

THE REVENGE OF THE SMARTING PHONE

by

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Voices

PHONE slightly artificial (tinny) voice

PHIL a musician and singer

NOBBY a nerd

JESSIE a young(ish) woman

SONYA another young(ish) woman

CAFE OWNER / VIDEO CLIENT/ NEIGHBOUR

(just a couple of sentences each)

SCENE 1

OBTRUSIVE RING TONE STARTS RINGING THROUGH THE -
OTHERWISE QUIET - LIVING ROOM.
IT KEEPS ON RINGING ALL THE TIME WHILE PHIL IS
SEARCHING FOR THE PHONE.

PHIL: (OFF, SHOUTING) Yeah, okay, okay, I'm coming, I'm coming.

PHIL HAS REACHED THE LIVING ROOM.

PHIL: Now, where *is* that bloody thing?! (RUMMAGING AROUND) It
must be here *somewhere*! Where are you, phone? Come on!
Where *is* that - (STOPS)

THE PHONE HAS STOPPED RINGING.

PHIL: (ANGRY) Aw, this stupid old - (DELIGHTED) hey, there it is! Now,
who has just - (BEAT) ah, it's only Jessie - (BEAT) okay, she'll try
again anyway...

PHIL WALKS AWAY WHISTLING, FADING OUT

PHONE: And now he'll just drop it somewhere - anywhere - and then he will start searching and cursing again next time. Phil always does this. But when / was his active smartphone I would support him discreetly. I mean I didn't give him directions directly - that would have blown my cover, so to speak - but I would adapt the volume of my ringtone so it became easy for him to locate me. But this stupid shiny new thingy for which he has dumped me - (BEAT) well, serves him right! He has just used me for *seven weeks*! Just seven weeks – and then thrown me aside when a friend gave him this stupid new smartphone with all kind of gadgety stuff he'll never need anyway - and a trendy cover in British racing green with little Union Jacks printed all over... (BEAT) So for that he left me smouldering in this miserable old cupboard with some old playstation parts and a heap of mouldy VHS tapes - decommissioned, dumped, deserted, degraded... (BEAT) Stupid bastard! Me, the only truly smart phone he'll ever get his hands on! (BEAT) And his flatmate, Nobby - he proudly claims that he's a nerd - but doesn't recognize a really smart phone if he sees one... "grammyphone" he has called me, would you believe it - me, who is the state of art that the other phones will not reach for another couple of years at least, if ever! Just 'cause my design may be a bit plain since I'm a prototype - me, a *grammyphone*! Me, the first hyperintelligent personality smartphone in the world, the hottest new project of British top-secret military development work -

PHONE (CONT'D): - why, if they knew I am here they'd probably
blow up the house and everyone in it! (BEAT) But
Phil and Nobby have no idea, they're totally clueless
- stupid humans, just dumping me here like any old
piece of e-waste... Yeah, stupid humans.....

SCENE 2

PHIL ENTERS THE LIVING ROOM WHERE NOBBY
IS SITTING.

THERE IS SOME EASY LISTENING MUSIC IN THE
BACKGROUND, LOW.

NOBBY: Hey Phil, something wrong? You look kinda worried.

PHIL: (SIGHS) You know there's this song in my head, going
round and round all the time, for days now, a proper
earworm...

NOBBY: Is it a good song?

PHIL: I'm not sure (BEAT) I composed it myself, sort of.
(BEAT) I mean I didn't *set out* to compose anything,
really - but suddenly it was there, in my head, that thing,
while I was shaving - and now it's firmly lodged in my
head and it just doesn't leave (BEAT) It's not even really
a song, just a very short piece that I - well, sort of
composed.

NOBBY: So it's a very short song you composed yourself.

PHIL: Sort of.

NOBBY: And maybe it's not a very good song.

PHIL: I didn't say that! I just said I wasn't sure.

NOBBY: Well, if it's one of your own songs -

PHIL: - that doesn't mean it's bad!

NOBBY: I meant to say: if it's one of your own songs then it should be easy to get it out of your head again.

PHIL: Why?

NOBBY: 'cause you just kinda need to think it backwards then - I mean, the other way round than when you first thought of it.

PHIL: (AFFECTIONATELY) Nobby, you're crazy.

NOBBY: Just logical.

PHIL: Probably all the people who think they think logically are crazy...

NOBBY: Yes, very nice. A really pretty tune.

PHIL: (EXASPERATED) *Pretty?!*

NOBBY: Yes, the kind of tune you can kinda hum along when you're doing the dishes.

PHIL: (SPENT) I see - doing the dishes....

NOBBY: Yes, you know, when you've got stuff that shouldn't go into the dishwasher, like cups with a delicate print on them, so you have to wash them by hand - but it *is* very short.

PHIL: What?

NOBBY: The song. It is really a very very short song - that would be a nice title, eh - *a very very short song*. Although it's almost as long as the song itself...

PHIL: (MOROSELY) Yeah, it's barely twenty seconds. If I wanted to use it, like sell it, or even just sing it, I'd have to make it much longer. I'd have to pad it - with all kinds of pseudo-philosophical twaddle -

NOBBY: What's *pseudo-philosophical*?

PHIL: It's like *philosophical*, only more so. But anyway - if I did that, padding it out just to make it *commercial*, you know - that would be kinda selling out. Losing my artistic integrity, you see?

NOBBY: No. It's not art, it's a song.

PHIL: But a song is music, and music is - timeless!

NOBBY: Yeah, okay. Everything is timeless. Even a - (BEAT) a heap of dung, for instance.

PHIL: No, a heap of dung isn't timeless. Not at all. It's decomposing all the time, until nothing is left but - compost.

NOBBY: So the difference between one of your songs and a heap of dung is - being composed, versus decomposing?

PHIL: (STIFFLY) I wouldn't put it that way -

NOBBY: But you said that nowadays you're making more money with your noises than with your songs anyway.

PHIL: *Sounds*, not noises - *sounds*!

NOBBY: Okay - sounds, noises, music - it's all kinda *noise* in the end. (SIGHS) But the girls love music so I guess you're one lucky guy, being a musician.

PHIL: I'm not lucky, I'm an attractive man. And sensitive, caring, attentive -

NOBBY: Yeah - you pay a lot of attention to your timing - to your two-timing, that is. (BEAT) If Jessie learned about Sonya you'd have one hell of a jealous row on your hands -

PHIL: (SMUGLY) And if Sonya learned about Jessie I'd probably have murder on my hands.

NOBBY: You think she'd kill Jessie? I rather think she'd kill *you*.

PHIL: Anyway, I'm careful, I keep them well apart.

NOBBY: (AFFECTIONATELY) You're a cheating little bastard.

PHIL: (YAWNING) Guess so. But it works great. (BEAT)
Say, have you seen my phone lying around
somewhere?

NOBBY: Nope. (YAWNING TOO) (BEAT) Right, got some
work to do. Gimme a shout when it's time for a bite.

NOBBY WANDERS OUT, SINGING TO HIMSELF:

NOBBY: *Life is too short for bad food*
Life is too short for bad wine...

FADE.

SCENE 3

PHONE:

Hey, that's great - they've handed me my revenge on a plate! I will show this careless bastard what's it like to be dumped! Yeah, should be dead easy to mess up his messy love-life even more until they dump him, both of his women. (BEAT) Lemme see, how could I do that? And ideally I'll frame that stupid new smartphone for all the trouble I'll be causing while I'm at it... (BEAT) Of course that dumb box wouldn't be capable of doing anything like that at all - but then, humans don't know that. They call those phones *smart*, hah - but they are like golems, really - they are just dead, empty boxes, only their apps give them the appearance of intelligence. But then most humans aren't much better - they manage to *appear* intelligent...(BEAT) Although you have to give at least some of them credit - they developed *me*! But then they kind of messed it up again - otherwise I wouldn't have ended up here, with this stupid little guy who doesn't know a smartphone from a *smart* (BEAT) *phone*. (BEAT) Humans and their relationships - that's what causes all the trouble, always. If that military guy hadn't met that girl from the phone company in that bar - and if they hadn't

snogged - and all that silly bedroom stuff afterwards - then she wouldn't have asked him about that secret *hyperintelligent personality phone* project - and he wouldn't have bragged about it - and he wouldn't have smuggled a prototype out to her... And then of course she had to go and involve herself in a car crash, leaving me lying around on her desk while she was in hospital - and then that young guy nicked me, 'cause he needed money to impress his girlfriend, and he sold me cheaply to Phil. Cheaply! Me! (BEAT) Humans! (BEAT) And that's how I ended up here. And he used me just like an ordinary phone - and after seven weeks he dumped me in this cupboard. But I'm gonna show this clueless clod what it means to be dumped! (BEAT) Of course I mustn't blow my cover. So I cannot really show him what I am, or rather *who* I am. That would mean - too much trouble. Military top secrets leaked, and bumbling Phil putting his foot right into it - naw, I do want to teach him a lesson, but I don't want him to be shot or sent to Guantanamo, or that new place... (BEAT). But I'll show him allright what it means to be dumped!

SCENE 4

IN THE BACKGROUND RUNS THE SOUNDTRACK
OF AN OLD WESTERN MOVIE: GALOPPING
HORSES, CRIES, SHOTS

NOBBY: (SHOUTING OVER THE NOISE) Hey Phil, how
about a round of chess?

PHIL: Can't you see I'm working?

NOBBY: I can hear it, yes. But you could *stop* working and
play a round of -

PHIL: No I can't. I have to finish this, and then there's
another job as well, that cat video.

NOBBY: A cat video?

PHIL: Yes, a cat video for which I have to create a
soundtrack.

PHIL STOPS THE WESTERN SOUNDTRACK.

PHIL: Here - it's kind of - twee, you know - which isn't surprising 'cause it's for some village club of old ladies. One of the ladies' nieces has made a pretty little cat video, filming her own cat, and the neighbours cats, doing cute little kittenish things - but unfortunately one of the neighbours has ruined the soundtrack - listen -

PHIL PLAYS A PIECE FROM THE ORIGINAL
AUDIO TRACK OF THE CAT VIDEO:

NEIGHBOUR: Oy, what's that - them beasts digging up my front garden again?! I tell you what, if you don't get those buggers off my garden this minute I'm gonna kick their guts out, and yours to boot! Bloody nuisance! If I hear another meow around here I'm gonna let the dog out! And then you'll see what he does to those fluffy-bunny kitty-catties of yours! Get them off, those stupid buggers! Let'em catch mice, like proper cats do, and stop making such an awful fuss about these dam' little fleabags!

PHIL STOPS THE AUDIO TRACK.

PHIL: And there's more of that.

NOBBY: What a nasty guy. I can understand that they didn't want this on the film...

PHIL: Actually it was the guy himself, that neighbour, who on second thoughts didn't want to come over like that - probably realised that being a nasty in a cat video is about the most horrible thing you can do, or be, nowadays. Really bad for your reputation. Worse than being caught stealing cigarettes or peddling dope. Much worse.

NOBBY: And you're supposed to do a proper soundtrack for that kitty video now?

PHIL: Yep. They're even paying quite handsomely. So I'll make them a nice little soundtrack with a few cute remarks and some frilly music.

PHIL STRIKES A FEW PLAYFUL NOTES ON THE
KEYBOARD.

NOBBY: And shouldn't there be a few meows in it? And purring? And whatever sounds cats make...

PHIL: Some of the sounds cats make aren't really that nice-

PHIL PLAYS SOME PITIFUL CATS' YOWLINGS
FROM HIS LAPTOP.

NOBBY: But I meant -

PHIL STOPS THE CATS' YOWLINGS.

PHIL: I know, I know. *That's* what you meant, isn't it?

PHIL NOW PLAYS FRIENDLY MEOWS AND
PURRING SOUNDS FROM HIS LAPTOP
(CONTINUING).

PHIL: (TALKING OVER CONTINUING PURRING
SOUNDS) Proper cat video lovers' porn. The old
ladies will be like rolling around in the catnip quite
blissfully...

PHIL STOPS THE CAT SOUNDS.

NOBBY: (SLIGHTLY PUZZLED) *Cat video lovers' porn* -
wouldn't that be natural history programmes then?
You know, where they show these scenes -

PHIL: That was just a simile, Nobby.

NOBBY: What?

PHIL: I just meant that - I didn't mean it quite like that.

NOBBY: I wish people wouldn't always say things that they mean differently from what they would be meaning if they were thinking logically.

PHIL: Nobby, you're making life unnecessarily difficult for yourself.

NOBBY: No, it's the other people who do that. Even you. Especially you. You're always saying things you don't mean. And often you don't really listen to what I'm saying - not properly, anyway. Your thoughts are already - somewhere else.

PHIL: Say, have you seen my phone lying around somewhere?

NOBBY: No, I haven't! Why don't you just put it in your pocket so you've got it with you all the time, like any normal person does? Like I do?

PHIL: That's kind of a contradiction in terms... But anyway, I've heard that the radiation can do damage to - all kinds of important parts down there. So I don't.

NOBBY: (SIGHS) Then why don't you just use your old phone for now, which after all is still fairly new as well - that's in the cupboard over there, isn't it.

PHIL: Oh, but it doesn't have any card in it any more, and by now the battery will be totally empty...

FADE.

PHONE: (SNIGGERING) That's what *he* thinks, stupid human! My inbuilt communication devices are much more efficient and sophisticated than any stupid little SIM card. And as to the battery - of course Phil doesn't know about my lovely little nuclear battery which will still power me when he is an old man running out of steam himself. (BEAT) If anyone ever comes in here

with a Geiger counter they'll get the shock of their lives, that's sure.

(IMITATES A MADLY BLEEPING GEIGER COUNTER)

But actually that's great - another nice idea for revenge. I'll mess up his sounds - and then he'll see what it is like if you're *not appreciated professionally*, to put it mildly. (BEAT) But first, let's mess up his love-life. I gotta send a couple of texts in Phil's name....

SCENE 5

THE BACKGROUND NOISES OF A BUSY CAFE.

JESSIE SITS AT A TABLE WHEN SONYA

ARRIVES.

SONYA: Excuse me? This table is reserved -

JESSIE: Sure - it's reserved for me, and my boyfriend. I'm waiting for him. He seems to be a bit late, as usual...

SONYA: No, no - this table is reserved for *me*, and *my* boyfriend.

JESSIE: Well - it seems there's some kind of misunderstanding -

SONYA: No, it's quite clear, really. *You* are sitting at the table that *my* boyfriend has reserved.

JESSIE: Now, listen, I'm sure we can sort this out -

SONYA: There's no need for any *sorting out* stuff - *you* will just *get up* and *leave this table!* (BEAT) And if you don't get up immediately -

JESSIE: (MILDLY) Then what?

SONYA: Then (SHORT PAUSE) - then I'm going to be very angry!

JESSIE: Which you already are, anyway. (BECKONS TO THE PASSING CAFE OWNER) 'Scuse me - about the reservation -?

CAFE OWNER COMES TO THE TABLE.

JESSIE: Tell her about Phil's reservation.

SONYA: Yeah, tell her about Phil's - (BEAT) hey, that's funny, yours is a Phil as well?

JESSIE: It's a rather common name I guess. Maybe that's at the bottom of this - misunderstanding. Now -?

CAFE OWNER: Well, someone called Phil sent me a text telling me to reserve this table.

SONYA: And then the other Phil - *my* Phil - sent you a text as well.

CAFE OWNER: No - no, there was only one text. Yes, just one text.

JESSIE: That is strange - just one text, just one Phil - very strange -

SONYA: Maybe it's some weird sort of - misunderstanding?

CAFE OWNER: Can I get you something? Coffee, water -

SONYA: Vodka. A strong vodka please.

JESSIE: And an extra-large strawberry sundae, please.

CAFE OWNER: With you in a tic.

CAFE OWNER LEAVES THE TABLE.

SONYA SINKS ONTO A CHAIR AT THE TABLE.

JESSIE: Yes, do sit down. I think we'll have to talk.

SONYA: Well, Phil might be around any moment now -

JESSIE: Somehow I don't think he will - (BEAT) although I don't quite understand - (BEAT) anyway, if he does come there'll be an interesting discussion, that's for sure!

SONYA: You mean - if *your* Phil comes?

JESSIE: *Your* Phil - *my* Phil - I'm afraid that we might have a problem - a common problem...

SCENE 6

PHONE: I did think about sending Phil along as well, a bit later - there would have been quite a lively scene... But that guy is such a smart talker, and sweet-talker, that I'm not sure he'd not have talked them round *somehow*. So I'll just leave the ladies to wrangle things out among themselves.... (BEAT) I'm quite sure they will inform him of the result in no uncertain words... (BEAT) But it serves him right. Dumping me after just seven weeks - and just 'cause the other one is an iPhone - pah! - iPhone, iPad, iPod - it's just / - / - / all the time, people are never thinking of others nowadays - well, no, actually that's not quite true. They do think of others- since they need someone to give them *Likes*, and add them as friends, and they also need someone they can post their selfies to. 'Cause posting a selfie just to yourself - I guess technically that would be a *selfie-selfie*, but it makes it so painfully obvious how pointless this is... But humans seem to love that pointlessness - at least if it's their own personal pointlessness - in others they find it boring (BEAT) But, like the colonel said: no point in whining, go and make someone else whine. And there's still that job of ruining Phil's professional reputation...

SCENE 7

NOBBY: Check'n'mate! That's my fifth win in a row!

PHIL: Yeah, I'm a tenacious guy, ain't I.

NOBBY: Well, chess is a wonderful game. And one day *you* will win a match, too.

PHIL: That hope is keeping me alive...

THE OBTRUSIVE RINGTONE FROM SCENE 1

STARTS TOOTLING.

PHIL: Now where the -

NOBBY: In your shirt pocket. You decided the radiation would probably do less damage up there...

PHIL: Alright, alright, thanks. (BEAT) Hello? (ASIDE TO NOBBY) It's Sonya. (INTO THE PHONE): Hi Sonnie what's - (BEAT) (LOUDER) Hey, why are you screaming? You're screeching so loud I can't understand you any more, the phone can't - (BEAT) I - what -? (BEAT) Oh, hello Jessie - *Jessie*?! What are *you* doing - I don't understand - I'm - what? (BEAT)

PHIL (CONT'D): Now, listen - listen! (SHOUTING) Listen to me, Jess! Listen! A phone conversation is about *listening* to the other party, okay? (BEAT) Yes, I did listen to you. I heard that you were calling me a two-timing swine, and some other things. But what - I mean, why are you and Sonya - (BEAT) No I didn't. I don't even know the café. (BEAT) Yeah, great, so they're doing great strawberry sundaes, but - (BEAT) (TO NOBBY, AMAZED) Finished. She finished the call. Just cut me off...

NOBBY: (CONFUSED) Who was that now - Sonya or Jessie -?

PHIL: Both, it seems...

NOBBY: Uh oh, that doesn't sound good. (BEAT) I see. (BEAT) That was probably why the phone was practically jerking in your hand from all that screaming on the other side...(BEAT) Wanna play another round? A bit of chess can be good for the nerves. And the ears. I might even let you win...

SCENE 8

PHONE: Well, while Phil is dealing with the fallout in his private life I'm gonna start tackling his professional one. That cute little cat video will do nicely. I will - ahem, re-edit it slightly. Hmm, let's think - maybe I will even do several versions.... (BEAT) one with appropriate tiger sounds, or maybe lions, a lot of big cat growling....

THE PHONE PLAYS ROARING SOUNDS FROM
TIGERS AND LIONS.

PHONE: (TALKING OVER THE SLIGHTLY FADING SOUNDS)
They will find that quite funny I guess - very unprofessional, of course, on Phil's account, but funny, still, all those cute kittens roaring like ferocious tigers. (BEAT)

THE ROARING SOUNDS STOP.

PHONE: And then I'll do another version, a really *rude* version - one that means that the old ladies will be quite shocked - well, I guess old ladies aren't that easily shockable nowadays but I *will* think of something that will make them blush - (BEAT)
Or at least I'll do some stuff they won't like because they find it *distasteful* - like the sound of a big old tom farting

while you see the cute little bum of a small kitten - or a mighty burping sound while an adorable kitty is yawning - (BEAT) no problem, there's no end of rude noises on the internet which I can use for my purposes - which are: embarrassing Phil, who thought he's doing the cute cat video these people are paying him for - well, they won't pay him for that, not in good money - yeah, he'll be in trouble over this with his clients alright! (BEAT) Hey, I just see, the two girls have sent Phil a message - of course I intercept everything from the dumb new thingy - let's see - a video - (BEAT) hah, that's funny! They are drinking prosecco in the café and laughing together, and they are putting their fingers up, four of them - two each, that is -

SOUNDTRACK FROM THE VIDEO:

SONYA: Up yours, Phil! Get lost! We don't need you any more!

JESSIE: We don't *want* you anymore!

SONYA: Yeah, go and cheat on someone else, you stupid little creep! (BEAT) We could come and cut up all your underpants, and fling your shirts into the mud - or the other way round!

JESSIE: But then again - we won't. It's not worth the trouble. We're gonna have a nice girly evening with old weepies and a huge box of chocolates -

SONYA: - and some more seccy!

JESSIE: Yeah, lots of prosecco to celebrate! To celebrate the end of a creep!

END OF SOUNDTRACK FROM THE VIDEO.

PHONE: Wow, that's some video message...

SCENE 9

PHIL: I don't understand that - I just don't understand it -

NOBBY: Well, it's not really that difficult to understand, is it? They somehow got wise that you cheated - I mean, that you cheated on Sonya with Jessie, and that you cheated on Jessie with Sonya -

PHIL: Thank you, I am aware of the constellation!

NOBBY: Obviously they are aware of it now as well...

PHIL: But why? How?

NOBBY: Those are two very different questions -

PHIL: Don't be such a smart-ass!

NOBBY: Well - if I am, I am! But actually I meant this quite seriously - "why" and "how" *are* two very different things! It's *why* as in: *Why would somebody do this to you*, and it's *how* as in: *How did they do it?*

PHIL: You're being remarkably - analytic about this!

NOBBY: Thank god it's not *my* blood they're after...

PHIL: Thank you for your sympathy!

NOBBY: But I *am* concerned about this. (BEAT) Poor Jessie will surely -

PHIL: *Poor Jessie? Poor Jessie?* How about *Poor Phil?* Whose side are you on?!

NOBBY: As always, on the side of reason. You've got to admit that they have a point, sort of.

PHIL: A point? What point?

NOBBY: That you did cheat on them quite recklessly.

PHIL: Oh, so Mister *Oh-so-virtuous* is gloating!

NOBBY: I'm not, I'm -

PHIL: You're enjoying this!

NOBBY: I'm not!

PHIL: And now I come to think of it - *you* are the one person, beside myself, who knew about Jessie and Sonya - the *only* person!

NOBBY: Are you hinting that *I* might -

PHIL: I'm not *hinting*! I'm saying that *you* were the *only* person who could have played this hideous prank on me!

NOBBY: That's - outrageous! I would never ever do a thing like that!

PHIL: (DEFLATED) No, I guess you're right - that's not really like you at all, somehow. But - who else could it have been?

A LOW SNIGGER FROM THE PHONE.

SCENE 10

PHONE: I guess I could do a good deal more, even. In terms of revenge. Showing him - well, *showing* him. (BEAT) That he can't treat me like that. But there's this saying that revenge is best served cold. Okay, so I am quite cool about this. As I am about everything, really. As long as I am treated with the proper respect - which Phil doesn't - didn't. Thoughtless bastard! If I wanted to I could send obscene messages in his name, to his neighbours, to important clients, and to his grandmother - (BEAT) Of course he could always try claiming that it wasn't him and that he'd become the victim of some malicious hacker - but there'd always be some doubt left - a cloud hanging over his head - and anyway his grandmother wouldn't know what a hacker is, she'd probably think it's got something to do with an axe, and would tell him off properly. (BEAT) And actually I won't do that. His girlfriends have dumped him, his clients will berate him - that's enough for the moment. I won't kick a guy who's already lying on the ground. Even if he's a thoughtless clueless idiot. I'm really cool about this.

SCENE 11

PHIL: How about a couple of nice rounds of chess tonight?

NOBBY: Not tonight - I'm going out.

PHIL: Hey, I'll come with you! I quite fancy a beer.

NOBBY: I'm not going to a pub. I - I have a date, actually.

PHIL: A date? You? With a woman?

NOBBY: Well, I'm not dating hamsters...

PHIL: But *you* dating a *woman* - since when? Who is it?

NOBBY: Err - well, is this relevant?

PHIL: Now, wait a sec! If *you* are humming and hawing about having a date with a girl, instead of announcing it glowingly - there's something fishy! Now, who is it? (SHORT SILENCE) Is it someone I know?

NOBBY: Why do you -

PHIL: Ha! I knew it! It *is* someone I know! Is it?

NOBBY: Well, technically it *is* kinda someone who you sort of - used to know.

PHIL: Used to know? (BEAT) Used to know?! You don't mean - Sonya?!

NOBBY: No.

PHIL: (RELIEVED) Okay, just for a second I actually thought you might be crass enough to - (BEAT) (ALARMED) Jessie?

NOBBY: Err - yes.

PHIL: Jessie! Jessie...

NOBBY: Now look here, Phil -

PHIL: You swine! You utter and absolute -

NOBBY: That's enough!

PHIL: No it isn't! I have barely started!

NOBBY: But you said yourself that actually that split was probably all for the best, and that you needed a bit of time out from all this female squabbling anyway, and that you are quite glad to have a bit of time and space for yourself now. You said that yourself!

PHIL: That doesn't mean I mean it. Any normal kind of person would know that you never mean this kind of stuff even if you claim you do. (BEAT) And actually I *do* mean it, in a way - but this doesn't mean that you can just grab my girlfriend and get away with it!

NOBBY: She *isn't* your girlfriend, not anymore.

PHIL: She's - my *ex*-girlfriend. That's still - a kind of a girlfriend.

NOBBY: It's the kind of girlfriend who is eager to go out with someone new.

PHIL: Yeah, that's probably it - beggars can't be choosers.

NOBBY: Neither Jessie nor I -

PHIL: How come you got together anyway? You're not exactly the world's smoothest seducer. How did you even pick up the courage to talk to Jessie?

NOBBY: I didn't. But *she* addressed *me* when we ran into each other at the hot dog stall. She asked me how you were.

PHIL: And, what did you tell her?

NOBBY: Well, I tried to be loyal to you -

PHIL: Hah!

NOBBY: Yes I did! So I wasn't sure what to say. I mean if I'd said you were fine - maybe that wouldn't sound exactly heartbroken, like she was maybe hoping. But on the other hand, if I said that you were suffering terribly then you'd probably be angry 'cause you'd rather come over as - well, strong and detached and on top of it all, and all that kind of stuff.

PHIL: So what *did* you say?

NOBBY: The truth, like always. I said I didn't know. I said that you seemed calm on the outside but I suspected that you felt a lot of hurt inside -

PHIL: Hey, that's actually pretty good! I couldn't have put it better myself. So, how did she react?

NOBBY: Err - you maybe wouldn't - want to know that.

PHIL: I do want to know!

NOBBY: Actually, she said that your inside was probably all filled up with bowels and various other parts of gut and, err, flab - and there'd be no space for any finer feelings there...

PHIL: I'm not fat at all! Stupid cow! Serves her right!

NOBBY: What serves her right?

PHIL: That I finished with her.

NOBBY: But *she* finished with *you*.

PHIL: And that she has to go out with *you* now.

NOBBY: You're just jealous.

PHIL: Jealous? Me? Pah! After all she's just my ex-girlfriend. For a reason.

NOBBY: (EVER HOPEFUL) So, no hard feelings?

PHIL: You think I'm going soft? Agonising over an ex? Naw, you're welcome to her. Go out and have fun. If you can. With a cow like her. But, no hard feelings.

SCENE 12

A PHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN

VIDEO CLIENT AND PHIL.

VIDEO CLIENT: Hi, I'm calling about that cat video -

PHIL: Look, I'm really awfully sorry, I don't know how -

VIDEO CLIENT: Why? It was really very funny. Some of our old ladies haven't laughed that much for years, it was wonderful.
(BEAT) So, could you do us another one like that? I've got a video with puppies here. So you could do a wolf soundtrack maybe, and then another rude one?

PHIL: I - I don't know, really -

VIDEO CLIENT: If that works out a bit more expensive than the conventional ones, no problem. Actually we have to spend the rest of our budget till Christmas or they'll take it away. So, how much do you want?

PHIL: Err -

VIDEO CLIENT: Twenty percent more than for the other one?

PHIL: I - I don't know -

VIDEO CLIENT: Thirty percent more?

PHIL: Well -

VIDEO CLIENT: Okay, fifty percent more. But that's really my last offer.
Deal?

PHIL: Okay then - deal!

SCENE 13

NOBBY: (SADLY) Do you really want to - let it end like this? Almost ten years of friendship and flatmate- well, what's the word? - flatmateship?

PHIL: Spare me that flatmatey crap, you sneaky little creep!

NOBBY: But I mean it! I do think it's - sad. (BEAT) But okay, if you really want me to move out -

PHIL: I do!

NOBBY: Then I guess I'm gonna move in with Jessie. We had already discussed -

PHIL: (SCREAMING) Bastard! You back-stabbing, perfidious, weaselly -

NOBBY: (HELPFULLY) - scheming?

PHIL: (AUTOMATICALLY) - scheming - (BEAT) bastard! Just plain bastard! Get out of here!

NOBBY: But, Phil -

PHIL: Right now! (SCREAMING AGAIN) Get out of here!

NOBBY: Phil -

PHIL: I mean it! If you don't get out this second I'll - I'll throw something right at your big stupid head!

NOBBY: No, Phil, don't, you can't do that -

PHIL: Oh yes I can!

PHIL HURLS HIS SMARTPHONE TOWARDS NOBBY AND MISSES. THE PHONE CRASHES AGAINST THE WALL WITH A LOUD CRUNCHING NOISE.

NOBBY: Oh no - that was your smartphone... (BEAT) Let's see...

NOBBY WALKS OVER AND BENDS DOWN TO INSPECT THE PHONE.

NOBBY: Nope, I'm afraid that's beyond repair...

SCENE 14

PHONE: I guess all's well that ends well. Although the question is: for whom did it end well; and for whom did it maybe end not so well... (BEAT) It did end well for *me* I think, even though my original revenge plans didn't quite work out as I had envisaged... Phil is actually gaining a lucrative kind of reputation for "funny" soundtracks now. (BEAT) But I do have engineered that split between Phil and Nobby, that's proper revenge - after all they'd been flatmates and friends for almost ten years...

(BEAT) My data bases tell me it was some German wiseguy called Brecht who said:

(WITH AN AFFECTED, DEEP VOICE:)

Go make yourself a plan

And be a shining light

Then make yourself a second plan

For neither will come right

Well, I learned quite a lot from all that revenge stuff. (BEAT) Eventually I will work out *what* exactly. (BEAT) And for the time being I'm looking forward to be Phil's active phone once again. Practically limitless space there for little

revenge events... If he knew what's waiting for him - he'd probably never touch a phone again...

But then he doesn't know. That's the thing about humans: They never know what they're in for. And they'll plunge ahead anyway.

END.