

Extract from Act One Scene Two of 'CLAMPERS' by David Weedall.

*The action of the play takes place in and around an underground car park near you,
in the not too distant future.*

(The lights rise illuminating YARGER (F) seated in her overalls, eating her breakfast and STENNA (F), who is standing in the room also in overalls. STENNA is reading off e-mails from the Communicator.)

STENNA. Bills, bills and more bloody bills! Unbelievable! You spend most of your waking life working... working off your bottom arse only to get wages to pass onto other people... all of whom think they have some God given right to charge you for merely existing! "Oh, you're alive are you? Well, that will be thousands of smackers in housing and vehicle repayments! Oh... then there's your income tax, council tax, national insurance, health insurance ... water... electric.... gas.... vehicle fuel.... oh... and don't forget your food will you? You might just need a little food, all right!" Fresh air will be next you know! They'll bottle it and sell it in supermarkets next to the spring water department! "*Fresh Air... Bottled to Our Very Highest Standards – Just Ten Meter's Distance from an Austrian Mountain Stream*",

YARGER. Five metres from a bloody sewage farm, more like!

STENNA. Then of course there's your parking to pay for... that is... if you can ever find anywhere legal to park! Plus pay and display charges... resident permit charges... congestion charges... toll fees... not to mention actual parking fines... or those friendly little vehicle removal fees!

YARGER. But there again, you could actually just get rid of your vehicle altogether! That would be cheaper, arguably safer and generally greener! Not that you'd ever actually get anywhere ever again, what with civic transport as it is! Not that you could rely on your car either...with virtual gridlock, practically everywhere... which makes the vicious circle, virtually bleedin' complete!

STENNA. Meanwhile, back on the finance front, you've reached month end.... just managed to pay everything off... and then... a new month commences... and we start the wretched process, all over again! Oh...did I forget something? Yes, I believe I actually did! For if you don't find a legal place to park, which is now a virtual certainty, you might just be unlucky enough to receive a quick clamping or two! Oh yes, there's pesky, little clamping fines all right! Currently running at around three thousand smackers a shot... a nice little stinger to your ever-dwindling resources!

YARGER. Which reminds me... I'm sure my reply must be due from that application! There must be a reply by now... there's got to be! *(She refers to the Communicator)* Bill.... Circular... bill... Ah... yes...! Yes, this looks like it! "If message incorrectly delivered, please return to Fleecems Unlimited" That's the one! This is the moment... the moment of truth! *(She presses the Communicator and reads from it)* 'Dear Ms blar de blar...following you're application of blar de blar we are pleased to inform you that blar de blar de blar'*(Her face breaks into a smile)* I've got it! Stenna... I've got it!

STENNA. Got what?

YARGER. I've got *it!*

STENNA. *It?*

YARGER. You've not listened to a word I've been saying, over the past three months?

STENNA. Er... kind of... I was kind of listening... in a general sort of way... but not specifically... to every word!

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YARGER. Year upon year of civic toilet cleansing... ever since my graduation!

STENNA. And me... me as well!

YARGER. Thing is, once you're assigned employment... you're supposed to be content... content with the job you've been given!

STENNA. But not us... never us! We're... somehow... in someway... different!

YARGER. Different ?...

STENNA. Singular.... uncommon... a-typical... unusual...

YARGER. Singular... that's us... that's why we're so low graded! That's just the problem!

STENNA. So what is *it* that you have got?

YARGER. *It* is the very thing I've always wanted...

STENNA. Oh well ... that's clear then! Clear as mud! What?

YARGER. A proposal. (*She points to the message*) See? A proposition!

STENNA. Proposition ? You lucky blighter! Come on then... who is he?

YARGER. Chance would be a fine thing! Just give me a male toilet-cleansing operative... any time...any day! But no...you've got it wrong! The proposition of a new dawn... a new day.... a new start ! No more toilet cleansing for me... a brand new beginning!

STENNA. Really? Well, most of us would like the chance of a new start at some time. I'm as sick of cleaning toilets as you! It's all I ever dream about... the bleach, the brush the pan, the seat...! One long, recurring, bloody nightmare... the bleach, the brush the pan, the seat...!

YARGER. The chance to start out anew...to become the one thing that I always wanted! I'm called in for Testing, it's all in the letter!

STENNA. No.... you're kidding! You can't be serious...?

YARGER. Have I ever looked less like I was not serious?

STENNA. No... I have to say... that you've never looked less like you were not serious! Let me read it! (*She reads from the Communicator*) 'Dear blar de blar...following your application of blar de blar we are pleased to inform you that blar de blar de blar.....' You lucky blighter!

YARGER. Ambition, that's what! It's my ambition!

STENNA. But that's hardly fair! I mean, I applied at least three months prior to you! I have ambitions too!

YARGER. Ah... but have you ever got called for Testing?

STENNA. Well, no, that's just it! I never did!

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YARGER. And whoever said that life was fair? You'll just have to wait... to wait some more! More waiting... is what's in store!

STENNA. Oh, thanks! But why did no one forewarn me of the long delay ahead? Waiting... holding on all this time? Caught and held firmly in the gridlock of life! I shall complain, of course... when eventually I'm seen. I shall complain... ferociously!

YARGER. Ferociously?

STENNA. Aggressively... viciously... brutally... wildly... about the long wait I've had with still no offer of a Test!!!

YARGER. Ah... now they'll like that! That, they will find particularly impressive! They like brutal, wild aggression! They'll be pleasantly astonished! On the other hand, you could of course re-apply.

STENNA. And risk losing my dignity? No thank you! Not bloody likely!

YARGER. Strange... those words...

STENNA. What words?

YARGER. The words you just used then...

STENNA. What? 'Not bloody likely?'

YARGER. No, the phrase 'thank you.'

STENNA. Oh?

YARGER. They remind me distinctively of a time when I first realised that the phrase 'thank you' was of no particular value...

STENNA. What?

YARGER. You see for many years, I believed the phrase would help me fulfil my ambitions to climb the grading, social and economic ladder. So I said 'thank you' on just about every occasion I could, to just about anyone I met! To give the impression that I was a rather pleasant, even cordial individual!

STENNA. You, cordial?

YARGER. Affable... genial... amiable... friendly!

STENNA. You... affable... genial... amiable... friendly? Oh, come on!

YARGER. I really believed it would help me progress! Which only goes to prove how wrong you can be! You see, I soon realised that people who get to the top don't get there by saying 'thank you'... 'after you'... or 'sorry!' 'Fine!' maybe.... but never 'thank you'. 'Out of the way!' but never 'after you' and 'tough shit' never 'sorry'.

STENNA. Oh... I see!

YARGER. You didn't use it in your application, did you?

STENNA. Use what?

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YARGER. The phrase, 'Thank you'... Like, 'Dear Bla de bla, *Thank you* for your letter dated bla de bla... for the information concerning the bla de bla de bla'.

STENNA. I might have...I just might have used it... I can't honestly remember! I might have said something like, 'Dear.... bla de bla.... *Thank you* for sending me the bla de bla for the bla de bla de bla....' I *might* have used it!

YARGER. Ha! No wonder then, that you were never called for Testing! It's one of the first rules of the game! Not one of them would ever say "thank you!" It's strictly off limits and against the rules! Therefore, and to use me as an example, when I reply to this letter I shall merely be writing thus... 'Dear bla de bla.. I have received your offer to attend the Test and will be present on... bla de bla de bla.... Yours, Bla de bla!' No 'please' or 'thank you'... just straight in there and to the point!

STENNA. So very certain...so very assertive!

YARGER. Got to be! No thrills and spills... just right to it and no delay! Grab e'm by the balls and keep 'em there... firmly clasped in a steel, vice-like grip! Clamped balls... in fact!

STENNA. Sounds excruciating!

YARGER. Most certainly!

STENNA. That's impressive...

YARGER. No compromise!

STENNA. It's what makes us special!

YARGER. Special and strong...

STENNA. ... special, strong and attractive...

YARGER. ... special, strong, attractive and so very, very desirable...!

STENNA. Yeah... come get us boys!

YARGER. Yeah lads... we're ready for you!

(The sound of a bleeper)

STENNA. Ah... the Contacter! It must be for you!

YARGER. No, no! Assert yourself more and say.... 'Ah...the Contactor! It *must* be for me!' Try it!

STENNA. Ah...the Contactor! It must be for me!! *(She presses a button)* Hello? Ah yes!..... It's for you!

YARGER. Yarger speaking!Yes, it is me!Yes, I've got your letter!Yes, of course I've read it.... What is my reply? I haven't written one yet!..... Do I want the Test? Bet your top dollar I do..... How soon can I attend? Well, tomorrow or today..... This afternoon? Bet your bottom arse I'll be there.....! Yeah, see you then.....bye! *(He presses the button)* Hear that? Loud and clear and to the point! "Want me this afternoon? Bet your bottom arse I'll be there!"

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STENNA. Aggressive, strong and forceful... that's you! So where's your top arse, then?

YARGER. Sheer naked aggression is what makes a woman a woman, in this age!

STENNA. It's why you've been called for Testing and I haven't! But I must learn to be more obnoxious!

YARGER. Obnoxious ?....

STENNA. Violent...brutish...sadistic... bestial!

'CLAMPERS!' is a darkly comedic play for five actors (3f 2m) with a running time of approx 75 mins.

It was written to be easily produced with few props and minimal furniture on a low budget. The play was first performed at the Brighton Fringe Festival 2003 and then at the Hawth Theatre, Crawley.

'If you thought traffic wardens were bad – just wait till you meet the CLAMPERS!' Brighton Argus

Copies are £5.00 each.

Royalties: £35/ show (150 audience or less. Enquiries can also be made concerning larger audiences and for profit productions)

If you would like to read the entire script then send simply go to the 'Contact Us' page of this website and make an enquiry. We will explain how to purchase a copy that will be sent to your email address.