

*Extract from Act One Scene One of 'In Bed With Harry' by David Weedall*

This absurd comedy takes place at Harry and Carrie's place, somewhere in a remote outback region of that great Southern Continent, usually referred to as Australia!

Carrie. When he arrives, we must be careful. Don't allow yourself to be impressed by his manner. We never did get on... no... we never did hit it off at all! He's just wanting to use his past, so called, friendship with me.

Harry. But you were *mates*. You've mentioned him on occasions.

Carrie. A sort of conversation filler, something to say when there wasn't anything to tell.

Harry. When that's the case, it's best to say nothing at all.

Carrie. When he arrives, we must be pleasant, cordial, but don't give him any cause to feel too comfortable or he might think of stayin' a second or a third night and I couldn't... I wouldn't tolerate that.

Harry. Strange how what you say can have such an effect on someone.

Carrie. Um?

Harry. On the other hand, what you don't say, the omissions in one's speech, can be equally destructive.

Carrie. You're very profound this a'rvo... probably sickening for something!

Harry. You really don't like him, do you?

Carrie. You can't be too careful with some people. Some people can't be trusted. Treat him like an overnight lodger. Say we're tired, that we need to retire early.

Harry. Sleep is all you ever think about! There are other things people do in bed!

Carrie. Not 'ere we don't. Besides, once you're married... you should be easing up on that sort of thing!

Harry. Easing up? When did we ever get going?

Carrie. Look... we need to get ourselves *organised!*

Harry. You do love having it all worked out!

Carrie. Being organised is how I survive. No, when he arrives, we will be in control.

Harry. You do love that!

Carrie. Too right!

Harry. But surely, sometimes, it's good to take a risk.?

Carrie. Eh?

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Harry. ...tell someone exactly what you think of them!

Carrie. You know how I operate.... discretion at all costs!

Harry. Oh, don't worry - no need to fear! *(Pause)* So what did he ever do to you that was so terrible?

Carrie. Um?

Harry. You talk about him with such disdain. Something obviously happened to colour your view of the man.

Carrie. Eh?

Harry. What happened between you? Something must have happened...

Carrie. Whatever gave you that idea?

Harry. You have that long, cold, distant sound in your voice. There's a story here, something untold from the past.

Carrie. That's the problem with you, you're far too perceptive for your own good... or like to think you are.

Harry. I thought you said you could tell me everything?

Carrie. No one can possibly have the balls to tell another person everything. Anything maybe, but not everything. If that were the case, all relationships would be intolerable.

Harry. All relationships I've ever had have been intolerable, in the end. Don't keep it locked up inside.

Carrie. Some things are better left unsaid.

Harry. You've thought this through, in advance...?

Carrie. Yeah, well, I'm a great thinker.... a deep thinker.

Harry. I know... I understand you... most of the time...

Carrie. Yeah, well, when he arrives...

Harry. When he arrives we shall be cold, hard hearted, bloody minded and inconsiderate and... I hate it!

Carrie. It's just that people from the past have a habit of getting under your defences, undressing one as it were and revealing the vulnerable areas. People who know you from the past, know you too well, or like to think they do. Think they've got some bloody God given right to say whatever they like. Rather like one's relatives!

Harry. No vulnerability?

Carrie. Exactly!

*(There is a loud knock on the front door. Carrie leaps in the air and onto the bed.)*

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Carrie. God, it's him... 'es 'ere! *(Pours another drink and downs it in one.)*

Harry. Stay absolutely calm! Take a deep breath in... and count to ten... *(She obeys)* one... two... three... four... five... six... seven... eight... nine... ten... and then out! Now you're feeling calmer arn't you?

Carrie. No, I'm not!

Harry. Yes you are... you're fine! *(He sits on the bed)*

Carrie. Yeah, you're right... I'll be fine. *(Another knock on the door).* All right, I'm comin', I'm comin'! *(She moves to the front door.)*

Harry. You really will be...

Carrie. The bed! Make the bed! *(Harry leaps off the bed and they both tidy it with urgency. Harry then gets into bed. Another loud knock on the door)* OK! I'm 'ere! *(Carrie opens the door very slightly, then rushes back to the bed and sits next to Harry. They both sit in bed smiling in their night clothes)*

Ollie. *(Opens the door slowly and stands in the doorway. He speaks with an English accent and is dressed in a suit. He carries with him a very tall, thin box and cannot see ahead of himself)* Anyone at home? Anyone... is there... was there.... will there be ... anyone here?

Carrie. Ollie, me old mate, is that you? Don't just stand there... come on in! *(Ollie enters.)* Well I must say Ollie, you're looking very well... or rather... the bits of you I can see are lookin' good!

Ollie. Yes, I'm feeling good. You don't look so bad yourself. Or rather, I'm sure you are looking fine!  
Carrie, my young friend, how are you?

Carrie. I'm not so bad.

Ollie. Good! Well, after all this time, we meet again. You sound different, though...

Carrie. Er... well... when in Rome an' all that!

Ollie. You look similar though... er... I imagine! Seven years older, but similar. Nice place you've got here, Carrie, small but comfortable.

Carrie. Thanks a lot. We like it.

Ollie. I'm pleased that you do. Nice position too, very pleasant.

Carrie. I'm pleased that you like it. We're pleased with what we 'ave.

Ollie. You know, that's right, it really is. It most certainly is! Look, you don't mind if I put this box down somewhere do you... it's beginning to feel rather heavy?

Carrie. Be my guest. I'm afraid there's not much room.

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Ollie. Not to worry. *(He staggers into the room and the momentum of that movement carries him around the bed to the far side of the bed where he puts the box down)* Ahhh! That's better! Thanks! So, Carrie, who is this friend? I get an introduction?

Carrie This is Harry, my partner in business and marriage.

Ollie. Marriage?

Carrie. Marriage.

Ollie. Well I never! Good afternoon Harry, pleasure to meet you.

Harry. Good'ay , pleasure to meet you, also!

Ollie. By the way, please don't open up this box and get in it, will you? It's a rather private sort of box, if you know what I mean. *(Awkward pause during which they smile at one another)* Nice bed you've got here!

Carrie. We like it...

Harry. Yes, we do, we're happy with it!

Ollie. Good, I'm so pleased. *(Pause)* I've er... no doubt you... er... you have some other rooms here... a lounge... possibly?

Carrie. No.

Ollie. Oh. So...er.... this... a sofa bed is it?

Harry. A sofa bed? No!

Ollie. Oh.

Harry. We have a kitchenette, bathroomette and dunny of course!

Ollie. A *bathroomette*?

Harry. We like it this way!

Ollie. Really?

Harry. Absolutely! Nothin' wrong in that!

Ollie. No, not at all! Cramped, but intimate!

Harry. Besides, we can't afford anythin' bigger!

Ollie. From what I remember of Carrie, she was never at a loss for making a quick buck or two!

Carrie. That was in the past, mate.... seven years ago! Besides, in this town, all the homes are small and of an identical design.

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Ollie. Yes, I couldn't help noticing that as I drove into town!

Harry. Here, we mostly stay indoors an' wear our jimjams!

Ollie. That's er... a little unusual... isn't it? I mean, staying in doors with a climate like this in pyjamas? I thought you'd out there constantly sunning yourselves at the pool side!

Harry. It's unusual, but comfortable. In and out of bed so much, you see!

Ollie. Really? So Carrie, what do you do... now I mean...?

Harry. Not a great deal!

Carrie. Mail order counselling, in the main... you know... teaching people to live better lives? As you can see, there ain't space to run much of a business.

Ollie. But with all this open space around you, miles of open countryside, surely you could have built a massive home, instead of this tiny place? *(They stare at him)* No. You're right. I wasn't really thinking, was I?

Carrie. No, mate!

Harry. No, mate!

Ollie. No!

Carrie. *(Taking Ollie aside)* Look, I don't quite know how to say this... truth is there is no easy way to say it... but when did you last have a wash?

Ollie. What?

Carrie. A bath or a shower...?

Ollie. Um?

Carrie. When did you last wash... all over?

Ollie. Er... a couple of days ago... I think...

Carrie. A couple of days ago, eh? Undies and socks?

Ollie. What?

Harry. Come on... no need to be shy... when did you last change 'em?

Ollie. Look, what is this?

Harry. When did you last change 'em?

Ollie. This morning... or was it yesterday? Yeah... yesterday most likely. Look, what the hell are you up to?

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Harry. But surely, you could have changed them this morning?

Ollie. What the heck are you going on about?

Carrie. Two days ago eh? Well, I suppose for a man, that's to be expected!

Harry. Look mate... we can't have someone stayin' with us in a home this size, in a climate this 'ot, if they're not prepared to be clean and wash frequently! We have high standards of cleanliness in this town. Everyone who lives 'ere has to ablute frequently, a shower twice a day!

Ollie. Is that so?

Carrie. Look, strictly between ourselves, I have a very keen sense of smell, but I'm afraid Harry has no sense of smell whatsoever!

Ollie. Yes, you mentioned it briefly, on the phone...

Carrie. I did? Had a nose job done two years ago... plastic surgery thing... the surgeon made a terrible error... internally... you understand.

Ollie. Really? I'm so sorry. Never mind, they do say that if you loose one sense, the others overcompensate to make up for it, eh? So how are you then, Harry old chap?

Harry. I'm just fine!

Ollie. Excellent! Carrie?

Carrie. I'm fine. I'm smellin' for two, but I'm fine!

Ollie. Delighted to know it!

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'In Bed With Harry' is an absurd comedy for five actors (3f 2m) with a running time of approx 80 mins. It was written to be easily produced with very few props and minimal furniture on a low budget.

The play was first performed at the Brighton Fringe Festival 2004 and then at The Hawth Theatre, Crawley.

'A witty and entertaining production that has the audience guessing and laughing until the final twist' Brighton Argus

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