

# VENABLES (SHIRLEY)

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Pardon Me, Prime Minister

*Campbell exits*

*Venables closes the main door and mops his brow*

*The ante-room door opens and Shirley emerges, still clad only in her flimsy underwear, carrying her handbag*

Shirley Daddy?

Venables (*jumping*) Sh!

Shirley What have you done so far?

Venables I've decided to have a talk with your mother face to face. The personal touch, you know, always the best way.

Shirley This isn't a trick, is it?

Venables I'll telephone and ask her to come here as quickly as possible.

Shirley Here's the number. (*She gives him a card from her bag*) We live in Putney.

*Venables takes the card and picks up the external telephone*

Venables No, better not use this one, I'm having it tapped. We can use the hot line. (*He picks up the red telephone receiver, and speaks into it*)

Hello? . . . Where are we plugged into at the moment? . . . Washington?

Well unplug me and get me Putney. The number is oh-five-two-nine.

(*He passes the telephone to Shirley*) Tell her to come here as soon as she can. (*He opens the main door to make sure no-one can overhear*)

Shirley (*into the telephone*) Hello, Mummy. It's me—Shirley. I did it! . . .

Yes! I'm here. . . . Promise! It is a bit of a grin, isn't it?

*Venables groans*

Yes, I have told him, and he wants to meet you and talk. . . . Yes, he

does! Can you come to Downing Street now? . . . Doing what? . . .

Toenails? Well, cut them later. . . . What? Well, *paint* them later. Come straight away.

Venables (*in an urgent whisper*) Tell her to ask for Mr Campbell.

Shirley (*on the telephone*) He says you've got to ask for Mr Campbell . . .

'Bye. (*She replaces the receiver*)

Venables She's coming right away?

Shirley (*excitedly*) I can't believe it! I'll see my parents together for the first time! I hope I don't come over all unorthodox.

Venables (*with feeling*) And so do I, and so do I.

Shirley Well, as we're going to behave sensibly, I'd better put my clothes on. Where's my dress?

Venables Ah—yes, a good question. Your dress.

Shirley Where is it?

Venables My wife took it away.

Shirley Why?

Venables (*hastily*) To hang it up. Now, you go into the library for a few moments, and I promise to retrieve your dress. (*He leads her to the library and opens the door*)

*Shirley goes into the library*

