wearing a jacket & trousers, shirt & tie, shoes & socks, is in the process of getting undressed.

Gloria *(not looking up from her book)* How was it?

Tony *(taking off his jacket and putting it on a hanger)* It?

Gloria Your evening with 'the Boys'.

Tony Fine. Yes, fine. What about you? How was your evening?

Gloria Much as usual.

Tony *(not listening, bending to untie his shoelaces)* That's good.

Gloria Quiet ...

Tony Oh, yes.

Gloria Apart from a phone call. *(beat)* A rather odd phone call ...

Tony *(not listening, taking off his shoes)* Really. *(looking at his shoes)* I must get these resoled.

Gloria What?

Tony These shoes.

Gloria Good idea. *(beat)* I've finally finished that novel I was reading.

Tony *(putting his shoes in the cupboard)* Any good?

Gloria No, not really. But I've started another one.

Tony. *(not listening)* Oh, yes ...

Gloria By the same author.

Tony *(not listening)* Hmm.

Beat.

Gloria How were 'the Boys'?

Tony *(taking off his socks)* Same as always.

Gloria What did you talk about?

Tony The usual. Pensions. Prescriptions. Prostate problems.

Gloria Any gossip?

Tony We don't do gossip.

Gloria No gossip? That's a shame. Where did you go?

Tony Where we always go.

Gloria The Pig & Whistle?

Tony *(putting his socks in the wash basket)* That's right. The Pig & Whistle.

Gloria Have you eaten?

Tony A few of us finished up in a curry house.

Gloria Did you? Which curry house?

Tony The Taj Palace.

Gloria How was it?

Tony *(taking off his trousers and hanging them up)* Good. Yes, good.

Gloria I thought you said you'd never go there again.

Tony Did I?

Gloria You said the staff were surly.

Tony I don't remember.

Gloria They weren't surly this time, then?

Tony They were fine.

Gloria I put your jeans in the wash, by the way. You left them on the floor.

Tony Sorry about that. I was in a bit of a rush.

Gloria To get to The Pig & Whistle?

Tony Are you in a mood, Gloria?

Gloria In a mood?

Tony Yes.

Gloria No. *(beat)* You don't think you're a little old to still be wearing jeans?

Tony You seem a little ...

Gloria I'm not.

Tony *(unbuttoning his shirt)* You weren't waiting up for me, were you? I said I'd be back by eleven and it's only ...

Gloria Twenty past. Don't worry. I wasn't hovering behind the front door with a rolling-pin.

Tony *(taking off his shirt and standing in his underpants)* Well, that's a relief.

Gloria You can put that shirt in the dirty wash. Did you go anywhere else?

Tony Apart from the Pig & Whistle, you mean?

Gloria And the Taj Palace.

Tony And the Taj Palace. No, nowhere else. Why do you ask?

Gloria You didn't go to the squash club perhaps?

Tony I've given up squash. You know that, Gloria. I can't go chasing round a squash court. Not at my age.

Gloria How about swimming? You still go swimming, don't you?

Tony Yes, but ...

Gloria I was wondering if perhaps you went for a swim?

Tony Tonight? Why on earth would I go for a swim?

Gloria It's not late-night shopping at M&S, is it?

Tony What are you talking about, Gloria?

Gloria You didn't decide to try on a nice new pair of chinos, for example?

Tony You're not losing it, are you, Gloria?

Gloria No, not chinos. It would have to be boxers. But they don't let you try on underwear in the store, do they? That wouldn't do at all. Horribly unhygienic.

Tony Have you been hitting the sherry?

Gloria Although it might explain things.

Tony What things might it explain?

Gloria Oh, you know, things. By the way, Charlie rang.

Tony Charlie?

Gloria He was wondering where you were.

Tony I arrived a little late.

Gloria At the Pig & Whistle?

Tony Yes, Gloria. At the Pig & Whistle.

Gloria I see. The odd thing is ...

Tony What's the 'odd thing'?

Gloria Charlie rang twenty minutes ago.

Tony (*absorbing this*) Did he? Well, you know Charlie. Poor old Charlie. He sometimes gets confused. And he was probably a little pissed.
 (*afterthought*) His eyesight's going, too.

Gloria Are you saying you were there, in The Pig & Whistle, but Charlie either didn't see you, or he doesn't remember seeing you?

Tony (*unconvincing*) Something like that. It was pretty crowded.

Gloria On a Tuesday night?

Tony (*improvising*) There was a darts match. And, as I say, Charlie's ...

Gloria Charlie's what?

Tony We're all getting older, Gloria. Charlie's eyesight isn't what it was

Gloria Poor old Charlie.

Tony Yes.

Gloria But my eyesight's fine.

Tony I'm delighted to hear it.

Gloria Which is how I know they were the right way round.

Tony What were?

Gloria Your underpants.

Tony My ...

Gloria When you went out this evening.

Tony What?

Gloria You took off your jeans, and you changed into your charcoal trousers.

Tony I try to keep up appearances.

Gloria That's admirable. (*pointing*) But look.

Tony What am I looking at?

Gloria Your underpants, Tony. They're the wrong way round.

Tony (*looking down*) Oh.

Gloria You're sure you haven't been swimming? Or playing squash? Or doing anything else that might explain why your underpants are the wrong way round?

Tony I must have ...

Gloria You must have ...?

Tony I must have ... Taken them off somewhere.

Gloria Yes, you must have done. The question is: Where? Not at the squash club ...

Tony No.

Gloria Not at the swimming-pool ...

Tony No.

Gloria Not at M&S ...

Tony No.

Gloria At the Taj Palace maybe?

Tony (*searching for an explanation*) The Taj Palace? Yes. Possibly. Sorry, Gloria. It's been a long evening.

Gloria You took them off. And you put them on again. Were you in a hurry, Tony? Or were you dressing in the dark?

Tony I really don't remember.

Gloria Are you getting as muddled as Charlie?

Tony I think I must be.

Beat

Gloria Charlie didn't sound remotely muddled when I spoke to him.

Tony Didn't he?

Gloria In fact he sounded remarkably lucid.

Tony Good for Charlie.

Beat.

Gloria You know, I've always had a lot of time for Charlie.

Tony Have you? You surprise me. I've always thought Charlie was a dry old stick.

Gloria A dry old stick?

Tony A stick-in-the-mud. An old woman. A bit of a bore.

Gloria Really?

Tony Yes.

Beat.

Gloria How's Cynthia?

Tony Cynthia?

Gloria Charlie's wife, Cynthia.

Tony Oh, that Cynthia.

Gloria Do you know more than one Cynthia?

Tony The world probably has its fair share of Cynthias, wouldn't you think?

Gloria Are you trying to be clever, Tony?

Tony I was simply saying ...

Gloria Don't 'simply say'. Tell me. How many Cynthias leave you little notes?

Tony What little notes?

Gloria Like the one I found in the pocket of your jeans.

Tony Ah. Oh.

Gloria Yes, Tony. Ah and Oh. And so explicit. I was very nearly shocked.

Tony Yes, Cynthia can be very direct. And really very difficult to refuse.

Gloria I honestly thought you'd given up philandering, Tony.

Tony Yes. So did I. But Cynthia ...

Gloria You said you were past it.

Tony I pretty sure I am.

Gloria Like squash.

Tony Just like squash. I'm so, so sorry, Gloria.

Gloria I expect you are and I'm sure you will be. Now take off your underpants, put on your pyjama bottoms — the right way round — and take yourself off to the spare room.

Tony The spare room? Couldn't I ...? Can't I ...?

Gloria No, Tony. The spare room. We can talk again when I get back from Amsterdam.

Tony Amsterdam? When are you going to Amsterdam?

Gloria The day after tomorrow. It's a last-minute trip.

Tony With the girls?

Gloria (*resuming her book*) No, Tony. Not with the girls.

Tony On your own?

Gloria (*looking up*) No, Tony. Not on my own. With Charlie.

THE END