

# **EVERYBODY'S AT IT!**

A Cautionary Tale

by

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## EVERYBODY'S AT IT !

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## EVERYBODY'S AT IT !

### **Cast – in order of appearance**

Horace Dooley - CEO Dooley's Desserts

Doris Palmer - Horace's secretary

Boris Norris - Quality controller

Maurice Forbes - Horace's Accountant

Clarice Harris - The Cleaner

Rosie Lee - Canteen supervisor

Melanie Parker - Horace's girlfriend

Angela Bentley - Acting Detective Chief Inspector

Henry Sykes - Acting Detective Sergeant

Dominic Gilbert - An Accountancy Consultant

Norma Grapes – Acting Health and Safety Inspector

Mrs Parker - Melanie's mother

Freddie (Frederika) – Acting Forensic Pathologist

*(If desired these thirteen characters can be played by ten actors: the actors playing Doris, Maurice and Rosie doubling as Mrs Parker, Henry, and Freddie)*

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**(The setting requires two spaces:**

**1. The top floor windowless office of Dooley's Desserts.**

**There is one entrance door, and another door to a walk-in stationery cupboard. There are the usual filing cabinets, chests of drawers, wall cupboards and side tables.**

**2. An area which serves as a section of the Works**

**Canteen. It may be further indicated by screens wheeled on and off by Rosie at the beginning and end of Scene 2.**

**It will require two tables with two chairs at each. These may already be in place as part of the office furniture or brought on by the actors. Transition from the office to the canteen may also be effected by lighting cross fades)**

## Scene One

Friday afternoon. Dooley's Office

(The CEO Horace Dooley is seated at his desk. He appears to be examining some papers, but in reality he is reading the Beano).

(FX: His phone rings).

(He picks up the receiver and yells into the mouthpiece).

**Horace:** Not now. I'm busy. (slams the phone down, returns to the Beano, chortling.)

(FX:The phone rings again. Horace answers it).

**Horace:** What?....Problem? What problem?..... No. I'm not coming down. I'm the boss. You come up ...I know its three flights of stairs. It means I can work undisturbed, and it's good exercise. If there's a problem, *you* come up and tell me about it. On the other hand, *you* could sort the problem out yourself. It's what I pay you for.....

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Something I should see? .... What do you mean *taste*? ....

Not *another* batch! Well, bring it up, then. Bring it up!

**(Slams down the phone and returns to his Beano. There is a knock at the door but he is too engrossed to notice. His secretary, Doris Palmer, enters with a sheaf of letters. She waits patiently at his desk and finally raps on the desk with her knuckles).**

**Horace:** Come in.

**Doris:** I'm already in. **(She puts the letters on the desk)**

**Horace:** You should have knocked before entering. I might have been busy.

**Doris:** Very unlikely. You sit there reading the Beano. The workers do the work, and you rake in the money.

**Horace:** Don't be impertinent. I could give you the sack.

**Doris:** No you couldn't. I know too much. You *could* give me a pay rise to keep my mouth shut.

**Horace:** That's blackmail.

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**Doris:** You could give me a cheque for a thousand pounds instead.

**Horace:** That wouldn't look good in the accounts.

**Doris:** Exactly. A pay rise it is then. Shall we say fifty?

**Horace:** Fifty a month?

**Doris:** A week would be better.

**Horace:** **(giving in)** Oh ... talk to Maurice.

**Doris:** I *can* talk to Maurice, but he'll need your signature.

**Horace:** OH ... Yeee....ees. All right. Ask him to come up.

**(Doris picks up the phone on Horace's desk, presses some buttons, waits a moment and then speaks to Maurice).**

**Doris:** Ah...Maurice?...Doris... I'm with Horace. He'd like you to pop up ...Now! **(to Horace)** He's on his way. **(replaces the phone).**

**Horace:** What would you do if I didn't pay up, or if I gave you the sack?

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**Doris:** I'd go straight to the police.

**Horace:** They'd do you for blackmail, you know.

**Doris:** And they'd do *you* for fraud. Is that what you want?

**Horace:** I suppose not. We'll keep this just between the two of us  
then.

**Doris:** And Margaret.

**Horace:** Margaret! You can't tell Margaret. She'll think we're  
having an affair.

**Doris:** Oh, I thought we were. Have you given me the sack in  
that department?

**Horace:** Of course not. You know I'd be lost without you.

**Doris:** Secretarially, yes. I'm not so sure about the other.  
Anyway, one way or another you're in a bit of a pickle,  
aren't you? Fraud, adultery, blackmail, and a business on  
the verge of collapse.....

**Horace:** Who told you that?



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**Doris:** I'm your personal secretary, Horace. I write letters for you, I read the post and answer the phone. *Your* information is *my* information. How did you get where you are when you're so dim?

**Horace:** Irresistible charm.

**Doris:** If you say so, Horace, if you say so.

**(FX: The phone rings. Doris answers it).**

**Doris:** Dooley's Desserts; Doris Palmer speaking. How may I help you? .... I'm not sure if I can find Mr Dooley at the moment. Can I get him to ring you back? ..... What name is it? .... Miss Parker...thank you ... and the number? **(She makes a note on a pad)** ..... Thank you, Miss Parker: I'll get him to call you as soon as he's free. **(replaces the phone, turns to Horace)**. Who's Miss **Parker**? I hope she's not another victim of your irresistible charms.

**Horace:** **(lying through his teeth)** No, no , no, no, no ... potential client ... could be a big order. Actually, I think I should go and see her. **(he gets up in a hurry and heads for the**

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**door**). No time like the present, strike while the iron's hot. *(Exits)*

**Doris:** **(calling after him)** What about Maurice?

**Doris flaps her arms in despair and sits in Horace's Chair, picks up the Beano and begins to turn the pages.**

**Doris:** Just a big kid really. How did he get to be where he is?  
And why did I fall for his dubious charms?

**(A knock at the door).**

**Doris:** Come in **Maurice**.

**The door opens. It is not Maurice. It is Norris – an ancient dodderly old man, wheezing from having come up three flights of stairs. It is a mystery how he still comes to be employed when he is clearly well beyond retirement age. He is carrying a large yoghurt pot. He looks at Doris with bewilderment. Doris looks at him with equal bewilderment. At last Doris speaks...**

**Doris:** You're not Maurice.

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**Norris:** **(He thinks she has said Norris).** Yes, but you're not Mr Horace.

**Doris:** I'm Doris. Mr Horace, er, Mr Dooley - is not here at the moment. I thought you were Maurice.

**Norris:** Norris. That's right.

**Doris:** Have you seen Maurice?

**(Norris is even more confused).**

**Norris:** Only in the mirror this morning. Does my hair need combing?

**Doris:** I mean Maurice from Accounts.

**Norris:** Oh, is there another Norris? In Accounts? I never knew that. I'm Norris from Quality Control. Mr Horace said I should produce a sample. I've got it here in this pot.

**Doris:** Erm...**(Confused)** Are you here for a health check? This is not the place...er .. Norris?

**Norris:** Yes that's right. Boris Norris to see Mr Horace..... with a sample.

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**Doris:** We do employ a nurse, Mr Norris. She has a room in the basement.

**Norris:** I don't need a nurse Miss. Mr Horace wouldn't come down so I had to bring it up. It's Banana.

**Doris:** Banana?

**Norris:** Yoggit.

**Doris:** Yoggit?

**Norris:** Banana flavoured yoggit. It needs investigating.