

The school bell rings. The PUPILS become restless. MR GRYCE stops them in their tracks.

That bell is for my benefit, not for you. (*Pause.*) Right, dismissed.

Scene 3

Outside Mr Gryce's Office, 9.25 am

MACDOWALL, BILLY, DELAMORE *and two other SMOKERS remain on stage waiting for MR GRYCE.*

MACDOWALL. It's his favourite trick this. He likes to keep you waiting. He thinks it makes it worse.

DELAMORE. Don't worry, MacDowall, you've got the opera to look forward to. (*Sings operatically.*) HA HA HA.

SMOKER 1 (*sings*). HA HA HA.

DELAMORE (*sings*). WILLIAM?

SMOKER 1 (*sings*). WHAT, PHILIP?

DELAMORE (*sings*). DO YOU LOVE ME?

SMOKER 1 (*sings*). DO I BOLLOCKS.

DELAMORE (*sings*). OH, WILLIAM I THOUGHT THAT YOU DID.

SMOKER 1 (*sings*). I NEVER SAID SO. NO. NO. NO.

DELAMORE (*sings*). YOU ROTTEN SWINE. YOU'VE BROKEN ME HEART.

SMOKER 2 (*sings*). IT SERVES YOU RIGHT. HA HA HA. HA HA HA.

BOTH (*sings*). HA HA HA.

OTHERS (*sings*). HA HA HA.

MACDOWALL. Ha, ha-bloody-ha. It wan't me that coughed you know. I'm going to tell Gryce that an' all.

DELAMORE. It makes no difference whether you tell him or not, he doesn't listen.

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BILLY.

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That
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BILLY.

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BILLY.

Pause
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MACDOWALL. I'll bring me Dad up if he gives me stick.

e.) Right,

BILLY. What you always bringing your Dad up for? He never does owt when he comes. They say last time your Dad came up, Gryce gave him t' stick an' all.

MACDOWALL. At least I've got a proper Dad to bring up. That's more than you can say, Casper. Where's your Dad then?

BILLY. Shut your gob, MacDowall.

MACDOWALL. Why, what are you going to do about it?

other
ACE.

BILLY. You'd be surprised.

kes to keep

MACDOWALL. Right then, I'll see you at dinner.

BILLY. Anytime you want.

got the opera
HA.

MACDOWALL. Right then.

BILLY. Right then.

Pause. A MESSENGER enters with a note for MR GRyce. He is the most innocent looking boy in the school.

DELAMORE. If you've come for t' stick you'd better get to t' back of queue.

T THAT

MESSENGER. I've not come for the stick. Mr Crossley sent me with a message for Mr Gryce.

NO.

MACDOWALL (*taking his cigarettes out of his pocket and going to the MESSENGER*). You'd better save us these 'til after. If he searches us he'll only take 'em off us and give us another two strokes. Here.

U'VE

MESSENGER. I don't want 'em, you're not getting me into trouble as well.

HA HA.

MACDOWALL. Who's getting you into trouble? You can give 'em us back after.

coughed

MESSENGER (*shaking his head*). I don't want 'em.

ll him or

MACDOWALL (*threatening the young boy*). Do you want some fist instead?

They surround the MESSENGER and fill his pockets with their cigarettes, matches and lighters.

DELAMORE (*sings*). I THINK I WILL GO TO T' BOG
NOW.

SMOKER 1 (*sings*). A VERY GOOD IDEA, DELA – MORE
– MORE – MORE!

DELAMORE (*sings*). ARE YOU COMING W-I-T-H ME-E-E-E?

SMOKER 1 (*sings*). NO-O I DO NOT THINK SO. NO NO
NO!

DELAMORE (*sings*). WHY NO-OT? WHY NO-OT?

SMOKER 1. Because Gryce Pudding is coming.

MR GRYCE *approaches to investigate the noise.*

MR GRYCE. What's going on here?

DELAMORE. Nowt, sir.

SMOKER 2. What, sir?

MR GRYCE. 'What, sir?' Singing, laughing, making a
mockery in the corridor. What were you laughing at, boy?

DELAMORE. Nothing, sir.

MR GRYCE. Nothing? Nothing? They lock people up for
laughing at nothing.

MESSENGER. Please, sir.

MR GRYCE. Don't interrupt boy, when I'm speaking.

Look at you. You've got the world on a plate. You know it
all, you young people, don't you? With your gear and your
music. Nobody can tell you anything, can they? But it's
only superficial. Just a sheen with nothing worthwhile or
solid underneath. There's something happening today that's
frightening, that makes me feel that it's all been a waste of
time.

MESSENGER. Please, sir.

MR GRYCE. Don't interrupt, boy. I won't tell you again. A
waste of time. Like it's a waste of time me standing here
talking to you boys, because you won't take a blind bit of
notice of what I'm saying. I know what you're thinking
now. You're thinking why doesn't he just get on with it

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