

GUY Good heavens.

JARVIS It lifts one ton of water forty feet on each stroke of the engine.

GUY Amazing.

JARVIS That's what I've been listening to for the past hour.

GUY A beam engine?

JARVIS Aye.

GUY What, all evening?

JARVIS No, no, no. This is called *Vanishing Sounds in Britain*. Issued by the BBC. All vanishing sounds...

GUY Well, listening to that, it's probably a good job, isn't it?
(*He laughs*)

JARVIS (*not hearing*) What's that? (*He switches off the recorder*)
No, I gave the record to the wife last Christmas but she wasn't so keen...

GUY Look. May I have a quick word with you? (*Looking round to see that they're alone*) It's about a piece of land that apparently belongs to you. Round the back of the BLM factory. Do you know it?

JARVIS I not only know it. I own it.

GUY Yes.

JARVIS I'll tell you a very interesting little tale about that bit of land...

GUY (*his heart sinking*) Oh, really...

JARVIS That land was purchased by my grandfather, old Joshua Pike, for the benefit of his employees. He were a philanthropist and a deeply religious man—chapel, you see—but his other passion, apart from't firm, were cricket. Cricket mad. You with me?

GUY Aye. Yes.

JARVIS Well, he bought that land off a widow woman and he had his lads, his workers, levelling and draining and returfing it—in their own time, mind—not his. And, well, when it were finished—well, some said it were the finest strip for a hundred mile or more. Like a billiard pool. And he said to the lads, there you are, lads, go to it. That's my gift to you. That's my bounty.

GUY Wonderful.

JARVIS Only one thing—bearing in mind he were a chapel man—not on Sundays, lads. Never on the sabbath. Well, any road up, year or so later, he's out for a stroll one Sunday afternoon with his children and his grandchildren—taking the air, like—and what should he spy as he's passing the cricket field but a bunch of workers laughing and joking and chucking a ball about like it were Saturday dinner time. And the old man says nowt. Not at the time. But the next day, Monday morning first thing, he sends in his bulldozers and diggers and ploughs and he digs that land up from one end to the other. Then he sets fire to't pavilion and he puts up a twelve foot wooden fence. Palings. And to this day, not a ball has been thrown on that field. That's the sort of man he was. Me grandfather. Dying breed.

GUY Another Vanishing Sound of Britain. Yes... (*After what he hopes is a respectful pause*) The point is, with regard to this land... There is a rumour, unconfirmed I may add, that BLM are contemplating buying it. Possibly. In which case it could be worth a bit. If you were considering selling it.

JARVIS *considers this.*

So.

JARVIS Say no more.

GUY You follow me.

JARVIS I'm glad of the information. I trust you. You're a Scotty. And I'll see you're looked after, don't worry.

GUY No, I don't need looking after. Really.

JARVIS Then why are you telling me?

GUY Well, I—thought you ought to know—it's just that I wouldn't want people to put one over on you. Friendly.

JARVIS (*laughing sceptically*) Friendly? Oh, aye? That's a good one.

GUY Well, if you don't believe me...

JARVIS Don't come the friendly with me, friend. I've a few years to go yet but when I leave this earth, I'll be leaving it fair and square. Same as me father did and me grandfather. I owe nothing to no one. They're all paid off. I've paid off my business. I've paid off my family. There's no claim on me from any quarter. And I don't intend to start making exceptions with you. You see me right. I'll see you right. Right?

GUY Right.

REBECCA comes in from the street. She is in time to catch the end of this conversation. She looks at them a trifle suspiciously.

REBECCA Hello.

JARVIS Aye.

GUY Good evening.

REBECCA Has Dafydd got to us yet?

GUY No. I don't think he's got to very much, actually...

REBECCA How unsurprising. Where is he? Back there?

GUY Yes.

REBECCA I'll sort them out then. I've had enough of this...

REBECCA goes backstage.

JARVIS I've paid her off and all. My mother's ninety-two. She's paid off.