

# **The Accident**

**A comedy-drama in one act**

**By Peter Pitt**

**SPOTLIGHT PUBLICATIONS**

## **The Accident**

CAST (in order of appearance)

**Eileen**, a secretary. About 30. Smart.

**Josie**, a clerk/typist. Around the same age as Eileen. Less sophisticated.

**Sally**, office junior. Teenager.

**Fred**, maintenance man, about 22.

**Mr Scott**, office manager. Fortyish.

**Mary**, tea lady. Late 50s or early 60s.

**Setting** - An office

**Time** - Autumn, 1947

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## SCENE 1

*A simple office set. The entrance is through a door roughly centre stage. On one side of the stage another door leads into a small inner office. On the opposite side there are two desks, one in front of the other. A third desk is situated in front of the inner office. Other furniture includes a filing cabinet, and a hat stand*

*Eileen is standing by the filing cabinet. She extracts some papers and goes over to her desk, which is the one nearest the entrance door to the office. At the desk in front of her Josie sits working. Sally is seated at the third desk. Fred enters. He is wearing a brown overall*

**Fred** Morning, all.

**Women** Good morning, Fred.

**Fred** Now which one of you lovely ladies wants me to brighten up your life?

**Josie** How can you be so lively on a Monday morning?

**Fred** Well it's no good moping, is it? And it is only four days to pay day.

**Eileen** Over there. Above Miss Smith's desk.

*Fred moves towards Sally's desk*

**Fred** Well, Sally, we can't have you straining your pretty eyes, can we? *(He looks up at the light)* Is this it?

*Sally nods her head. Fred climbs onto her desk. He removes the bulb from its socket and jumps down from the desk*

**Fred** You're alright for the moment, aren't you? Only I've got a radiator to see to on the second floor.

**Sally** That's okay. I usually only need it on after lunch.

**Eileen** Do you mean to say that you didn't bring a bulb with you?

**Fred** No, I didn't.

**Josie** He wanted a reason to come and see us again.

**Fred** Do I need a reason to visit you girls?

**Eileen** Then why not bring a bulb?

**Fred** I can't carry everything around with me.

**Josie** No, they can be very heavy, light bulbs.

**Fred** Very funny, I don't think. How am I to know what wattage it is? It could be a forty watt plain, or a forty watt pearl, a sixty watt plain. Or a sixty watt pearl. A hundred watt plain, or a.....

**Josie** Alright, alright. We get the point.

**Eileen** And Fred. You mentioned radiators. Ours don't seem to give out much heat.

**Fred** That's because the Guv'nor won't let me put 'em on full yet. Not till the really cold weather starts.

**Josie** Well it was jolly cold round my neck of the woods this morning.

**Fred** Now, that's something I like to do.

**Josie** What?

**Fred** Neck in the woods.

**Josie** Oh you are awful, Fred.

**Fred** You didn't say that when I got you those eggs the other week.

**Josie** When can we expect some more?

**Fred** Probably next week. *(He turns to Eileen)* Some for you as well this time, Miss Lennor.

**Eileen** *(hesitantly)* I could certainly do with some, but where do they come from, I ask myself?

**Fred** Well, they didn't fall off a lorry, I can tell you that. You won't find any cracked ones.

*Josie and Sally smile*

**Eileen** But they're not actually official, are they?

**Fred** I don't need your ration book, if that's what you mean.

**Eileen** During the war, I made a point of not buying black market goods.

**Fred** Well the war's over now, but I'm not trying to twist your arm. I can find plenty of customers for

them.

**Eileen** I suppose it doesn't do any harm now. Yes I'd like some please, Fred.

**Fred** (*looks toward the inner office*) What about his nibs?

**Josie** Oh I'm sure he'll want some.

**Fred** Right-o, then. See you ladies later.

*Fred exits*

**Sally** I can't make out this order at all, Josie.

**Josie** Let me see it.

*Sally gets up, goes to Josie's desk and hands her the order*

**Sally** Looks like a lot of scribble to me. Something like, 'pocket something typing manuals'.

**Josie** It's four packets of latch-type mandrells.

**Sally** Is it?

**Josie** Yes, I couldn't tell you what they are or what they're used for though.

**Sally** I'd have never got that.

**Josie** You'll have to pass an examination for it. If the examiner can read what they're written, they fail.

**Sally** You're kidding me.

**Eileen** They should be made to type the orders out. I don't know why Mr Scott doesn't insist on it.

*Whilst she is speaking, Mr Scott enters from the inner office*

**Mr Scott** What is it I should insist on, Eileen?

**Eileen** That all orders should be typewritten.

**Mr Scott** Is there some problem?

**Josie** No, not really. Just one of Frank Parker's orders, but I've deciphered it now.

**Eileen** It shouldn't be necessary to have to do that. He should be more careful.

**Mr Scott** I grant you that his writing is pretty awful, but I don't think he'd take it too well if I told him he had to type out every order when he got back to his hotel each evening.

**Josie** Well, I think I shall have a word with him when he comes in.

**Mr Scott** By all means. He might take it coming from you, but don't upset him.

**Josie** I know.

**Mr Scott** He was salesman of the month, again for January. It wouldn't surprise me if we saw him on the Board pretty soon.

**Josie** He might even make Managing Director if he learns to write.

*Mr. Scott smiles. He deposits the papers he is holding on Sally's desk*

**Mr Scott** What has happened to the coffee this morning? It's late.

*He doesn't wait for a reply and goes back into his office*

**Josie** When is Frank due in again?

**Eileen** The end of next week, I think.

**Sally** Are you really going to tick him off about his writing?

**Josie** Yes, I shall speak to him about it. He's a nice bloke, Frank, I could quite fancy him.

**Sally** He's a bit old, isn't he?

**Josie** Oh I don't know. There's many a tune played on an old fiddle.

**Sally** Eh...what's music got to do with it?

**Josie** It's a old saying. Haven't you heard it before?

*Sally looks slightly bewildered*

**Sally** Oh yes, I get it.

**Eileen** I can't say that I'd like to be married to a commercial traveller.

**Josie** You mean that you wouldn't trust him when he's on the road.

**Eileen** No, not that. If I loved him I'd trust him.

**Josie** I don't know that I would. But all those reunions would be nice. I remember when Dave used to come home on leave during the war. They were like second honeymoons.

**Sally** Did you go to nice places?

**Josie** (*chuckles*) We didn't go away. You could call them holidays at home.

**Eileen** I don't think the passion would be quite the same after only a couple of nights away.

**Josie** Yes. You are probably right.

**Eileen** Where is the coffee?

**Josie** I could do with a cuppa to warm me up. I haven't felt warm since I got here.

**Eileen** I do hope this winter isn't going to be a repeat of the last one.

**Josie** Oh it can't be. That was freak weather.

**Eileen** They say it was the coldest for fifty three years.

**Sally** Yes it was real brass monkey weather, wasn't it?

**Eileen** Sally.

*Josie laughs and gets on with her work*

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### **Synopsis**

One Monday morning, the staff of a small office is shocked when they hear that Maggie, their tea lady, has been injured in a road accident. They are even more shocked when the replacement tea lady returns from visiting Maggie in hospital with some startling revelations.

Running time: 25 minutes