

With an inexperienced finger, he taps out the odd note and attempts to match them with his voice. Whatever he plays appears to be outside his range. He clears his throat but it's quite obvious that his voice has packed up completely. With sudden determination, GUY screws up the piece of music, stuffs it into his pocket and marches towards the door.

Before he can leave, there is a burst of chatter from off and DAFYDD enters. He is a busy, slightly overweight, energetic man in his late thirties. A live wire. The mainspring of the Society. Never using one word where three will do, never walking when he can hurry. Whatever the temperature, DAFYDD always appears to find it a little on the warm side.

DAFYDD (*seeing GUY*) My dear chap, I'm so sorry. I'm deeply sorry. I knew you were coming. I wrote down you were coming. It slipped my mind. How do you do? Dafydd Ap Llewellyn. Good of you to come along. We're on our first stages of rehearsal. Just getting started. Broken for tea for ten minutes.

GUY Ah. Yes.

DAFYDD (*calling*) Mr Ames? I'll just fetch Mr Ames in and he can play for you. Brought something along to sing, have you?

GUY Well, I had sort of—

DAFYDD (*calling*) Mr Ames? Otherwise we've got plenty of bits and pieces lying around, you know. And, of course, Mr Ames, he's encyclopaedic. He's played practically every musical comedy you could name. Choose a key, choose a tune, choose a tempo, he's away—where, the bloody hell is he? Excuse me. (*He moves to the door, calling*) Mr Ames?—ah, there you are. This is Mr Ames.

MR AMES enters. *He is a small, intensely shy man whose silent, unobtrusive personality is in direct contrast to that of DAFYDD's.*

Music

Mr Ames, this is Mr—God, I'm afraid I don't even know your name—Mr...?

GUY Jones.

DAFYDD Mr Jones. Not Welsh, are you?

GUY No. No. 'Fraid not. From Leeds.

DAFYDD (*dubiously*) Leeds?

GUY Originally.

DAFYDD Originally from Leeds. Right. This is our Mr Ames. Mr Ames, Mr Jones is going to sing for us. Give us an idea of his range. And intonation. Which is a polite way of saying can he sing in tune. (*He laughs*) If not, welcome to the club. What are you, tenor, are you?

GUY I think I'm a sort of light baritone. I think.

DAFYDD Oh yes? Light baritone, eh? Yes, we've got plenty of those lurking in the back row, haven't we, Mr Ames? They're what we call our down the octave brigade.

GUY (*laughing*) Yes, yes...

DAFYDD Come on then. Let's have a listen. Did you say you had some music? Or shall we ask Mr Ames to rifle through his golden treasure chest of memories?

GUY (*fumbling for his music*) No, I've brought... (*He is unable to find it and rummages through his pockets*) Just a second...

DAFYDD Bit of *Merry Widow*? Fancy that?

GUY (*somewhat panic-stricken at the thought*) No, no, please...

DAFYDD West Side Story? Oklahoma? The King and I?

'MR AMES *plays a bar of this last.*

GUY (*finding his music at last*) No. Here we are. Found it. Here. (*He holds up the crumpled piece of music*)

DAFYDD Is that it?

GUY Sorry.

DAFYDD You shouldn't have splashed out like that, you know.
Not just for an audition. (*He laughs again*)

DAFYDD *takes the scrap of music from GUY and gives it to MR AMES.*

Here we are, Mr Ames. Second Act of *Tannhauser* by the look of it. (*He laughs*) No, I'm sorry, Mr Jones. We're only having a little joke. Don't mind us, you'll get used to it. Possibly. (*Briskly*) Right. Seriously for a moment. Be serious, Llewellyn, boy. What have we got here? (*He puts on his reading glasses*) My word, my word. You still claim you're not Welsh? What does that say there, Mr Ames? What does it say to you? *All Through the Night*. Ar hyd y nos.

GUY Yes. Coincidence.

DAFYDD (*mock serious*) Well. I don't know. Should we allow a man from Leeds to sing this, Mr Ames? Eh? What do you think?

GUY It was just the only song I happen to...

DAFYDD Well. Seeing your name is Jones. Maybe. Special dispensation, eh?

GUY (*gamely trying to keep up with the joke*) Thank you very much...

DAFYDD Just this once.

GUY It was the only song I knew in the piano stool. My mother used to sing it. Years ago.

DAFYDD Your mother's Welsh, then?

GUY No.

DAFYDD But she sings?

GUY No, she...

DAFYDD Bring her down. Bring her down next time with you.

GUY No, she's dead.

DAFYDD (*sadly*) Ah. Well. Too late, then. Too late. Sad. Can you play that do you think, Mr Ames?

MR AMES Yes, yes... (*He plays a chord or two, peering at the music*)

ENID WASHBROOK appears in the doorway during this. Behind ENID, her daughter LINDA cranes round her to catch a glimpse of the newcomer.

ENID Are we starting again, Dafydd?

DAFYDD In just one moment, Enid, just one moment. We'll give you a call. We're just going to hear this gentleman sing...

ENID Oh, right. Excuse us, won't you...

DAFYDD We'll give you a call.

ENID (*to GUY, as they go*) Good luck.

GUY Thank you.

ENID and LINDA go out.

DAFYDD Now, Mr Jones, the million dollar question. Are you going to sing this in Welsh or in English?

GUY Well, I'm sorry, in English if that's all right...

DAFYDD (*hopping about in mock pain*) Oh, oh, oh, oh... Like *Pomp and Circumstance* in Japanese... If you must, if you must... Right. When you're ready, Mr Ames. Take it away...

MR AMES plays the introduction. DAFYDD moves away slightly. GUY opens his mouth to sing. Before he can do so, DAFYDD is there before him sounding off in a full Welsh tenor.

Singing.

HOLL AMRANTAU'R SER DDYWEDANT, AR HYD Y NOS,
DYMA'R FFORDD I FRO GOGON-IANT, AR HYD Y NOS;

GO-LAU A-RALL YW TYWYLL-WCH, I ARDDANGOS GWIR
BRYD-FERTHWCH,
TEULU'R NEFOEDD MEWN TA-WELWCH, AR HYD Y NOS.

DAFYDD stops singing. MR AMES stops playing. There is a respectful silence.

Sorry. I'm sorry. I sincerely beg your pardon, Mr Jones. Every time I hear... *(He breaks off too moved to continue. Then, clapping GUY on the shoulder)* It's all yours. Take it away, boy.

GUY *(horrified)* Right.

MR AMES re-starts the introduction. DAFYDD moves away to the far reaches of the auditorium. GUY, by now very nervous, misses the introduction first time round but manages on the second.

Nervously.

WHILE THE MOON HER WATCH IS KEEPING,
ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT,
WHILE THE WE—

DAFYDD *(calling from the darkness)* Mr Jones, sorry to interrupt you just as you were getting underway. That's lovely. Very pleasant. A little tip. Just try facing out this way a bit more, would you? You're not in need of the music, are you?

GUY *(straining to see DAFYDD)* No, no.

DAFYDD No, it didn't appear you were reading it. *(Waving GUY away from the safety of the piano)* Now. Just try placing your weight equally on both your feet. Legs slightly apart. That's it. A bit more. Now, can you feel yourself balanced, can you?

GUY Yes, yes.

DAFYDD Singing is a great deal to do with balance, Mr Jones. Balance, you see. You can't sing on one leg now, can you? You'd feel unbalanced.