

# DENIS

NIGEL Lets let the public in. That is the point of a public meeting after all. Denis if you would be so kind as to open the doors.

*We hear a VOICE from the back.*

DENIS I have opened the doors.

*DENIS walks down to the front.*

I'm afraid no ones come.

DOROTHY What? No one?

DENIS Well it's a cold night and you're up against Strictly...

*Pause as the bad news sinks in.*

DOROTHY So that's it then. There is to be no last appeal.

MARY Maybe people felt the last "Last appeal" was one last appeal too many?

DOROTHY They've given up on us.

NIGEL And so the final curtain descends... la commedia e finita...

DENIS Don't be so dramatic, Nigel.

MARY Maybe we should give it ten minutes.

DOROTHY I have given it ten years, Mary. Not to mention a second mortgage.

Perhaps what I really need is to face the truth. Who am I kidding? Maybe no one wants to see us prancing about in fancy dress spouting words written hundreds of years ago.

DENIS Shall we all go home then? We could catch the end of Strictly...

## DENIS

JEFFERSON I'm sorry to disappoint you lady, but Jefferson Steel is not so washed up he has to do charity gigs

MARY But you promised. It was on the news. You were really inspiring.

DENIS

'Theatre is in my blood" and all that stuff. Very moving.

JEFFERSON I was acting you idiot!

*He keeps punching numbers into his cell phone.*

*(On phone)* Charlie Rosen, you moron, you booked me into the wrong goddam Stratford! This is Stratford on Pigshit in Nowheresville...

NIGEL Charming!

JEFFERSON (on phone)

You've got to get me out of here. Charlie,  
Now!

*Pause.*

It can't be too late. It was just one lousy press conference.  
No one saw it.

DENIS Six o'clock news over here.

JEFFERSON (on phone) ...and every network in the States...oh great... No Charlie I am NOT PLEASED!

*DENIS is looking at his mobile.*

DENIS Oh look you're trending on Twitter - and the press conference is on YouTube...

JEFFERSON (to Charlie on mobile) No, you halfwit I am not making a noble sacrifice and going back to my theatrical roots - I'm stuck in Loserville with a bunch of amateurs. Hello? Hello? Holy' crap!

NIGEL I'm afraid we have a 'save the theatre\*' swear box...

*He produces swear box.*

JEFFERSON I don't give a fuck. And I am not saving your fucking theatre!

Enter LAUREN, an attractive trophy wife of the brewer sponsor who is not taken seriously because of her looks. She is nervous about the project because the sponsorship was her idea.

LAUREN Everything all right?

DOROTHY Mr. Steel is a bit upset as there has been something of a misunderstanding. He thought he was playing Lear in Stratford on Avon...

LAUREN Oh dear. That's not going to be a problem is it?

*JEFFERSON is a broken man.*

DENIS No it's an easy mistake to make...there are several Stratfords in Britain. There's Stratford in East London

NIGEL Stony Stratford in Buckinghamshire...

DENIS Stratford St. Agnes in Somerset...

DOROTHY OK. I think Mr. Steel gets the picture.

DENIS ...Stratford St. Andrew and Stratford St Mary. Stratford St. Peter, Stratford St. Bernard...

JEFFERSON Can you do me a favour...?

*JEFFERSON cannot remember DENIS's name. DENIS supplies it.*

DENIS Denis.

JEFFERSON Right, Denis. Can you do me a favour Denis...and shut the fuck up?

## DENIS

DENIS Morning Dorothy. Morning Mr. Steel.  
How was your Journey?

JEFFERSON Unacceptably long.

DENIS I know what you mean. I got held up on Crackett's Lane, they've got one of them big hedge-cutters and the traffic has backed up beyond the silage depot and you wouldn't believe it Mr Steel

JEFFERSON Denis. It is Denis isn't it? Can we just get one thing straight here?

DENIS Yeah. Sure.

JEFFERSON Denis - you're mistaking me for someone who gives a shit.

DENIS Fair enough.