

# SILLY OLD BUGGERS

A musical celebration of growing old

in two acts.

by

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# **SILLY OLD BUGGERS**

## **THE CHARACTERS – All aged 60 years and older.**

<b>CHLORIS (soprano)</b>	<b>Ex-opera singer – Full Age Pension</b>
<b>PAUL (light baritone/low tenor)</b>	<b>Ex-truck driver – Part Pension</b>
<b>HELEN (mezzo or contralto)</b>	<b>Ex-schoolteacher – Part Pension</b>
<b>MARTIN (baritone/high bass)</b>	<b>Ex-merchant banker – Fully Self Funded Retiree</b>

## SONG LIST

The music is all recognisable – even familiar. It is drawn from nursery rhymes, popular classics, Gilbert and Sullivan, traditional folk tunes, etc. It is all in the public domain.

### Source of original songs & music

<u>Song Title</u>	<u>Original Title</u>	<u>Composer</u>	<u>Source</u>
<b><u>ACT 1</u></b>			
1. Fight for Your Rights	Toreador's Song	Bizet (d.1875)	Carmen
2. I lived my life	Habanera	Bizet (d.1875)	Carmen
3. We're Tired of Being Old	Three Blind Mice	Trad.	Nursery Rhyme
4. Computers	Modern Major General	Sullivan (d.1900)	Pirates of Penzance
5. The Nicest Solar Plexus	Yellow Rose of Texas	Trad.	American Civil War
6. Researching Your Family Tree	Jota	Chabrier (d.1894)	Espana
7. Little Boxes	Clementine	Percy Montross	c1880
8. Fitness Song	My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean	Trad. Scot.	c1745
<b><u>ACT 2</u></b>			
9. We Have to Fart	So go to him ....	Sullivan	Patience
10. All Through the Night	Welsh Folk Tune	Trad.	
11. Hypochondria – the Anthem	Dance of the Hours	Ponchielli (d.1886)	Dance of the Hours
12. I'd Rather Dye Than be Grey	Tooralai...	Trad.	Botany Bay
13. Come to Me...	Barcarolle	Offenbach (d.1880)	Tales of Hoffmann
14. Pull the Plug	If you're happy...	Trad.	Children's Song
15. Our Friends Will Make us Strong	John Brown's Body	Trad.	American Civil War
16. Bang That Drum ...	Jingle Bells	Pierpont (d.1886)	OK.
17. Adieu – Silly Old Buggers	Tavern in the Town	Trad.	English Folk Song
18. Reprise: Friends Will Make Us Strong			

There are seventeen songs. Of these, fifteen are virtually unchanged from the original music. Some have variations in tempo or rhythm but they have needed very little arranging. The remaining two are arrangements of classical compositions.

## **SILLY OLD BUGGERS**

### **ACT 1**

THE SET IS ONE ROOM – PAUL AND HELEN’S APARTMENT. CHLORIS LIVES ON ONE SIDE AND MARTIN ON THE OTHER. THERE IS A SHARED BALCONY ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE STAGE.

#### **OVERTURE**

SINGLE SPOT ON CHLORIS STANDING ALONE AT ONE SIDE ON THE SHARED BALCONY. SHE IS HOLDING A CORDLESS PHONE AND IS IMPATIENTLY WAITING TO BE ANSWERED. WE CAN HEAR THE ‘BRR BRR’ OF THE PHONE RINGING.

VOICE: (A GENTLE, KINDLY, CONDESCENDING WOMAN – SPEAKING VERY SLOWLY) Good afternoon. (SOOTHING MUSIC BEGINS IN THE BACKGROUND) Welcome to the Retirement Services Line. Your call may be recorded for security or listened to for customer service. Please tell the operator if you do not wish this to occur.

CHLORIS: Hah! What operator?

VOICE: This is a speech access service. When I ask for your Customer Access Number, you may speak your answer or press the keys on your key pad. Please tell me your customer access number including the letter on the end.

CHLORIS IS A LITTLE DISTRACTED, HAVING NOTICED A NAIL THAT NEEDS FILING.

CHLORIS: What? That’s my problem! I can’t find my ....

VOICE: If you do not have a Customer Access Number, just say – I don’t have one.

CHLORIS: (ANGRY) I’ve already told you that! I just want to talk to someone about my pension! I haven’t had it since ...

VOICE: I’m sorry, I seem to be having trouble understanding.

CHLORIS: You certainly do!!!

VOICE: Please hold while I transfer you to a customer service adviser.

CHLORIS (SARCASTIC) Thank you!

MUSIC: Abba singing: “Money, money, money”

CHLORIS: Omigod!!

CHLORIS TAKES A LARGE MAKE-UP BAG FROM HER HANDBAG AND SEARCHES FOR A FILE, REMOVING MANY ITEMS SUCH AS MIRROR, MAKE-UP, ETC, ETC,

RING-RING, RING-RING: CHLORIS PAUSES IN ANTICIPATION.

VOICE: Thank you for waiting. All our operators are attending to other customers at present. Your call has been placed in a cue and will be answered as soon as possible.

MUSIC: Abba singing: “Money, money, money”.

VOICE: Did you know that you can visit our website on [www.senioroutreachbranch.com](http://www.senioroutreachbranch.com) and register for online access?

CHLORIS: Do you mind? I HATE computers!

MUSIC: Abba singing: “Money, money, money”.

RING, RING, RING:

VOICE: Thank you for waiting ...

CHLORIS: Oh, shut-up, you condescending bitch!

VOICE: I beg your pardon!

CHLORIS: Omigod! Are you a real person?

VOICE: (FRIGID) Yes, I am. How can I help you?

CHLORIS: Well, you can get some more operators for a start. I haven't got time to hang on the phone all day listening to rubbish!

VOICE: I don't have to put up with aggression, you know. If you continue with this attitude, I have every right to hang up.

CHLORIS: Oh, fu... goodness' sake! I wasn't being aggressive. I'm just sick to death of listening to stupid messages.

VOICE: And I'm sick to death of rude customers.

CHLORIS: I am NOT being rude!

VOICE: Well, it certainly sounds like it to me.

CHLORIS: Anyway, thought this call was being monitored for customer service.

VOICE: Oh, shit! (SILENCE – TOTAL CHANGE OF VOICE) I'm so sorry. I don't know how that rude person got to the phone. She's a – she's a cleaner! How can I help you?

CHLORIS: Oh, come on! You don't expect me to believe ....Oh, never mind. Look, it's my pension. I haven't had a payment for three weeks. I can't find my card, I don't know my number ...

VOICE: Please hold the line. I'll put you through. (CLICK)

VOICE: Thank you for waiting. Your call *has* been placed in a queue and will be answered as soon as possible.

MUSIC: Abba singing: “Money, money, money”.

LIGHTS UP – PAUL, HELEN AND MARTIN ENTER, SINGING.

### **FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS!**

(Tune: ‘Toreador’s Song’ from Carmen – Bizet)

PAUL: Fight for your rights, don't let the bastards win.  
They have to pay,  
You'll find a way.

MARTIN: Keep fighting till they want to run and hide  
You have right on your side.

HELEN: It's time to turn the page  
Forget your age

ALL: Stand up and fight – like hell!

PAUL: Lady, we're on your side!

HELEN: You don't have to take it, you know.

MARTIN: We're all here to help.

CHLORIS: But ...

HELEN: I'll bet they've gone for a cuppa.

PAUL: Yeah, probably gone to the loo.

MARTIN: They have no idea what it's like to be left hanging on the phone.

PAUL: You know what you've gotta do?

THREE:

Stand up and fight, we'll see you get your pay,  
Where there's a will  
We'll find a way.

PAUL: You know, there are a million just like you  
And we're here at your side.

MARTIN & HELEN: We're here to let you know  
You're not alone

ALL: Stand up and fight like hell!

PAUL: (TO CHLORIS) Feel better now?

CHLORIS: (TOTALLY BEMUSED) I feel – absolutely fan-bloody-tastic! But how did you  
know I was ...? Who are you?

PAUL: We're your new neighbours.

HELEN: Paul and I live next door to you and Martin's on our other side.

MARTIN: And the three apartments share this balcony.

HELEN: I'm Helen, and we're here to welcome you to your new apartment.

CHLORIS: Oh, that's wonderful. Thank you so much. I'm Chloris. And you are Helen,  
Martin and Paul.

PAUL: Quite right. Welcome Chloris. And we hope you'll join us in the fight.

CHLORIS: (WARY) What fight is that?

PAUL: For the right to grow old with ...

CHLORIS: With dignity?

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PAUL: Certainly not! With indignity!

MARTIN: With indignation.

PAUL: With freedom to make fool of ourselves.

MARTIN: To be stupid.

HELEN: To be undignified and outrageous.

PAUL: We may be silly old buggers but we're no sillier than when we were young buggers. Right?

HELEN & MARTIN: Right!

CHLORIS: But that's fabulous! I'll certainly join. What do I have to do?

PAUL: Absolutely nothing. If you're over sixty, you're in it already.

PHONE: RING, RING.

CHLORIS: Oh, excuse me. (INTO PHONE) Hallo?

VOICE: Thank you for waiting. All our operators are attending to other customers at present.  
Your call *has* been placed in a queue ...

MALE VOICE: (CHARMING) Hallo, this is Brad. How may I help you?

CHLORIS: Oh, Brad! Are you really a real person?

MALE VOICE: (LAUGHS GENTLY) Yes, I am. How can I be of assistance?

CHLORIS: It's my pension, you see. I haven't had a payment for three weeks. I can't find my card and ...

CLICK – BEEP, BEEP, BEEP. THE PHONE HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED.

CHLORIS: (IN DISBELIEF) I've been cut off! (RHYMICAL) I can't get my pension paid.  
I'm nearly in despair!

HELEN: I know what you're going through. No one seems to care!

MARTIN: My broker's just as bad, you know – I nearly go insane!

PAUL: Well, you know what I think we need? (HOLDING IT UP) A bottle of champagne! Follow me!

**ALL: AS THEY MARCH OFF TO PAUL AND HELEN'S APARTMENT**

**THIS CAN FADE OUT DURING THEIR EXIT AND LIGHT CHANGE – MUSIC UNDER.**

Fight for your rights, don't let the bastards win.  
They have to pay,  
We'll find a way.  
Keep fighting till they want to run and hide  
We have right on our side.  
It's time to turn the page  
Forget your age  
Stand up and fight – like hell!

**THEY HAVE ALL GONE – LIGHTS UP ON PAUL AND HELEN’S APARTMENT.  
ALL SEATED WITH GLASSES AND NIBBLES.  
IT IS A COUPLE OF BOTTLES LATER.**

CHLORIS: Darlings, I couldn’t afford it on my own. I’m a tax dodge!

PAUL: A what?

CHLORIS: A tax dodge.

MARTIN: For whom?

CHLORIS: My daughter. She’s a journalist. She has plenty of money, I have none. She provides the apartment – I live in it. Perfect arrangement.

MARTIN: And where does she live?

CHLORIS: At the moment – Paris. How I envy her!

MARTIN: You know Paris?

CHLORIS: Oh, intimately! I’ve been all over the world. I was a singer, you know.

PAUL: A singer? What – clubs? That sort of thing?

CHLORIS: (SMILES KINDLY) Opera, darling.

HELEN: (IMPRESSED) Opera? Did you sing – well – major roles?

CHLORIS: Oh, yes. Queen of the Night, Butterfly, Traviata, (PAUSE) Merry Widow. And, of course, my favourites – the bitches: Lady Macbeth, Lucretia Borgia...

HELEN: And you travelled the world?

CHLORIS: Far and wide. And the farther I travelled, the wider I got!

HELEN: The big opera houses?

CHLORIS: Of course. Paris Opera, La Scala, Covent Garden, The Met – even Sydney!

HELEN: What an absolutely glamorous life you’ve led.

CHLORIS: Aah, glamorous, yes. But expensive. A contract here, a contract there. But between the contracts – nothing. And the rent and the gas bill still must be paid.

MARTIN: (NODS) Mm, it would need careful managing.

CHLORIS: Then, at last, you get older. The contracts dry up and – you come home.

MARTIN: You have superannuation?

CHLORIS: Hah!

MARTIN: And you didn’t manage to save anything?

CHLORIS: (LAUGHS HEARTILY)

**I LIVED MY LIFE**

(Tune: ‘Habanera’ from Carmen – Bizet)

I lived my life up to the max  
I paid my dues I paid my income tax  
Whatever pleasure came my way



I never cared how much I had to pay.

The whole wide world became my home  
I lived in London and I lived in Rome  
But oh the life that captured me  
Was in that city that they call Parea.

CHLORIS: Ah, gay Parea – you captured me.

OTHERS: (At same time) The whole wide world became her home  
She lived in London and she lived in Rome  
But oh the place she loved to see  
What that great city that they call Parea.

CHLORIS: The Eiffel Tower, the River Seine  
In summer sunshine and in winter rain  
I had my fling and it's been flung  
And on the way I've had a lot of fun

OTHERS: A lot of fun!

CHLORIS: And then the time had come for me to sing my own sweet song

OTHERS: Her own sweet song

CHLORIS: I learned a different song for every man who came along.

OTHERS: She learned to sing her own sweet song  
For every man she had a different song

CHLORIS: And who they were, I can't recall  
I only know that I have loved them all.

OTHERS: She loved them all!

CHLORIS: And now the time has come for me to sing a final song.

OTHERS: A final song.

CHLORIS: My fling's been flung, my song is sung, and so my life is done!

OTHERS: Da-done!

(END OF SONG)

CHLORIS: No regrets! I've had a ball. But oh, I would love to see Paris just once more.

PAUL: Helen and I met in Paris. The only time I've ever been out of the country – and look what happened to me.

CHLORIS: Have you been married long?

HELEN: No, not long. In fact, not at all.

PAUL: Yeah, well, by the time we'd travelled around Europe together for three months, there didn't seem to be a lot of point in getting married.

HELEN: We met on top of the Eiffel Tower.

CHLORIS: How romantic!

HELEN: Romantic? (LAUGHS) He was standing there all by himself, singing about the bridges of Paris.

PAUL: You know the one: “How would you like to be, Down by the Seine with me, Oh what I’d give for a moment or two, Under the bridges of Paris with you”...

MARTIN: That was Dean Martin!

PAUL: Yeah, that’s right. And she laughed at me!

HELEN: I couldn’t help it. Then I told him there were tourist boats that would take him under all the bridges, and he said ...

PAUL: I said: “I know. I’m planning on having dinner on one of those tonight. You wanna come with me?” She was shocked.

HELEN: He thought I was really stuck up.

PAUL: You were. I’d never met anyone like you. She’d been the Principal of a Private Girls’ School, y’know. (LAUGHS) She came to dinner with me, though.

HELEN: And we talked ...

PAUL: ... and we laughed ...

HELEN: ... the whole evening.

PAUL: And we haven’t stopped since.

HELEN: Paul was a truck driver.

PAUL: Yeah. Nearly got killed in a big accident. Got a nice hefty insurance payout. That’s how I got to Paris.

HELEN: You paid for it though. He was in hospital for nearly twelve months.

PAUL: I was all right by the time I met you. Didn’t slow me down much, did it?

HELEN: I’d never met a truckie before. He showed me a whole new world.

CHLORIS: Really?

HELEN: He was mad! He made me do all sorts of things I’d never have thought of doing before.

PAUL: And that was before we got out of bed!

HELEN: You see? He’s dreadful!

PAUL: Don’t tell me you didn’t have a good time. What about the sky diving?

CHLORIS: You went sky diving? When was this?

HELEN: Not long ago. About four years.

CHLORIS: My god! And I thought I’d been adventurous.

HELEN: I can’t believe I really did some of them. Hang-gliding...

PAUL: Hang-gliding, skydiving, scuba-diving, you name it, we did it. Helicopters, balloons –

HELEN: And that parachute thing. What was it called?

PAUL: Paragliding. (TO CHLORIS) Off the back of a boat, high over the Mediterranean in the South of France.

CHLORIS: (TO HELEN) Weren't you scared?

HELEN: I was terrified. But he kept booking things and then saying we couldn't cancel.

PAUL: Did you enjoy it?

HELEN: It was fantastic.

CHLORIS: Sounds like it. And what about Martin? Have you three been friends for long?

MARTIN: No. Only about three months. Since we all moved in here.

PAUL: Yeah. Martin's the one with a bit of class. He was a merchant wank – er – banker. Weren't you, mate?

MARTIN: I suppose you could call it that. I worked for an international banking company . I travelled a lot, too – currency trading, that sort of thing.

CHLORIS: Really? I'm afraid I just don't understand any of that.

MARTIN: Well, you see it's quite simple ...

CHLORIS: Please don't try to tell me! It won't make any sense at all. Have you been retired long?

MARTIN: No, not long. Only a couple of years – well, nearly three, now.

CHLORIS: Married?

MARTIN: I was. My wife died just after I retired.

CHLORIS: Oh, how awful.

MARTIN: We were going to travel. We couldn't before because we'd been looking after my mother. Then, at last, we were both free to do what we liked. I retired, we started making plans and – suddenly, she was gone.

CHLORIS: Any children?

MARTIN: Yes, two sons. The eldest one's in Mt. Isa – he's a mining engineer. And the other's a teacher. He and his wife live in Canada, now.

CHLORIS: You'll have to visit them.

MARTIN: Yes. Yes, I will. It's just that – I don't seem to have the energy.

PAUL: Come on, Martin.

MARTIN: The only thing I have to get up for in the morning are doctor's appointments!

PAUL: You've got to take control, mate.

MARTIN: I just don't like feeling old! I can't even...(SHRUGS)

PAUL: No, neither can I, mate. Well, not all that often.

MARTIN: (SHOCKED) I didn't mean...

HELEN: Don't tease him, Paul. We all get a bit sick of being old sometimes. I mean – I don't really feel old. Inside I feel about forty.

CHLORIS: Do you? So do I! I think I'm really only about thirty-six. And then I look in the mirror!

PAUL: Yeah. Specially in the bathroom. I reckon Helen's seeing some other bloke. There's someone in there with an old man's body. Can't be me!

CHLORIS: Oh, you should never have a big mirror in the bathroom. That's too cruel.

MARTIN: And depressing.

PAUL: But you've got to learn to laugh about it.

MARTIN: It's hard to laugh when you wake up in the morning so stiff you can hardly move.

PAUL: Wow! Sounds all right to me!

CHLORIS: At least you don't have to worry because you haven't got any money. Now that is depressing.

PAUL: (OFFERING CASK WINE) Have another drink.

CHLORIS: I don't think I should. I can't remember how many I've had. (PAUL FILLS HER GLASS)

HELEN: And that's another thing! Forgetting things.

PAUL: Yeah. It used to really bug me when Helen'd tell me the same thing two and three times. It doesn't matter now.

MARTIN: Why not?

PAUL: 'Cos now I don't remember that she's already told me.

CHLORIS: Don't talk about it! The other day the doctor asked me what my new address would be and I couldn't remember it. I couldn't even remember the suburb!

HELEN: Do you know what I did yesterday? I couldn't get the remote control to work the TV. You know why? I was using the mobile phone! I felt such an idiot!

MARTIN: And people treat you like an idiot.

PAUL: If they see you at all.

MARTIN: Oh, yes. We've all become invisible.

CHLORIS: It's like magic, isn't it? You hit sixty and this invisibility cloak floats down and completely covers you.

HELEN: Especially if you're a woman.

MARTIN: It doesn't happen just to women.

PAUL: No! Try standing at a counter next to a couple of pretty girls and see who gets served first.

CHLORIS: Try hailing a taxi when there's anyone younger with their hand up.

MARTIN: Try getting someone younger to actually listen to what you're saying.

(THEY ALL NOD)

### **WE'RE TIRED OF BEING OLD**

(Tune: Three Blind Mice)

MARTIN: I'm tired of being old  
CHLORIS: I'm tired of being old  
M, CH, PAUL: We're tired of being old  
M, CH, P, HELEN: We're tired of being old.

MARTIN: My life in banking was dear to my heart  
I revelled in being the top of the chart  
But now all I am is a silly old fart!  
I'm tired of being old.

ALL: Poor old bloke,  
Can't take a joke  
We all agree,  
CHLORIS: But what about me?

I spent all my money without any shame  
Ferrari, Givenchy, the finest champagne  
Now I haven't a fashionable shoe to my name!  
I'm tired of being old.

ALL: Poor old you  
It's sad but true  
We all agree  
PAUL: But what about me?

There's many a bedroom I've hung me hat  
I could make love for hours and never go flat  
Now I get up at night – but it's never for that!  
I'm tired of being old.

ALL: Poor old chap  
Better take a nap  
We all agree  
HELEN: But what about me?

I once had a brain that for better or worse  
Could quote you from Shakespeare, chapter and verse  
But now I forget where I've put my purse!  
I'm tired of being old.

ALL: Poor old us  
Can't make a fuss  
It's such a shame  
  
But we're all the same.  
When your spirits are starting to take a dive

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And your misery goes into overdrive  
Be happy to know that you're still alive

HELEN: Even though you're old  
MARTIN: Like really, really old  
CHLORIS: A hundred years old!  
PAUL: Don't say you weren't told  
ALL: Get used to – being – old!

HELEN: It's not all bad, though, really. Is it?

CHLORIS: Isn't it?

HELEN: No. We have our bad days but we have our good days too. And now we've got the time to do all those things we've always wanted to do.

CHLORIS: Like what? I always did the things I wanted to do.

HELEN: Well, Martin's writing a book. Aren't you Martin?

CHLORIS: Really? What's it about?

MARTIN: International banking and the effect of currency trading on the nations of the world and their relative standards of living.

CHLORIS: Oh.

HELEN: And Paul is totally besotted with his computer. He spends hours on it.

CHLORIS: What do you do on it?

HELEN: Hah! He plays games.

PAUL: Not all the time!

HELEN: No, not all time.

PAUL: I do other things. I send emails, I do photos, I find out things on the internet. I can check the weather all over the world!

HELEN & CHLORIS: Wow!

PAUL: It's amazing! (TO CHLORIS) Have you ever wondered how a sewing machine works?

CHLORIS: No.

PAUL: I looked it up the other day and I got a full explanation and an animated diagram!

CHLORIS: How do you know all about computers? Did you work with them before?

PAUL: No, never touched one till I retired.

CHLORIS: So, how did you learn?

PAUL: It was easy.

### **COMPUTERS**

(Tune: 'Modern Major General' from The Pirates of Penzance – Gilbert & Sullivan)

PAUL:

I went along to classes so I'd manage my computer  
And they welcomed me and quickly introduced me to a tutor  
She demonstrated windows which she said I couldn't clean  
And she said I had to hold a mouse although I wasn't keen.  
When she said I had a hard drive, I knew that I was lucky  
And I told her I was used to that 'cos I had been a truckie  
Then she said we had to boot it – so I got up to go  
And why she sat me down again, I'll never, ever know.

ALL:

And why she sat him down again he'll never, ever know.  
And why she sat him down again he'll never, ever know.  
And why she sat him down again he'll never, never, never, ever know.

PAUL:

There's a screen that doesn't stop the flies, and snow that isn't cold  
And all I could remember was the last thing I was told:  
"If you really want to Google while you fiddle with a riddle  
Then you need another model with a toggle in the middle."

ALL:

"If you really want to Google while you fiddle with a riddle  
Then you need another model with a toggle in the middle."

PAUL:

We got on to the internet by pressing lots of keys in  
And she said I had a virus but I wasn't even sneezin'  
Then she talked about the web and said it still was growing wider  
And I thought what really worries me is how big is the spider?

And then she started saying things I've never heard before  
Like I hadn't any mem'ry left and did I want some more?  
The things that she would talk about, they really made me stropo  
Like could I use a mem'ry stick or did I have a floppy.

ALL:

Like could he use a mem'ry stick or did he have a floppy.  
Like could he use a mem'ry stick or did he have a floppy.  
Like could he use a mem'ry stick or did he have a (very floppy) floppy.

PAUL:

The result of my examination was a perfect pass  
But I never have forgotten what she told me in the class  
"If you really want to Google while you fiddle with a riddle  
Then you need another model with a toggle in the middle."

ALL:

"If you really want to Google while you fiddle with a riddle  
Then you need another model with a toggle in the middle."

PAUL:

Now me and my computer don't ever have a quibble  
'Cos I've got another model with a toggle in the middle.

ALL:

If you really want to Google while you fiddle with a riddle  
Then you need another model with a toggle in the middle.

PAUL: You see, Chloris? All you have to do is to be prepared to learn.

CHLORIS: But I don't want to learn!

PAUL: Look at Helen. She's been researching her family tree on the internet, and has she discovered some scandals! (TO HELEN) Tell them what you just found out.

CHLORIS: Scandal?

HELEN: Only ancient history, I'm afraid. But fascinating all the same. Let me tell you – researching family history can dig up all sorts of unexpected things.

CHLORIS: Really? You mean you're actually discovering some family skeletons?

HELEN: Oh, yes! They were no better in the old days than they are now – worse, probably. And how they managed to keep all those secrets hidden for so long I just don't know.

CHLORIS: What sort of secrets?

HELEN: I'll show you. (OPENS UP A BIG FOLDER OF PAPERS)

### **RESEARCHING YOUR FAMILY TREE**

(Tune: 'Jota' from España – Chabriet)

**NOTE: This tune was used for a Dean Martin song called: "Hot Diggety" but has been arranged differently.**

HELEN:

When Uncle Josiah  
Met Great Aunt Maria  
He wanted to bed her  
But never would wed her.  
The things you find out  
When you're scratching about  
And researching your family tree!

And then you discover  
That she took a lover  
And he took another  
And she had his brother.  
And who was the father  
Of my Great Grandmother?  
Well, nobody ever will know!

There's no end to the skeletons hidden away  
And I'm happy to say, I find more every day  
And we'll possibly find you're related to me



As I'm searching my family tree.

A forebear from Norway  
Was raped in a doorway  
And one from Romania  
Was sent to Tasmania  
A financial failure  
Arrived in Australia  
And that's how I came to be here.

Uncles and cousins  
And aunts by the dozens  
If they had a mystery  
I'll search out their history  
There's no way to hide it  
I'll get right inside it  
While searching my family tree.

**FINALE – ALL: (very fast)**  
Bad skeletons, sad skeletons  
(BEAT) From our family tree  
(BEAT) Clank their chains at me  
(BEAT) Now you've set them free

Poor skeletons, more skeletons  
(BEAT) For the world to see  
Now you've opened the door  
(BEAT BEAT) Now you've opened the door  
(BEAT BEAT) And there still may be more! Olé!

CHLORIS: Oh, you are all so clever! Computers will always be a total mystery to me. I'm afraid I just don't have the computer gene.

MARTIN: What you need is a transplant. A donor gene from a computer nerd – like a donor kidney.

CHLORIS: Why not? I've already got a new knee.

HELEN: And Paul's had a kidney transplant – after his accident. As well as a few artificial bones and other bits.

PAUL: And Helen's got false teeth!

HELEN: Oh, shut-up, Paul!

MARTIN: Nothing wrong with that. So have I. And a prosthetic hip.

PAUL: Yeah? When was that done?

MARTIN: About seven years ago.

CHLORIS: If they put all the spare parts together, you could just about have a whole artificial person, couldn't you?

PAUL: The million dollar woman – then you could live forever!

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HELEN: Who would want to?

MARTIN: But really – it’s pretty amazing, isn’t it?

PAUL: Oh, yeah. Those doctors get very excited about their operations. Not theirs, of course, but yours.

**THE NICEST SOLAR PLEXUS**

(Tune: ‘Yellow Rose of Texas’ – Trad.)

PAUL: (as doctor)

It’s the nicest solar plexus that we have ever seen  
We’ll fix up your reflexes with a heart and lung machine  
We’ll replace a faulty kidney, with a careful stitch or two.  
We’ve flown one in from Sydney especially for you.

MARTIN:

If you need a hip replacement, you’d better join the queue  
Or perhaps you’d like a face-lift, it’s an easy thing to do  
Your doctor really likes to keep his patients all alive  
‘Cos every one contributes to his latest four wheel drive.

CHORUS: (ALL)

It’s the nicest solar plexus that they have ever seen  
They’ll fix up your reflexes with a heart and lung machine  
They’ll replace a faulty kidney with a careful stitch or two  
They’ve flown one in from Sydney especially for you.

PAUL:

One day my surgeon called me and he said ‘Your time has come.  
I’ve got some time to operate upon your broken thumb’  
But I had said my toe was sore and I was filled with fear  
And when I woke I found I had a new bionic ear.

CHORUS: (ALL)

It’s the nicest solar plexus that they have ever seen  
They’ll fix up your reflexes with a heart and lung machine  
They’ll replace a faulty kidney with a careful stitch or two  
They’ve flown one in from Sydney especially for you.

CHLORIS: Well, I’m staying away from surgeons just as long as I can. Been there once and don’t want to do it again. I’ve enough problems with pills.

MARTIN: How many do you take?

CHLORIS: Not that many. It’s just that I’ve got these pills for migraine and sometimes the pills are worse than the headache.

MARTIN: What are you taking?

CHLORIS: Oh, I don’t know. I’ve got little yellow ones, now.

MARTIN: Oh, no! I can’t take those! They make me terribly dizzy.

CHLORIS: It was the green ones that made me dizzy. Well, I think it was.

HELEN: I had those green ones. They made me feel sick. So I stopped taking them.

CHLORIS: And some of them are so big! Like a horse pill.

PAUL: Who knows exactly what every one of their pills are for?

CHLORIS: Not me.

HELEN: Or me.

MARTIN: I do. I make a point of it.

CHLORIS: How many do you take?

MARTIN: I take eight in the morning and five in the evening every day.

CHLORIS: Wow! And you really know what they all are?

MARTIN: Of course I do. I have two for blood pressure, one anti-inflammatory for arthritis, a pain killer morning and night, one to treat my ulcer, potassium because of the blood pressure tablets, another one to prevent angina, one to aid digestion and a small dose of aspirin. And a sleeping tablet if I need it.

PAUL: And do you?

MARTIN: Do I what?

PAUL: Need the sleeping tablet?

MARTIN: Not so much lately.

PAUL: You know why?

MARTIN: Well, I've been sleeping better.

PAUL: Because you've been having a drink with us and relaxing. That's why.

MARTIN: Maybe you're right.

PAUL: I know I'm right. We all take far too many pills.

### **LITTLE BOXES**

(Tune: "Clementine")

PAUL:

In the kitchen, on the bench top  
Where you see them every day  
There are special little items  
That we never put away.

MARTIN: What?

PAUL:

Little boxes with compartments  
For each day of every week  
Pills for morning, lunch and dinner  
It's enough to make you weep.

PAUL: There's a red one

HELEN: and a yellow one  
MARTIN: And there's one that's black and white  
CHLORIS: Try the pink one for constipation  
Its effect is dynamite.

ALL - CHORUS

Little boxes with compartments  
For each day of every week  
Pills for morning, lunch and dinner  
It's enough to make you weep.

PAUL: Now there's warfarin  
HELEN: and voltaren  
CHLORIS: And digoxin for your heart  
MARTIN: Diuretics and emetics  
You can tick them off your chart  
Take a stemetel and temazepam  
HELEN: Pseudoephedrine for your cold  
PAUL: Kaomagma and glucosamine  
CHLORIS: And Viagra for when you're old.

CHORUS

Little boxes with compartments  
For each day of every week  
Pills for morning, lunch and dinner  
It's enough to make you weep.

CHLORIS: There's got to be a better way!

HELEN: There is.

CHLORIS: Hah! Tell me what it is and I'll do it.

HELEN: Exercise!

CHLORIS: Exercise?

PAUL: Absolutely.

MARTIN: I can't exercise. I'm not well enough.

HELEN: Rubbish!

PAUL: Chloris?

CHLORIS: I don't – um – I'm not very good at exercise.

PAUL: Okay – we'll show you some really easy ones. Come on, out into the fresh air.

CHLORIS: Do I have to?

MARTIN: Come on, Chloris. We can do it.

THEY ALL MOVE ONTO THE BALCONY.

HELEN: We'll start really slowly – all right?

CHLORIS: Well – I'll try it.

HELEN: Just neck and arms to start with. (TO AUDIENCE) You can do this too, you know. Are we ready?

PAUL MAY HAVE TO SPEAK TO AUDIENCE MEMBER IN FRONT ROW:

PAUL: Come along – you too. We want everyone here to join in and get fit.

**FITNESS SONG**

(Tune: 'My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean')

HELEN:

You first roll your head to the left side

PAUL:

You then roll your head to the right

HELEN:

You now move it up and down gently

MARTIN:

My word I'll sleep soundly tonight!

**CHORUS (ALL)**

Fitness (LEFT ARM UP TO SHOULDER)

Fitness (RIGHT ARM UP TO SHOULDER)

It's all about fitness (LEFT ARM OUT FRONT)

For you and me (RIGHT ARM OUT FRONT)

Fitness (LEFT ARM TO SHOULDER)

Fitness (RIGHT ARM TO SHOULDER)

If you can be fit (BOTH ARMS OUT – POINTING)

So can we. (BOTH ARMS BACK)

PAUL: (TO AUDIENCE) You get the idea? We're not going to do this on our own, though. This is something that everyone of you out there can do. And if you do it properly and if we're quite satisfied that you've done your best – we'll let you go out and have a cup of coffee – or something a little stronger if that's your fancy. Are we all ready?

HELEN:

You first roll your head to the left side

PAUL:

You then roll your head to the right

HELEN:

You now move it up and down gently

MARTIN:

My word I'll sleep soundly tonight!

**CHORUS (ALL)**

Fitness (LEFT ARM UP TO SHOULDER)

Fitness (RIGHT ARM UP TO SHOULDER)

It's all about fitness (LEFT ARM OUT FRONT)

For you and me (RIGHT ARM OUT FRONT)

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Fitness (LEFT ARM TO SHOULDER)  
Fitness (RIGHT ARM TO SHOULDER)  
If you can be fit (BOTH ARMS OUT – POINTING)  
So can we.(BOTH ARMS BACK)

HELEN:  
Your shoulders you roll gently forwards  
PAUL:  
You then roll them back like before  
HELEN:  
Now breathe in and tighten your stomach  
CHLORIS:  
My God I can't do any more!

**CHORUS (ALL)** (Fitness, fitness, etc.)

CHLORIS:  
(I've got one!)  
Your left hand goes up facing forwards  
MARTIN:  
Your right one goes up the same way  
PAUL:  
You close and you open your fingers  
HELEN:  
I think that's enough for today.

**CHORUS (ALL)** (Fitness, fitness, etc.)

PAUL: Excellent! Excellent! You have all earned the right to an interval. And my  
God, so have we!

ALL HOBBLE AND STAGGER OFF STAGE.

**INTERVAL**

**ACT TWO**

**MORNING.**

DARKNESS. A RADIO OR ALARM IS HEARD. MAYBE THE ABC NEWS THEME OR  
'GOOD MORNING AUSTRALIA'.

LIGHT VERY SLOWLY INCREASES.

KETTLE WHISTLES AND IS TURNED OFF. PAUL, IN BOXERS AND SCRUFFY TEE  
SHIRT ENTERS WITH TWO STEAMING MUGS.

PAUL: Do you want me to bring it in to you?

HELEN: (OFF) No, thanks.

PAUL PUTS COFFEE ON TABLE. COUGHS, BURPS, SNEEZES, POKES EAR WITH  
KEY – INSPECTS IT. PICKS UP PAPER FROM UNDER DOOR AND STANDS  
READING IT.

HELEN ENTERS AND STANDS LOOKING AT PAPER OVER PAUL'S SHOULDER.  
PAUL FARTS LOUDLY. HELEN LOOKS SHOCKED.

HELEN FARTS.

HELEN: Oops. Sorry!

PAUL: No need to be sorry. It happens.

HELEN: Yes, but it's not very nice.

PAUL: (LAUGHS) You are *such* a lady! It can't be helped.

HELEN: Of course it can.

PAUL: Our bodies are getting older. They don't work so well – so ... (SHRUGS).

HELEN: Hmph. I'll bet the others don't.

PAUL: Who?

HELEN: Martin and Chloris.

PAUL: 'Course they do.

HELEN: Not Chloris. She's a lady.

PAUL: Bull shit! All right – let's ask her.

HELEN: I dare you.

PAUL: You're on. (ON TO BALCONY) Hey, Chloris! You up yet?

CHLORIS: Hallo?

PAUL: Come out here a minute.

CHLORIS: What for?

PAUL: Never mind. Just get here.

CHLORIS: (APPEARS) What's all the yelling about?

PAUL: Chloris, tell me something. Do you fart?

CHLORIS: What? No!

PAUL: Is that the honest truth?

CHLORIS: We-ell – I do a bit.

PAUL: The older you get, the more you fart. Right?

CHLORIS: Ye-es, I suppose so.

PAUL: Good. Now we'll call Martin.

CHLORIS: Are you going to ask him?

PAUL: Yeah.

CHLORIS: He won't tell you.

PAUL: Why shouldn't he?

CHLORIS: I bet he won't.

PAUL: Let's get him here and find out.

HELEN: Well, I'm not asking him.

CHLORIS: Nor am I.

PAUL: (CALLS) Martin!

MARTIN: Yes?

PAUL: Can you come out here a minute?

MARTIN: I'm not dressed.

PAUL: Doesn't matter. Neither are we.

MARTIN: But...

PAUL: Come on, Martin.

MARTIN: All right. Just a minute.

AFTER A SHORT PAUSE, MARTIN ENTERS. HE IS IN A VERY NEAT DRESSING GOWN, HAIR COMBED, ETC.

PAUL: 'Morning Martin. How are you?

MARTIN: I'm well, thank you. What can I do for you?

PAUL: We want to ask you something.

MARTIN: Yes?

PAUL: Well – (HE SUDDENLY LOSES HIS CONFIDENCE) y'see – Helen and I were talking and – well, we both – er – farted. Well – then we agreed that the older we get the more we fart. (TO HELEN) Didn't we?

HELEN: Yes, Paul.

PAUL: And then we asked Chloris and she said the same. Right, Chloris?

CHLORIS: Yes, Paul.

PAUL: So – do you?

MARTIN: Do I what?



PAUL: Do you – um – fart?

MARTIN: Well! If I do – I just don't think it's necessary to talk about it.

PAUL: But – like I tried to tell Helen, it doesn't matter.

PAUL: (SPOKEN) Our body's getting older  
And it doesn't work so well  
Our joints are getting creaky  
And our eyes are shot to hell.  
Our skin is getting wrinkled  
And our teeth are falling out  
And every now and then we have to fart.

**WE HAVE TO FART**

(Tune: 'So go to him ...' from Patience by Sullivan)

PAUL: But we're alive  
HELEN: Yes we're alive  
PAUL: And no matter how we strive  
We can't help it if our bodies tend to slowly fall apart.  
MARTIN & CHLORIS: Yes, we're alive  
HELEN & PAUL: We are alive  
We have managed to survive  
And we know that we're alive  
Because we fart.

SPOKEN

HELEN: My hair is turning grey  
MARTIN: My hair is falling out  
CHLORIS: My back is getting sore  
PAUL: I've got a touch of gout  
CHLORIS: I've got a dicky knee  
MARTIN: I've got a dicky heart  
PAUL: And because our body's old  
HELEN: We have to fart.

CHORUS: (ALL) But we're alive  
Yes we're alive  
And no matter how we strive  
We can't help it if our bodies tend to slowly fall apart.  
Yes, we're alive  
We are alive  
We have managed to survive  
And to prove that we're alive  
We have to fart.

DANCE & FINALE OF SONG AS PER MUSIC ARRANGER  
FINAL FART FROM MARTIN.

MARTIN: Oops! Sorry!

HELEN: No need to be sorry Martin. We all do it.

MARTIN: I thought I was the only one. I thought – maybe there was something wrong with me.

PAUL: Well, there probably is. Same as all of us. We're all cracking up.

CHLORIS: You can say that again.

PAUL: There are no secrets here – not with these walls.

CHLORIS: What do you mean?

HELEN: Well! *You* must have slept soundly last night.

CHLORIS: I did. I was exhausted.

HELEN: Maybe after tonight you'll know what we're talking about.

**ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT**  
(Tune: 'All Through the Night' - Trad.)

HELEN: Hear the toilets gently flushing  
HELEN: & PAUL: All through the night  
HELEN: To the loo we all are rushing  
HELEN: & PAUL: All through the night  
HELEN: Waking up – you lie there stalling  
Then you hear the raindrops falling  
Time to go – it's nature calling  
ALL: All through the night  
  
PAUL: Footsteps break the peace and quiet  
ALL: All through the night  
PAUL: All of us – you can't deny it  
ALL: All through the night  
PAUL: To the bathroom quickly fleeing  
In the darkness, eyes unseeing  
Safe at last – I'm gently pee-ing  
ALL: All through the night.

CHLORIS: Oh, that! I get so sick of having to get up in the middle of the night!

HELEN: See, Martin. You're not on your own.

MARTIN: I know all about that but – I don't know whether I might have something serious. I mean, like – well – I was looking at this medical book the other day and ...

HELEN: Medical book! Martin, that's the very worst thing you can do!

MARTIN: But I did have a lot of the symptoms. Passing wind...

PAUL: Farting, you mean?

MARTIN: Well – what if I do have – bowel cancer?

CHLORIS: Oh, Martin – they fix that easily these days. You just get a bit of your bowel cut out and they give you a bag.

PAUL: Now, here's something I've wondered about. What happens if you have a colostomy bag and you fart? Does the bag sort of, blow up? Like a balloon?

HELEN: Paul, that's not funny!

PAUL: Well, I think it's a very interesting question. Maybe they have a sort of fart-release valve. What do you reckon, Martin?

MARTIN: Oh, how do I know! Well, all right, it mightn't be cancer but my doctor thinks it might be – er – diverticulitis.

CHLORIS: So you've truly been to a doctor?

MARTIN: Of course I have. He said it could be diverticulitis, or maybe it's just gastritis. Or colitis. (THE OTHER THREE EXCHANGE LOOKS) Have you ever looked in one of those books?

### **HYPOCHONDRIA – THE ANTHEM**

(Tune: 'Dance of the Hours' – Ponchielli)

Bracketed words sung in background by others.

MARTIN:

There's so many  
Types of 'itis'  
That are lurking  
To delight us.

Sinusitis (tonsillitis) and arthritis (and bursitis)  
Typhilitis, tenonitis and colitis (enteritis)

Valvulitis (ileitis), fibrositis (labyrinthitis)  
Uvulitis (urethritis) and mastitis (tympanitis)  
Laryngitis (tracheitis) and proctitis (pharyngitis)  
Diverticulitis, tenosynovitis (and bronchitis).

Sometimes I lie in bed and get the tingles  
In my toe, in my foot, in my knee, in my hip.  
And I worry that I possibly have shingles  
(Maybe not) Maybe so  
(Maybe not) Maybe so  
(Maybe not)  
Maybe so – I don't know  
I don't know  
I don't know  
(SIGH)

All my doctors  
Give me potions  
I take tablets  
Rub on lotions  
Call me foolish  
Idiotic  
But I won't believe that I am just neurotic.

I've a headache  
In the morning  
It can happen  
Without warning  
Then I'm coughing  
And I'm sneezing  
Any minute now you'll hear me start my wheezing.  
Do I have tuberculosis?  
Could it be schizomycosis?  
I might have toxoplasmosis and phle-bo-scler-osis  
All at once.

I think I have got coxalgia  
Or may be it's just neuralgia  
Can they cure hypo-glycaemia and hyper-pyrexia  
With a pill?

I can't tell you  
How I'm aching  
And I know you  
Think I'm faking.  
Just a minute  
Here's a letter

MUSIC STOPS  
MARTIN TAKES ENVELOPE FROM HIS DRESSING GOWN  
POCKET, READS LETTER

Oh!

SUNG: "There's a party on, if you are feeling better!"

MARTIN: (SPOKEN) Hey, the Wilsons are having a party! Are we all going?

PAUL: Absolutely! Okay with you, Chloris?

CHLORIS: Will they mind if I ...?

PAUL: Of course not. They'll expect you. They're only in one of the other apartments.

CHLORIS: Then I'll be there! I'd better go and get ready!

MARTIN: What? It's not till tonight.

CHLORIS: Oh, please! I have to wash my hair – do my nails - *and* I have to decide what I'm wearing! Oh – what's unpacked? I'll probably have to iron something! There's scarcely enough time! Excuse me. (SHE GOES)

HELEN: (LAUGHS) Nice to have something to choose from! I'll be dragging out my best black! Better go and check it out. See you later, Martin. (GOES)

PAUL: So – you reckon you'll be well enough to go, Martin?

MARTIN: (SIGHS) Oh, well. I'm probably not going to get any worse, so ...

PAUL: You'll be going then?

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MARTIN: I suppose so.

PAUL: Somehow, I thought you would.

MARTIN: You don't think there's anything wrong with me, do you?

PAUL: I'm not a doctor, so how would I know? What I do know, though, is that when you're having a good time, you don't seem to notice your health.

MARTIN: That's true.

PAUL: So – let the good times roll, Martin. And keep them rolling!

PAUL:

All your doctors  
Give you potions  
You take tablets  
Rub on lotions  
P'raps you only  
Need a tonic  
You go on like this  
You'll end up catatonic.

MARTIN STARTS JOINING IN:

Take up laughing  
Get the giggles  
Don't read papers

TOGETHER:

Watch the Wiggles  
You'll/I'll be dazzling  
And fantastic  
Super triple X  
Enthusi-bloody-astic.

END WITH HIGH FIVE.

**BLACKOUT**

**PAUL & HELEN'S APARTMENT – BEFORE THE PARTY.**

**IT IS EMPTY.**

A KNOCK ON THE OUTER DOOR.

HELEN ENTERS FROM BEDROOM IN A SIMPLE BLACK DRESS.

SHE OPENS THE DOOR TO CHLORIS WHO IS EXTREMELY GLAMOROUS.

HELEN: Chloris, you look great!

CHLORIS: Oh, thanks, Helen. (SIGHS) It becomes more and more of an effort, don't you think? Where's Paul?

HELEN: He and Martin have gone out to get some wine. They'll be back in a minute.

CHLORIS: Are you all right?

HELEN: Well, a bit down.

CHLORIS: Anything wrong?

HELEN: I'm not sure. A small health problem. Don't know how serious yet.

CHLORIS: Omigod! Do you want to talk about it?

HELEN: Not really, Chloris. Not quite ready for that.

CHLORIS: Oh, Helen! Do you still want to go out tonight? Are you well enough?

HELEN: Oh, yes. I'm not feeling sick or anything. And Paul's looking forward to it. I just wish I felt a little less – plain. And old.

CHLORIS: I can help with that, you know.

HELEN: You can fix wrinkles? And age spots? And saggy chins – plural?

CHLORIS: Helen, my dear. You need to feel glamorous! And I can do it.

HELEN: Me, glamorous like you? No way! Look at this hair – patchy grey. Why these younger women have grey streaks put in on purpose I just don't understand.

CHLORIS: Depends how it's done, darling. Some grey streaks can look very sophisticated. I'll tell you what I can't handle, though and that's Brazilian Waxing.

HELEN: Brazilian Waxing – no way! I can't *imagine* how it must feel!

CHLORIS: Cold! That's how it feels!

HELEN: (LAUGHS) You've tried it? (CHLORIS NODS RUEFULLY) Did it hurt?

CHLORIS: (THEY ARE GIGGLING BY NOW) *Oooh, yes!* And it was Paris – in winter! I was so cold I even contemplated buying a merkin.

HELEN: A merkin?

CHLORIS: You know – a tiny wig.

HELEN: (HYSTERICAL) I don't think I've seen those for sale in K-Mart! You'd be better off with some of grandma's flannel knickers.

CHLORIS: No way! We've got to hang onto our glamour as long as we can. And that's what you need now, Helen. A little glamour. Do you trust me?

HELEN: Oh, come on, Chloris. Look at my hair, and look at yours.

CHLORIS: You don't think this is natural, do you?

HELEN: You mean...?

CHLORIS: Of course.

### **I'D RATHER DYE ...**

(Tune: 'Tooralai-ooralai-addity' – Trad.)

CHLORIS:

I don't intend growing old gracefully  
I've thrown all decorum away  
You're only as old as you want to be  
And I'd much rather dye than be grey.

BOTH

Singin' tooralai, ooralai, addity  
Singin' tooralai, ooralai, ay  
You're only as old as you want to be  
And it's better to dye than be grey.

HELEN: That's all very well, but I can't dye my hair before the party tonight.

CHLORIS: That's true. Hm, give me one minute. (HEADS FOR THE DOOR) I've got absolutely everything you need. (EXITS)

HELEN: Chloris, what are you ... ? (SHE IS GONE)

HELEN SIGHS AND EXAMINES HERSELF IN THE MIRROR – OBVIOUSLY UNHAPPY WITH WHAT SHE SEES.

CHLORIS RE-ENTERS WITH MAKE-UP CASE AND GLAMOROUS JACKET

CHLORIS: Da-dah!

HELEN: No, Chloris, you can't. I'll look ridiculous.

CHLORIS: Trust me. (OPENS MAKE-UP KIT)

CHLORIS:

There's a cream to make age spots invisible  
And another to smooth every line  
I've a lipstick to make your lips kissable  
And a perfume that's truly divine.

BOTH:

Singin' tooralai, ooralai, addity  
We're going to smooth every line  
Singin' tooralai, ooralai, addity  
This perfume is truly divine.

CHLORIS: All right. Now - we need a mirror and lights. Bathroom? Bedroom?

HELEN: But I haven't got a ...

CHLORIS: No arguments. Just put yourself in my hands. (THINKS) I think we need to go my place. Come along.

CHLORIS DRAGS HELEN OFF STAGE

**LIGHTS DOWN AND UP ON THE TWO MEN SEATED ON PARK BENCH  
OR MAYBE HAVING A QUIET DRINK AT A SMALL BAR.**

PAUL: It was pitch dark, mate. He came barrelling out of the side road with no lights on. I didn't have a hope.

MARTIN: Where were you?

PAUL: Northern New South – up near Moree. Look, if he wanted to kill himself, that's okay with me. But I was in a B-Double – travelling at a hundred K. He bloody near took me out, too.

MARTIN: You were very lucky.

PAUL: Yeah? Yeah, I reckon I was, too. It was a long, hard twelve months but – here I am now, just about as good as new. And you know – if it hadn't happened, I'd never have been in Paris. And I'd never have met Helen.

MARTIN: She means a lot to you.

PAUL: Yes, she does. First time I've really cared for someone for a long time. And now – (STOPS)

MARTIN: Something wrong?

PAUL: No. No, mate. She's apples. God, these shoes are killing me! One of Helen's efforts to smarten me up. (LOOSENS LACES) She has some good ideas, but they don't always work. Women, eh? Hah!

MARTIN: Were you married before?

PAUL: Yeah, yeah I was. Got three kids.

MARTIN: Did you – er, lose your wife?

PAUL: Yeah, I lost her all right. Not that she died – just found another bloke.

MARTIN: Oh! How awful!

PAUL: Well, I was a truckie, mate. Away five days, home two – and that was a good week. You think you're doing the right thing – bringing the money in but – she was a young, attractive woman. All I'd want to do when I got home was sleep and it'd be: "Get up and take the kids to the footy." and "Why don't you mow the lawn?" It's no life for a family man.

MARTIN: No, I suppose not.

PAUL: But I didn't know anything else.

MARTIN: So, what about your children? Do you see them?

PAUL: Yeah, I see them a bit but – they grew up, you know? And I wasn't around all that much. Somehow – I didn't seem to know how to do it. Be a dad, I mean.

MARTIN: Mm.

PAUL: And they're good people. I like them. Just – we're not all that close. (CHANGES MOOD) Hey! We've got a party to go to, mate. Where are those women?

PAUL GETS UP TO LOOK OFF STAGE JUST AS THE DOOR OPENS AND  
CHLORIS USHERS IN HELEN.

HELEN LOOKS STUNNING IN GLAMOROUS WIG, MAKE-UP AND JACKET.  
SHE ALSO FEELS FANTASTIC.

CHLORIS:

With eyelashes long and luxurious  
Just see her eyes sparkle and shine!  
And a coat to make peacocks feel envious  
To accomplish the final design.

BOTH:

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Singin' tooralai, ooralai, addity  
My/Your eyes how they sparkle and shine  
This coat will make peacocks feel envious  
And accomplish the final design.

PAUL: Wow!! Look at this!

HELEN: Don't touch me! None of it's real!

MARTIN: Helen, you look so – different.

PAUL: (ADMIRING) There's only one thing missing.

CHLORIS: What?

HELEN: Yes, what?

PAUL: A glass of champagne in your hand. And we can soon fix that!

HE OPENS A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE AND FILL FOUR GLASSES.

CHLORIS AND HELEN:  
So here's to the fine art of make-up  
You can learn something new every day  
Through the delicate use of deception  
We can hide all our signs of decay.

ALL (INCLUDING MEN)  
Singin' tooralai, ooralai, addity  
Singin' tooralai, ooralai, ay  
You're only as old as you want to be  
And it's better to dye than be grey.

PAUL & MARTIN:  
In many ways older is better  
We no longer work for our bread  
If we wake up with aches in the morning  
We don't have to get out of bed.

ALL:  
Singin' tooralai, ooralai, addity  
Singin' tooralai, ooralai, ay  
You're only as old as you want to be  
And it's better to dye than be grey.

ALL EXIT TO PARTY:  
Yes, it's better to dye than be grey!

**HELEN & PAUL'S APARTMENT – THE NEXT DAY.**

PAUL IS AT THE COMPUTER.

PAUL: It's not that easy.

HELEN: Isn't it?

PAUL: No. There's plenty of sites but everyone's a bit cagey. See – "Contact us for information". But no promises.

HELEN: (LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER) What about this one?

PAUL: (CONNECTS TO NEW SITE) Hmm. Yes, this looks interesting. "Nancy's Friends". Wasn't she that woman in Queensland a couple of years ago?

HELEN: Yes, I think so. It was in all the papers. And they'll come and visit?

PAUL: Yeah. I think they're our best bet. At least we know they're prepared to talk about it. (SITS BACK) Do you want to follow this one up?

HELEN: Yes. I think we should. We don't even know if it's possible to get what we need.

PAUL: Well, legally, it's probably not possible.

HELEN: If we talk to these people we might find out.

PAUL: Okay. (TYPES INTO COMPUTER. SENDS) Done!

HELEN: Good.

PAUL: There could be nothing at all to worry about, you know.

HELEN: I know. I *want* to be optimistic but we have to face it – it could be very serious – and I have to be prepared. I need to know that if it's necessary, I'll be in control.

PAUL: Whatever happens, Helen, whatever we do, we'll be together.

HELEN: Together?

PAUL: Together.

HELEN: Oh, Paul – only if you're *sure* that's what you want.

PAUL: I'm sure. (HE STANDS IN FRONT OF HER, HOLDING BOTH HER HANDS) Helen, since you and I have been together, I can't think of another thing in this life that I could possibly want. Without you, I would have nothing.

**COME TO ME...**

(Tune: 'The Barcarolle' from Tales of Hoffmann – Offenbach)

PAUL:  
Come to me  
Come close to my heart  
And we will be one forever.

HELEN:  
I will nestle  
Close to your heart  
Where I will be safe forever.

BOTH: (HARMONY)  
Like a flower that lives and dies whose perfume lingers after  
You and I will leave behind the echo of our laughter.

Like a bird in flight – we will soar through the sky

And say our last goodnight – with the sound of a sigh  
Just the sound of a sigh  
Hearing the sound of a sigh.

PAUL:  
Come to me  
Come close to my heart  
And we will be one forever

HELEN:  
I will nestle  
Close to your heart  
Where I will be safe at last

BOTH:  
And we two will be free  
And we two will be free  
And we two will be free  
To fly – at last.  
Ah, ah  
Ah, ah, etc.

HELEN CRIES GENTLY ON PAUL'S SHOULDER. THEY KISS.

THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

MARTIN'S VOICE: Are you two all right?

PAUL LOOKS A QUESTION AT HELEN. SHE NODS AND TURNS HER BACK TO  
THE DOOR – WIPING HER EYES, ETC.

PAUL OPENS THE DOOR AND MARTIN ENTERS.

MARTIN: I just – hey! Am I interrupting something?

PAUL: No, it's okay.

MARTIN: Tears?

PAUL: It's nothing. She'll be okay.

MARTIN: Anything I can do?

PAUL: I don't think she wants to talk about it.

HELEN: Yes, I do. I do want to talk about it. You and I think we should and – well, I think we all should.

MARTIN: Sounds serious.

HELEN: Yes, it is. Where's Chloris? Why isn't she here?

MARTIN: She is. She was going to tell you some news but ... She didn't want to intrude.

HELEN: Well, call her. Get her in here.

MARTIN: (YELLS) Chloris! Come on. You're wanted.

CHLORIS: (POKES HER HEAD IN) You're sure?

PAUL: We're sure. Helen wants to talk about something.

CHLORIS: Oh. All right. Are you – er – okay?

HELEN: Yes, yes, I am but – well, now that you're both here – this is what we've been talking about – Paul and I. (BLOWS NOSE) It's just that – Chloris knew I was feeling a bit low yesterday and that's why she did that big, glamorous make-over on me. And I do thank you for that, Chloris. It made such a difference. The fact is – I'd just been to see the doctor and – there's a tumour. Now before you say anything ...

CHLORIS: But Helen – that's not necessarily serious any more, they can ...

HELEN: Sorry, Chloris, but this could be serious. It's only a small lump but – it's behind my eye and that's ...

CHLORIS: Ohh! I'm so sorry!

HELEN: We don't know yet whether it's malignant but – it does become rather a wake-up call, doesn't it?

MARTIN: I wish I could think of something to say, Helen, but – I can't.

PAUL: Well, what Helen and I have been talking about is this: Okay Helen? (SHE NODS) I've been looking on the internet and we've discovered there are some people we can talk to who can help us make a decision – if we need to – if we want to. Something to take all the uncertainty out of it. For both of us.

CHLORIS: Is that what you were talking about when we ...?

HELEN: Yes. And, yes, I was crying. Because it's sad – it's sad to think it will all be over one day. But that doesn't mean I won't do it.

PAUL: 'We', Helen. We'll be doing it together. And if you two disapprove, then I'm sorry but ...

MARTIN: Disapprove? Not me! I'm all for it. Chloris?

CHLORIS: Well, I'm not sure. I haven't really thought much about it. Would you really do it, Helen?

HELEN: I honestly don't know. But what I do know is that I want to have the power in my own hands – not in someone else's when I'm no longer capable.

CHLORIS: Yes. I see what you mean. I don't think I could do it myself but I'll tell you something: I don't want to spend my final days being kept alive by tubes.

PAUL: You said it, Chloris. That's exactly what we're talking about.

MARTIN: Tubes? No way! Up your nose, down your throat, up your backside! They'd keep a vegetable alive if they could.

CHLORIS: A vegetable! That's right. And they do!

### **PULL THE PLUG**

(Tune: 'If you're happy and you know it...' – Trad.)

CHLORIS:

If I'm going to be a vegy, pull the plug  
If I'm balanced on the edge, pull the plug

If I'm going to be a veg. and I'm balanced on the edge  
Then I want you all to pledge  
You'll pull the plug.

ALL:

You bet – we'll pull the plug  
No sweat – we'll pull the plug  
We'll be glad to make a pledge – we'll pull the plug.

PAUL:

If I haven't got a hope – pull the plug  
And I'm on the slippery slope – pull the plug  
If I haven't got a hope and I'm on the slippery slope  
Don't go checking with the Pope – just pull the plug

ALL:

You bet – we'll pull the plug  
No sweat – we'll pull the plug  
No one's checking with the Pope – we'll pull the plug.

HELEN:

If my life is down the drain – pull the plug  
And I haven't got a brain – pull the plug  
If my life is down the drain and I haven't got a brain  
If I can't enjoy champagne – pull the plug

ALL:

.....If you can't enjoy champagne, we'll pull the plug

MARTIN:

If my senses all have fled – pull the plug  
And there's nothing in my head – pull the plug  
If my senses all have fled and there's nothing in my head  
Then I'd rather I was dead – just pull the plug.

ALL:

.....If you'd rather you were dead, we'll pull the plug.

ALL:

If our senses all have fled – pull the plug  
And there's nothing in our head – pull the plug  
If our senses all have fled and there's nothing in our head  
Then we'd rather we were dead – just pull the plug.

CHORUS:

You bet – we'll pull the plug  
No sweat – we'll pull the plug  
We'll be happy to be dead, just pull the plug

HELEN: Yess!! What would I do without you all? (CHECKS WATCH) Paul, I think it's time.

MARTIN & CHLORIS LOOK HORRIFIED.

HELEN: To ring the doctor, that's all..

MARTIN & CHLORIS ARE VASTLY RELIEVED.

MARTIN: Shall we go?

CHLORIS: Yes – really, we shouldn't ...

HELEN: Not at all. I'm strong enough for anything now.

HELEN TAKES PAUL'S HAND AS SHE MAKES THE PHONE CALL.

HELEN: Hallo? It's Helen Jeffries here. I was to ring for the results of my biopsy.....Yes, I'll hold. (PAUL PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER) Yes?.....(HELEN SMILES A BIG SMILE OF RELIEF). Thank you. Thank you so much. (SHE PUTS PHONE DOWN. (DRAWS BREATH) It's not malignant.

CHEERS, CONGRATULATIONS, ETC.

ALL: What's going to happen now? What do they have to do? Will they have to operate?

HELEN: Don't know. Don't care. I'll worry about that tomorrow.

**OUR FRIENDS WILL MAKE US STRONG**

(Tune: 'John Brown's Body' – Trad.)

HELEN:

Sometimes we are a little low and we don't feel so grand  
That's the time that we can use a friendly helping hand  
A sympathetic ear and a mate who'll understand  
It's our friends who make us strong.

CHORUS – ALL: (Repeat between each verse)

Glory, glory, hallelujah  
Fate will always try to screw ya  
But mates will never let 'em do ya  
It's our friends who make us strong.

MARTIN:

We may be getting older but we still have got our voice  
We may be getting weaker but we haven't any choice  
But there are still a lot of things that make us all rejoice  
And our friends will make us strong.

PAUL:

You say you're going camping and your children look askance  
You talk of Indonesia – they exchange a furtive glance  
It's better to ignore them, tell them: "Suffer in your pants!"  
And your friends will keep you strong.

CHLORIS:

If we can keep on laughing then we haven't time to cry  
Together we can bravely look the future in the eye  
We're proud of being older and we hold our head up high  
And our friends will keep us strong.

CHORUS – ALL:

Glory, glory, hallelujah  
Fate will always try to screw ya  
But mates will never let 'em do ya  
It's our friends who make us strong.

HELEN: Friends and laughter – that's the answer all right.

MARTIN: And occasional good news. That helps.

CHLORIS: I've just remembered! It's not quite as exciting news as yours, Helen but ...

HELEN: What is it?

CHLORIS: My pension money is through! I'm solvent again! (CHEERS FROM ALL)

**WE ALWAYS FEEL MUCH BETTER WHEN WE MAKE EACH OTHER LAUGH**

(Tune: 'Jingle Bells')

ALL:

Bang that drum, ring that bell  
It's time to celebrate  
Take my hand 'cos life is grand  
We don't have time to wait  
When skies are grey  
We've got a way  
To cut our cares in half  
We always feel much better when we make each other laugh.

CHLORIS: Time may be a great healer but it's a lousy beautician

PAUL: I don't mind going down, it's getting up that's difficult.

ALL

Forget your age  
It's just a stage  
Enjoy the aftermath  
We always feel much better when we make each other laugh.

HELEN: I'm not going deaf, it's just that everyone else is mumbling.

MARTIN: The doctor told me: I have good news and bad news. The good news is, you're not a hypochondriac.

ALL  
We sing it high  
We sing it low  
We sing it in the bath  
We always feel much better when we make each other laugh.

HELEN: It's hard to be nostalgic when you can't remember anything.

CHLORIS: Forget the health food, I need all the preservatives I can get.

ALL  
We have to learn  
To separate  
The good bits from the chaff,  
We always feel much better when we make each other laugh.

MARTIN: Of course I'm against sin. I'm against anything I'm too old to enjoy.

PAUL: He took some Viagra the other day but it got stuck in his throat. He had a terrible stiff neck for days!

ALL  
Bang that drum, ring that bell  
It's time to celebrate  
Take my hand 'cos life is grand  
We don't have time to wait  
When skies are grey  
We've got a way  
To cut our cares in half  
We always feel much better when we make each other laugh.

**STRAIGHT INTO:**

## **FINALE**

### **SILLY OLD BUGGERS ALL ARE WE**

(Tune: 'There is a tavern in the town')

ALL:  
And now, it's time to say goodnight,  
PAUL: Say 'goodnight'  
We've tried to shed a bit of light  
PAUL: On getting older.  
ALL:  
But we've had a laugh and we think you'll all agree



That silly old buggers all are we.

We'll go home and kick our shoes off  
We can close our eyes and snooze off  
'Cos the time has come for us to bring the curtain down.

Adieu, adieu kind friends, adieu, oh yes, adieu.  
It's been a pleasure meeting you

PAUL: Yes, we've enjoyed it.

And we'll stagger on (SOFTER)till we're just a memory

'Cos silly old buggers all are we

No doubt of it!

(GETTING LOUDER)Silly old buggers all are we

(LOUD)And proud of it!

Silly – old buggers all are we!!

(BEAT BEAT BEAT)

Just like you!

## THE END

POSSIBLE AND OPTIONAL REPRISE OF

### “IT’S OUR FRIENDS WHO MAKE US STRONG”

ALL MARCH IN WITH PLACARDS: (I’m an SOB and proud of it!)

CHORUS FIRST

ALL:

Glory, glory, hallelujah

Fate will always try to screw ya

But mates will never let ‘em do ya

It’s our friends who make us strong.

HELEN & PAUL:

Sometimes we are a little low and we don’t feel so grand

That’s the time that we can use a friendly helping hand

A sympathetic ear and a mate who’ll understand

It’s our friends who make us strong.

CHORUS – ALL:

EACH ONE TURNS PLACARD ON EACH LINE.

WORDS OF EACH LINE ARE ON THEM AND AUDIENCE ENCOURAGED TO JOIN IN.

Glory, glory, hallelujah

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Fate will always try to screw ya  
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It's our friends who make us strong.

CHLORIS & MARTIN:

If we can keep on laughing then we haven't time to cry  
Together we can bravely look the future in the eye  
We're proud of being older and we hold our head up high  
And our friends will keep us strong.

CHORUS – ALL:

Glory, glory, hallelujah  
Fate will always try to screw ya  
But mates will never let 'em do ya  
It's our friends who make us strong.  
It's our friends who make us strong.

**THE END**