

SUCCESS AT LAST!

This was Herbert's big chance. He had always wanted to be a screenwriter, and the opportunity to write had come when a screen-writing competition was announced. Herbert set to work and, having taken the trouble to watch some soap-operas for himself, he set to work:

Scene One: *Janice walks into the living-room of her house and flings her arms around Dennis, her next-door neighbour. She tells him that she loves him more than her husband, and that she would like to prove it, there and then. Coincidentally, and unknown to the couple, Billy, Janice's husband, has returned home early and is standing in the hallway. The camera focusses on an enraged Billy, as he storms into the living-room to confront the pair.*

Scene Two: *Having extricated himself from the situation, Dennis takes solace in a drink at his local, 'The Duck and Crumpet', where, surrounded by numerous people who had had relationships with one another, he consoles himself with a beer. At the precise moment he is reading a loving message from Janice, he is distracted by Josh Blinker, the local hard man. Squaring up to Josh, Billy ignores his phone, which is then read by Ricky Tudor, who is, coincidentally, Billy's best mate.*

Scene Three: *Out in the street, Ricky takes Dennis to one side and threatens to blackmail him if Dennis refuses to pay him £100 a week for the next year. Billy is, coincidentally, standing around the corner, and overhears the conversation, realising that he has been betrayed more than once.*

Scene Four: *Billy meets Ricky's wife, Cheryl, at her house. The final shot is of the shadow of someone standing outside the window. But whose shadow is it?*

Herbert was proud of his work. He believed it was dramatic, while presenting the reality of life in the inner-city, involving many social issues. He felt he had presented the complexity of many modern relationships, whilst making them accessible to the ordinary viewer.

Just at that moment, an email arrived in Herbert's in-box. 'Yes!' He had been called to a meeting at the head office of the Screen Writers Guild. The next day, Herbert put on his best jacket and tie, whilst forgetting to change his trainers, before calling a taxi and making his way to the meeting.

He was ushered into a room, and took his chair, surrounded by very important-looking people.

'Well?' Herbert could hardly speak, he was so nervous.

'The committee has reached its decision,' replied the booming voice. 'You have constructed a script in line with many of our popular soaps of today. There are coincidences galore...'

'I was hoping you would like them,' interrupted Herbert. 'Am I going to move on to the next round?' His shaking feet sent vibrations across the wooden floorboards.

'The simple answer is 'Yes'. But the competition you have entered will change. Your script will be forwarded to our comedy competition, with our blessing.'

'What?!' said Herbert. He didn't know whether to be happy or sad.