

"DIAGHILEV'S BAG"

© by

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DIAGHILEV'S BAG

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A fee will be charged for this licence which must be paid prior to the first performance otherwise the licence is automatically cancelled and the performance becomes illegal

DIAGHILEV'S BAG

CHARACTERS

Henrik	Overweight, roughly spoken and takes a pleasure in being obnoxious to people
Janesh	Opposite of Henrik, keen, religious and wishing to get on
Diaghilev	Sensitive carer suffering from stress at what the world has shown him
Child	Young boy or girl with an air of cheeky innocence

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(It is the middle of the night. The stage is bare apart from some old boxes and boulders lying around. Rubbish is scattered here and there, stones, pebbles, etc. Two men dressed in overalls move about shining torches and occasionally picking things up and taking them to a plastic bag that stands at the front of the stage. One carries a hand brush and pan. They could be park keepers or garbage men but they are not)

- Henrik That's the trouble with my wife, no sense of humour – "What time do you call this?" she says... I said " Bewitching hour?"... she wasn't amused I can tell you... "Twelve o' clock," she says, "Where've you been till twelve o'clock?"... I told her, I said, "Do you want to know the truth or do you want me to make up a story?" ... she says, "The truth of course"... so I said, "I've been up an alley screwing that barmaid with the blond hair!"... she said, " You've been what!?" and I was just going to repeat it when she says, " You've been drinking after time again haven't you ?" ... "O. K.," I said, "I've been drinking after time"... That's what she wanted to hear, she didn't want the truth even though she'd asked for it ... as a matter of fact I had been screwing the barmaid with the blond hair but it just goes to prove a point Janesh, if you want a woman to believe you, tell her what she wants to hear, tell her anything, but don't tell her the truth ... How about you? Have you set the date yet?
- Janesh No
- Henrik You should have set the date by now. How long is it?
- Janesh Two years
- Henrik Two years? For two years you've been going out with the girl and still you haven't set the date?
- Janesh We're saving
- Henrik Saving? By the time you're married you'll be too old for the other, you'll have forgotten what its for... You do know what it's for Janesh, don't you? It's not for peeing over high fences you know! (laughing) The youngsters of today, I don't know what to make of them - in my day you went out, found a girl then Wham! Bang! You got married if you put her in the club - but none of this "saving to get married" business
- Janesh We want to buy our own place
- Henrik It's not important - if it's that important I would forget all about it. Where's your passion Janesh? What are you waiting for? Still, I suppose with you it doesn't matter like it did with us - with us you were supposed to be married before you got a bit of the other - today it doesn't seem to matter
- Janesh It does with some women

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Henrik You what? You're not trying to tell me you've been going out with her for two years and you still haven't ?

Janesh Yes

Henrik You're joking Janesh? Tell me you're joking

Janesh I'm not

Henrik Two years? She's kept you waiting for two years?

Janesh She's an old fashioned girl

Henrik What've you been doing in that time?

Janesh Kissing...

Henrik Yes?

Janesh And cuddling...

Henrik Yes? ...Nut no...?

Janesh No

Henrik Let me see your hand (Janesh bewildered takes off his glove and shows it) Yes! I see now why you have the blisters!

Janesh (Snatching hand away) It isn't funny

Henrik You can say that again

 (At this point Diaghilev enters also in overalls. He is tentative, nervous, looking around at the ground)

Diaghilev What isn't funny?

Janesh Henrik - he isn't

Diaghilev What's he been saying ?

Henrik All I said was -

Janesh There's no need to repeat it

Henrik He's been going out with that girl of his for two years and they still haven't "consummated the relationship"

Diaghilev So?

Henrik So it's unusual that's all, in this day and age...anyway Diaghilev, where've you been?

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Diaghilev I had something to attend to

Henrik What thing? You've come when the job's almost done

Janesh Is this your first one serge?

Diaghilev No, of course not. I've been to loads of sudden deaths

Henrik But not suicides, eh Diaghilev?

Janesh Are you sure you're all right serge?

Diaghilev Course I'm all right

Janesh You don't look it

Henrik You look as if you're about to heave at any minute

Janesh Do you feel sick?

Diaghilev (Lying) No

Janesh Everybody feels sick the first time you know - I was sick - Have you tried putting your fingers down your throat

Diaghilev I'm fine I tell you

Henrik I'll put my fingers down your throat for you Diaghilev

Diaghilev That wont be necessary thank you

Henrik You know your trouble? You're too sensitive. You're not cut out for this kind of work

Janesh You were a teacher, serge, weren't you?

Diaghilev Yes

Janesh What made you give up a good job like that to be a. policeman?

Diaghilev I had great ambitions at the time

Henrik Don't tell me - you were going to change the world? Fight crime

Diaghilev Something like that

Henrik You lot are the worst sort – idealists - that's why you write that poetry of yours

Janesh You write poetry?

Diaghilev A little

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- Henrik Course he does - now then Diaghilev (indicating bag) How's about writing a poem for this fellow then?
- Diaghilev (Clutching mouth feeling unwell) Excuse me (he runs off to be sick causing much merriment to Henrik)
- Janesh You shouldn't humiliate him like that
- Henrik What've I done?
- Janesh He's a sergeant, you should show some respect for rank
- Henrik It takes more then three stripes to make me respect a man - respect is something you earn
- Janesh You've never tried for promotion then Henrik?
- Henrik Me? Why should I? I'm happy as I am. Anyway they'd never promote somebody like me - I speak my mind too much
- Janesh You might've upset him
- Henrik So? They shouldn't send a boy to do a man's job. You know what they say about teachers, "A man amongst boys and a boy amongst men "
- Janesh You should show more respect for the dead as well
- (Diaghilev re-enters wiping his mouth)
- I said he should show more respect for the dead, serge. What do you say?
- Diaghilev It would be more fitting
- Henrik Respect? For what?
- Janesh A young man's died here tonight
- Henrik And I should respect him because he had the stupidity to jump in front of the midnight express?
- Janesh You should be more thoughtful
- Henrik And was he thoughtful when he did this? Eh? Did he think of the practicalities?
- Janesh He was upset
- Henrik "He was upset" - I'm upset at having to miss my evening out - overtime like this I can do without - I could have been enjoying myself, instead of which I have to poke about looking for -
- Diaghilev Do you always have to be so heartless?

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- Henrik (To Janesh) What are you doing? While you're there Janesh say one for me - ask him who's going to win the three thirty
- (Pulls out a packet of sandwiches and starts eating)
- (To Diaghilev) You want one?
- Diaghilev How the hell can you eat at a time like this?
- Henrik At a time like what?
- Diaghilev Here we are combing the embankment for bits of some young man and all you can think about is eating
- Henrik You don't want one?
- Diaghilev No
- Henrik They're nice
- Diaghilev I don't care if they're caviar - I couldn't eat a thing at this moment
- Henrik You should eat - you've got to keep body and soul together - unlike this fellow (indicates bag then offers one to the bag as a joke) You want one?
- Diaghilev You know Henrik, I sometimes wonder what makes you tick, you seem to go out of your way to be disgusting
- Henrik Just a bit of fun - everybody needs a bit of fun - especially at a time like this
- Diaghilev I can understand that but you go over the top, you enjoy making people feel uncomfortable
- Henrik Which reminds me Diaghilev, why were you so late?
- Diaghilev I had something to attend to
- Henrik You said "Get started and I'll be with you directly"
- Diaghilev I'm sorry
- Henrik Instead of which you leave us to do the dirty work while you're away somewhere skiving
- Diaghilev I wasn't skiving.- anyway have you finished ?
- Henrik Almost - its difficult to say in this light
- Janesh We've been down the track quite a way but the torches weren't very good

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Diaghilev That's why I went to fetch you these batteries (producing them from pocket)

Henrik (Sarcastically) Oh that's where you've been? Fetching batteries - how thoughtful

Diaghilev Watch your tongue

Henrik I'm watching it - in fact I've been watching tongues for the last hour and a half - and ears and noses and God knows what else

Janesh Henrik!

Henrik Well, he talks to me as if I was a kid and now the job's done he brings us new batteries

Janesh We might need them later

Henrik What for? We've finished

Diaghilev I'm afraid not

Henrik Listen Sergeant Diaghilev, we've done what we had to - we've combed the embankment on both sides of the track, picked up what there was left to pick up - now can we please go home?

Diaghilev No

Henrik "No" he says

Janesh Why not serge?

Diaghilev We've had instructions to stay here till morning until they can get somebody out to relieve us

Henrik You're joking?

Diaghilev I wish I was

Janesh Till morning? That's ages yet - what are they playing at?

Diaghilev It seems they want to be sure we don't miss anything

Henrik What do they want us to do - count the bloody pieces? What do they think it is - a bloody jigsaw?

Janesh I can see their point Henrik - we'd look pretty silly if ...

Henrik Why cant they send some of the nightshift out?

Diaghilev They're busy it seems

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Janesh Never mind Henrik, think of all the overtime you'll be getting

Henrik Overtime like this I don't need - sleep I do - I'm dreadful if I don't get my sleep

Diaghilev That I can believe

Henrik Well this is just great - what are we going to do, sit and look at each other all night?

Janesh We could try sleeping

Henrik On what?

Janesh I know what, I've got some cards in the car, we could play cards

Henrik You stay there - I'll get them - where are they?

Janesh In the glove compartment

Henrik (Going off muttering to himself) "Sleeping" he says (calls back) You set up a table

 (They sort out boxes to sit on and a table)

Janesh He's a strange one old Henrik

Diaghilev You can say that again

Janesh His bark is worse than his bite, you know

Diaghilev (Unconvinced) Really

Janesh Underneath all his bluster he's a good policeman

Diaghilev If only he wasn't so

Janesh Awkward? He's a challenge for a sergeant, a problem in man management

Diaghilev You can say that again

Janesh Its a horrific business this

Diaghilev Yes - you had many?

Janesh One or two - you get used to them on this patch - it affects different people in different ways - take Henrik, he pretends it doesn't bother him but underneath ...

Diaghilev What about you?

Janesh I try and treat it as part of the job

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Diaghilev Not a very pleasant part

Janesh No, but somebody has to do it

Diaghilev You never think about things like this when you join

Janesh No - not the kind of thing to put on recruitment posters

Diaghilev I don't think I'll ever get used to it

Janesh That's because you're a poet - can I ask you, what's a policeman doing writing poetry?

Diaghilev I don't know, they just seem to come of their own accord

Janesh I wish I could create like that, the only thing I'm any good at is woodwork

Diaghilev A very useful pastime - you'll have plenty of time for that when you're married

Janesh If I get married

Diaghilev It is a long engagement

Janesh That's because she wants everything just so - just like her father

Diaghilev Her father?

Janesh One of the bosses at headquarters. I met her at one of the dances

Diaghilev One of the bosses? You'll be all right then - I'll soon be calling you "Sir." Perhaps there's more to you than meets the eye

Henrik (Re-entering with cards) You what?

Diaghilev I said there's more to Janesh than meets the eye - he tells me he's marrying a boss' s daughter

Henrik When she gets round to it - I wouldn't care if she was worth waiting for she's as ugly as sin

Janesh Hey!

Henrik Never mind Janesh, you know what they say 'The ugliest ones make up for it in bed'

Janesh That's my future wife you're talking about

Henrik Yeah, yeah... right then, what are we playing? Come on then, move over... turn the light this way (he begins to shuffle and deal)

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Diaghilev (Indicating bag) Don't you think we ought to... ?

Henrik What?

Diaghilev Well...move it... put it in the car or something?

Henrik He's all right where he is - we could find more of him at first light
(They play cards with Diaghilev looking round nervously at the bag)

Diaghilev It feels wrong

Henrik What?

Diaghilev Us sitting here playing cards and ... it doesn't seem right - like soldiers at the crucifixion

Henrik You're a Christian as well are you?

Diaghilev Sort of

Henrik What do you mean "Sort of" - either you are or you aren't, there cant be any half measures

Diaghilev I want to believe and yet... when something like this happens I ask myself "What's the point?"

Henrik The point is this fellow tried to argue with a train and the train came off best – that's the fact of the matter and the end result is over there in that bag - if you think you're made in the image of God my friend, go over there and take a look

Diaghilev No

Henrik (Sensing he's on to a weakness) Why not?

Diaghilev I don't want to