

LIVING TOGETHER 1 Tom + Reg

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Living Together

Norman There's nothing they like better in this family than a good laugh. Go on. Bring an atmosphere of merriment into the room. *(He gives a false laugh)*

Tom *(copying Norman)* All right. I'll try it. You're a good chap, Norman, you know. A very good chap.

Norman Thank you.

Tom I'm sorry you're having to dash away. To your—conference. Pity you're not staying. You brighten the place up a bit. Pity. Cheerio.

Norman Cheerio.

Tom goes out

Norman laughs

Tom appears at the door laughs and goes

Norman goes to the door and laughs. Tom is heard laughing, off. Norman closes the door, laughing. He finds the gramophone under the occasional table, puts it on the table, opens it, takes the record off the turntable and reads the label, hums a line from "Girls were made to Love and Kiss". He replaces the record. Winds the gramophone up and starts the record. He does a dance to the music and sings as the vocal starts. At one point he opens the door and "sings out" to the corridor. He returns, singing, puts his glass on the floor below the rug, and finally collapses on the rug

Here's to you, Tom, old buddy. Here's to the lot of you.

He sings louder, as—

the CURTAIN falls

SCENE 2

The same. Saturday, 8 p.m.

Norman is asleep on the rug, with bottles and a glass beside him. Reg and Tom enter from the house without seeing him

Reg . . . no, no. You say to me, who's there, you see . . .

Tom Oh, it's me who says that. I see. All right. Who's there?

Reg Start again. Knock knock.

Tom Come in—I mean, who's there?

Reg Vet.

Tom Vet?

Reg No. You say, vet who?

Tom Vet who, sorry. Come in—who's there—vet who.

Reg There's no "come in". Start again.

Tom Right-ho. Knock knock.

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Reg Who's there—no. I should have started it. Knock knock.

Tom Who's there?

Reg Vet.

Tom Vet who?

Reg Vet kind of door is this, you can't afford a bell. *(He laughs)*

Tom Yes, I think I've got it now—try it again.

Reg That's it.

Tom Oh, is it? Quite simple, really.

Reg Yes . . . *(Seeing Norman)* Good God! Look at that.

Tom Oh. It's Norman. *(They move to him)* Is he all right?

Reg Norman! Norman! *(No response)* He's out like a light.

Tom I thought he'd gone.

Reg So did everybody. When he finally stopped singing and peace descended over the fruit and cream, I thought we'd lost him. Sarah's going to be pleased.

Tom Ought we to move him?

Reg Well, he's not in anybody's way. Oy . . . *(He kicks Norman)*

Norman grunts

(Moving away) Leave him, I think. Oh, I'm starving after that meal. Salad. I can't bear salad. It grows while you're eating it, you know. Have you noticed? You start one side of your plate and by the time you've got to the other, there's a fresh crop of lettuce taken root and sprouted up. You have to start again. And it still doesn't fill you. You finish up exhausted and hungry. The only thing that keeps me going when I'm eating a salad is the hope that somebody might have thought it was my birthday and hidden something to eat under all the vegetation. But they never do. A sardine if you're lucky.

Tom *(still with Norman)* He's still breathing.

Reg I should hope so. He's enough trouble as he is without dying on us. The problem with this house is there's no television.

Tom It's very shallow breathing. Do you think I should take his hat off?

Reg He doesn't breathe through the top of his head, does he? Oh I don't know, he might do knowing Norman. *(Bending over him)* If I were you, I'd pull it down over his face—like this. *(He does so)* There you are, great improvement.

Tom It's the dandelion, you see. Look at that, he's had nearly a bottle. Drowning his sorrows, I suspect.

Reg Sorrows?

Tom Well, I was talking to him earlier. He was obviously very disturbed. Depressed . . .

Reg Was he? Well . . .

Tom Don't know why, I'm sure. You know something, though, I've got a theory there's probably a woman at the back of it. Man gets drunk like this, it's generally a woman. Ruth, do you think?

Reg Possibly. Possibly . . .

Tom Perhaps Sarah would know. She usually keeps her ear close to the ground. Better ask her.

End