

GIN AND TRICKERY

by

Adrian Bunting and Clea Smith

CHARACTERS

GINGE	Redheaded girl
STUMPY	Stumpy male

OTHER CHARACTERS

DOTTY	Cabaret singer
PROPIETY	Theatre owner
MR PUNCH	
JACK KETCH	
POLICEMAN	
DEVIL	

SCENE ONE. ROOM UNDER THE THEATRE.

(Curtains open to reveal Stumpy, a bad tempered old midget grouch, sitting at a table drinking gin. After a while, a huge muffled cheer and roar of laughter is heard. Stumpy addresses the ceiling.)

STUMPY

Shut up your laughing. You jackass gullions.
Shut up laughing all the time.

(He takes a drink.)

Yes I should be laughing, with this down me gullet shouldn't I. But I'm not am I? No I'm bloody not, 'cos I've got nothing to laugh about. When this is gone that's it. That's it, you hear? Do you?

(Large burst of laughing.)

Oh you do, do you? You think that's funny? That I've got nothing? You'll laugh at anything you will. I've seen you. You'll watch anything. Bastards. I'm worse than a worm to you, I've seen you, I've seen you laughing at hangings, I've seen you watch them half throttle a 12 year old after hanging his mother just to teach him a lesson. Just so as he won't turn to begging. What else could he do? You murdered his mother in front of his eyes to learn him justice. He tried thieving, but he had to end up a beggar.

(Huge muffled laugh.)

You know what you're like? The lot of you. You never give do you. Unless you've had your entertainment. Yes I've had my fun with you, when I could. I used to cut your fancy hankies your gold stuffed bastard purses, your watches. Who needs a bloody watch, who needs to be anywhere? Give me some land and I'd live by the sun. I am a thief, I was a thief before... My shaking hands, "Please put some money in an old man's hand, just so's I can bloody eat." No drink, that's what I do with it. Drink on my own. I hate beggars. If one of you bothered to care, I like none of you. Pampered ponces. Even me own kind, laughing at their own futility. Leave me alone.

(Laughter, with compere over the top. Stumpy falls asleep. Enter Ginge from high level.)

GINGE

Whoo.
Ha.
Yessah!
Like a bloody ant.
Yessah!
Are we in!
Yesser!
IIIIIn!

GINGE□ (CONT'D)

In.

You are an ant. A top quality AI insect. Just as sly and stealthy as an ant.

Yessahrisah! Ants we are sah! I Am Ant.

I now pronounce myself a criminal. Right and proper. Wahhayy.

My fast day of criminalnessness a success.

(Ginge lights a gas light,)

Oh damn it's an hovel. Oh damn your arse and shove an ember up it. Still it's somewhere to sleep which on the whole is not a bad thing.

(Ginge pokes around for somewhere to sleep and wakes up Stumpy.)

STUMPY

Mother! Anngghhgh. it's the angel of death. A devilish red devil.

I'm being cursed by a carrot.

GINGE

I'm not a carrot.

(Pause)

I am ant. Here have some gin.

STUMPY

What do you want? Leave me, leave me alone.

GINGE

I'm sorry I only wanted somewhere to stay for the night

STUMPY

Piss off.

GINGE

My name's Ginge, on account of my hair, see.

STUMPY

Gin? Don't mind if I do.

(Ginge passes bottle to Stumpy.)

GINGE

Nice spot you got

STUMPY

This has been Christened.

GINGE

What?

STUMPY

Watered down.

GINGE

Well yes, see I don't like it so strong. And seeing as it was the last of mine I wanted it to last.

STUMPY

Hummmmp. I've had the last of mine.

GINGE

Well drink away whatever your name is.

STUMPY

Look I'm going to drink this and then you can piss off alright?

GINGE

That's not quite what I had in mind. I have decided to become a criminal,. Are you a criminal?

STUMPY

Used to be.

GINGE

I thought I'd be a cracker, see I can't do nothing else. I tried dubbing, diving, filing, sneaking, shaving, sharking, rooking, rushing, foysting, forking, bulking, bilking and bamboozling, and that was only this morning.

STUMPY

What about bung-nippering?

GINGE

Same thing, see pick-pocketing needs an accomplice. And I ain't got one. so cracking an 'ouse is positively all I can do on me own. See this is the first house I've ever broken into..... It's nice to have someone to celebrate with.....drink up...,I'm sorry it's yours..., well I'm not sorry actually because you seem nice, and us criminals should stick together. Well that's what they say. Only I'm new to this lark. When my Dad died he left me a bit of money only it's all gone now and no-one wants to employ me so I'm stuck really. Do you mind if I stay a bit?

STUMPY

Got any more gin?

GINGE

Just what's left in there. So what do you do?

STUMPY

Nothing, but I certainly don't go about breaking into another's abode.

GINGE

Look I've said I'm sorry. I didn't pick your 'ouse on purpose. I'd 'ave chosen somewhere a damn sight fancier.

STUMPY

It's not good enough for the lady? Then clear yourself out of my face.

GINGE

Well I'll Just take my bottle and go then.

STUMPY

That's mine ,payment for your intrusion, so I don't call the watch.

GINGE

You give that to me cribbage face.

STUMPY

To a runt like you?

GINGE

Me? You crunch-backed dwarf.

STUMPY

You carrotty-pated strumpet.

GINGE

You cloven hooped Liliputian.

STUMPY

You're nothing better than a cheap cat.

GINGE

And you'd know. You Corinthian?

STUMPY

I don't even know what the inside of a brothel looks like.

GINGE

Oh! Do I hear brother round mouth speak?

STUMPY

You mange ridden wasp spawn.

GINGE

Well that's a little over the top.

STUMPY

Give us back me gin,.

GINGE

Or you'll...

STUMPY

Or you'll be scragged, otomised and grinned in a glass case!

GLNGE

And you're going to do that yourself?

STUMPY
Ain't your breeches quivering?

GINGE
The only thing what's quivering is your bones.
You're shaking worse than a pig on a Sunday.
*(Ginge and Stumpy shout at each other in
silence pulling comedy faces. Lighting
change.)*
Who'd have thought that from such a start such
a beautiful friendship would develop?

STUMPY
So you broke in then?

GINGE
Like an ant.

STUMPY
How so?

GINGE
Sly and stealthy like.

STUMPY
Yes, yes, but how?

GINGE
I lifted myself with great agility up and
passed myself through the window in a most
malicious and depraved way. I quite mistook
myself for a Mephistophelean which the curate
says often comes in the guise of a creepy
crawly.

STUMPY
No matter, I can say, without fear of
contradiction, you're without, doubt a
cracking cracker. You have a talent for house
breaking, which I respect. My names Stumpy.

GINGE
Why?

STUMPY
On account I outgrew my midget parents.

GINGE
Not because you're short, then.
(Sound effect of huge laughter.)

STUMPY
That is neither relevant nor indeed apt.

GINGE
Stumpy, could that be laughter I hear?

STUMPY

Laughter, yes, it's laughter. Laughter from
200 happy souls.

GINGE

Where am I?

STUMPY

I wouldn't normally say this, but you are
without doubt in the right place.

GINGE

Yessah. Where's that then?

STUMPY

You are in the Gaslight Bijou Music Hall
Theatre of the Stars

GINGE

Ennnnnngggghgh?

STUMPY

Yes, Ginge. Unburden yourself.

GINGE

This does not look like the Gaslight Bijou.
Music Hall Theatre of the Stars to me.

STUMPY

You will never shite a genius's turd My simple
pal, a theatre is renown for having people in
it. And they are in fact at this moment
enjoying fine entertainment directly above us.
This is the unused room, below the theatre.
And your home for a short stretch, but bother
yourself not with details. The stage is there.
Take this glass. And put it to the ceiling.

GINGE

Lift me up then Stumpy.

STUMPY

Mind my suit.

GINGE

Higher. That's it.

SCENE TWO INSIDE A MUSIC HALL

COMPERE

My wife, my wife can keep me happy I can tell
you, out not as happy as the lady who's on
next you all know her and love her,
celebrating her 47th season here at the
Gaslight Bijou, and this in fact due to a
personal tragedy, be her last ever appearance
on the stage that has become her home, the
Dame who's done it. Dotty Mullet. Singing "my
little pussy".

(Enter Dotty Mullet)

DOTTY

Has anyone seen my pussy?

(Singing)

I've got a little pussy, who isn't very shy.
All the boys stroke her when they pass by.
And I say give her a ha'penny and she'll
reply,
Mieaow, mieaow, mieaow.

(Lights cut)

SCENE THREE ROOM UNDER THE THEATRE

GINGE

That's Dotty Mullet, the dame who dunnit.

STUMPY

Done it, and is still doing it, for many of her loyal fanatasists. But Ginge. and I can hardly bear to reveal my outrage to you, Mme Moolette has performed her last comedy animal song. No more the strains of, my little dog's got an extra leg, ' All you have to do is beg Then you can pick a peek at my peke's puckered packet", or "Swim on little fishy swim on, you haven't got a bowl, it doesn't worry you at all but it makes me very happy. So swim on cheeky chappie glug glug." It is a scandal. If I could reek some wild revenge on the man that has taken from me the sunshine of my waking hours.

GINGE

It seems that we are all lost.

?RUMPY

None more so than her menagerie.

GINGE

Stumpy I do believe you are in love with her.

STUMPY

Yes indeed. If I had a heart, Ginge, she alone could break it. But alas the simple pleasures of love are denied me for I was born without one, that is the way of us criminals.

GINGE

Professional criminals.

STUMPY

We're not professionals, we're not committed enough. People like them up there the Dotty Mullets of this world they're not amateurs, we should learn from them..

GINGE

How to sing?

JTUMPY

No my friend, w sing is a" God given gift of which we are not worthy mores the pity. To be applauded by hundreds of appreciative audience members who have trudged all the way and willingly handed over great wads of lovely lolly.

GINGE

I hope she finds her cat.

STUMPY

That I'm afraid Ginge, will soon be the least of her worries for with no outlet for her musical talents, she will be forced onto the Streets, which you and I know, unless very lucky will mean, she will surely starve to death and die.

JINGE

Stumpy, are you sure I haven't got a heart, I feel a bit of a pang.

STUMPY

A pang. A PANG. Impossible. Aren't you and I criminals'?

GINGE

Course we is. Well I am now. I'm only new.

STUMPY

Then you have no heart Plain and simple. A heart has no place in the gutter and for those of us born to thee gutter, the gutter smells of home. And home is

GINGE

...where the heart is?

STUMPY

Precisely, And if I had half a heart, left I'd think twice about ripping off such talented people as Dotty Mullet. But needs must my friend, needs must.

GINGE

What do you mean rip off Dotty Mullet.

STUMPY

This is no life, having no life, just having what is given to you. We must take to taking so that we do not want.

GINGE

What do you want?

STUMPY

I never want to want again.

GINGE

I never wanted much.

STUMPY

You ain't got much. I just want to know where the nest bottle's coming from.
(Chink)

STUMPY (CONT'D)

As long as you've got a bottle, don't worry 'bout it, I've got to do some thinking.

GINGE

What about?

STUMPY

Don't you be bothering yourself, I'll elucidate you later.

GINGE

You think. I'll drink, I don't like thinking, Stumpy, it makes me sad. And when I'm sad I like a little glass of gin.

STUMPY

You must be sad bloody often men.

GINGE

Yes I am.

STUMPY

You having another pang my little sad'un?

GINGE

I remember me father, fore he died. He would have been sadly distressed if he saw me in this state, and I'm on the up. He was a nice man, very kind. I think of him sometimes, it makes me sorrowful.

STUMP

Hi look after you Ginge. 'Ere Put some colour in your cheeks,

GINGE

Douse the sparks in our throats, And then what Stumpy?

STUMPY

Well my dear Ginge, we plan ourselves a robbery.

(SING SONG)

No gin in me bottle, tears run down my cheeks.
I'm not bad, I don't mean to be a mean man,
I have to take to taking, wherever I can.

Verse fast

You've got to get in.

Where?

Wherever it is.

You've got to get it.

What.

Well the money of course.

When you got it what you you gonna do?

I don't know, what should we do?

You got to get away,

GINGE

Brilliant. Let me run this one past you. We wait till it's dark, drill an hole from down here directly up. Then I squeeze through it.

STUMPY

Yes. When there's no-one around?

GINGE

Yes.

STUMPY

And they've taken the money home?

GINGE

Yes. Damn, that's no plan at all is it. Well we wouldn't get caught.

STUMPY

Well Ginge, I've schemed.

GINGE

NO.

STUMPY

Hear the scheme and then shout your approval of my contrivance. Imagine an evening at the theatre above, the usual 200 joyless souls with just enough clenched in their calloused hands to momentarily relieve themselves of their drudgery. They each hand the silver to the cashier making a sum that could free, two people from scratching a living for ever. And those two people are we.

GINGE

Us.

STUMPY

The money is taken by the cashier after the start of the show to the propriety's office overlooking the street where they wait until the interval for the propriety to return and put the money in the safe. Once in the safe it is untouchable, the moment we must strike is when the cashier is alone. We must hide ourselves in the theatre and make our way unseen to the office where we crack the cashier on the head and mull him for the money.

GINGE

What ding him like Mr Punch, Stumpy?

STUMPY

You haven't been watching Mr Punch have you?

GINGE

It's not just for children. It's political and incisive. Mr Punch would take a very large stick, and bash everybody on the head who stood in his way. He'd get to the Propriety and go "Bosha, bosha, bosha" until he was dead and shout "That's the way to do it."

STUMPY

But that's murder.

GINGE

He wouldn't care.

(Gets into basket and flips little puppet legs out.)

He go up to the propriety and he'd go, "Bosha, bosha, bosha, you're dead Mister, that's the way to do it" I am Mister Punchineila.

Bosha, bosha, bosha.

(to audience))

Hey you big face. I don't like you looking at me, with you're peepy eyes. Hey whata I do, you tell me? I donta like him, you want me to kill him? You come here ugly I kill you. I just go bosha, bosha, bosha.

(Stumpy return dressed as policeman.)

STUMPY

Hello, I'm your friendly policeman, don't you be fretting yourself Mr Bigface I'm here to restore order and decency. Mr Punch..

GINGE

Urangh!!

STUMPY

I'm here to arrest you for murder, and theft, which are bad things you've done, now just wait here while I go get myself a hangman. I won't be long, now I'm just going to address the general public for a moment. Girls ana boys, this here is a very dangerous man and I want you to keep an eye on him for me. Goodbye.

(Stumply leaves.)

GINGE

Urangh!!Urangli!!Urangh!!

I'm not afraid of the little hangman, he's a poeo mayali.

(Makes pigs noises.)

Hey you Big-face I not finished with you, Hey what you think of policemen?

They are all Poco mayali, we go.

(pig noise])

we all go

(pig noises))

GINGE□ (CONT'D)

yeah.

(Stumpy enters as The Hangman)

GINGE (CONT'D)

Here comes Jack Ketch. Hey how's it go huh?

STUMPY

Oh gawd, what next hang, hang, hang that's all I ever do. Hello Mr Punch, right, I've to hang you, deary dear, just pop your head in here Mr Punch, and don't mess around.

GINGE

Why yon want to kill me? Uhhh? We boo you, BOO. Come on girls and boys.

STUMPY

Oh very good Boo away. Finished? Work, work, work. All I ever do is work like a dog. Right Pop your head in here.

GINGE

Where where? I don't understand, you show me.

STUMPY

Oh god, here like this.
Stumpy puts his head in noose and Ginge pulls.

GINGE

That's the way to do it, I'm Mr Punch, and I killed the hangman, I laugh in the face of death, haaa haa. Now everybody safe. Hooray for me, ladypeople and gents. That's the way to do it.

(Stumpy rises from back of basket as Devil.)

STUMPY

I am the Devil, ha, ha..

GINGE

Pah, you no scare me, Bosha, bosha.
(ad infinitum)

STUMPY

Giiiiinge. Ginge, Enough, Mr Punch is a viscious and evil child beating man.

GINGE

But he's funny, People love Mr Punch. Did you not see how everyone was behind him.

STUMPY

Look we can't go round knocking people on their heads and killing them. Life is not like that.

GINGE

We might as well, we'll get hanged for
thieving just the same as killing,

STUMPY

But killing ain't right. Now listen carefully,
and this is more important than anything else.
Make sure you only hit the cashier over the
head to stun them. Murdering's for murderers.
We are thieves, you can be proud of theivery,
my little brush-top. Look at the great
thieves, our heros of cunning shavery. Joe
Leashly, Mary-cut-and-cum-again, Jenny Diver,
Dick Turpin, Jack Sheppard. They cared not for
murderers, they had pride, a respectful
following. When they dangled and kicked the
clouds, they was cheered by thousands upon
thousands of admiring hoard.

GINGE

Hoardssssss.

STUMPY

Whatever. Singing the ballads, reading their
last dieing speech and confessions. Gasping-at
the audacity and bravado of their thefts, they
went to the gallows proud, and appreciated.
Compare and contrast the horrific abuse handed
out to murderers pelted with all manner of
vegetables and worse, taunted and tormented.
We might be Tyburn Blossom, Ginge, fated
to hang from the Tyburn tree but we die
thieves.

GINGE

I got it!

STUMPY

What?

GINGE

Can you smell it Stumpy ?

STUMPY

WHAT!

GINGE

The pungent odour of a genius' fart, and that
genius is I.

STUMPY

You have as much wit as three men two fools
and a lunatic but pray unleash this distemper.

GINGE

I know how we can get into the theatre.
Without having to hide ourselves away and
without being seen.

STUMPY

Phffhah.

GINGE

Well in fact we will be seen by every body, but no-one will suspect us. We get together an act. We get ourselves booked, do a show, then nick all the cash when we're back stage.

STUMPY

Yes. Brilliant and they happen to be looking for new act anyway since that Propiety sacked my Dotty.

SCENE 4 PROPIETY'S OFFICE
(Enter Dotty.)

MR PROPIETY

Dotty

DOTTY

Yes?

PROP

I've hired you for what is it?

DOTTY

47 wonderful seasons. That's how many years?

PROP

And how much do I pay you.

DOTTY

5 poundss a year.

PROP

And how much do you think you're worth.

DOTTY

5 pounds... two shilling and sixpence....a year?

PROP

No, bugger all.

DOTTY-

Oooh.

(Dotty does comedy faint and Prop catches her,)

PROP

Let me introduce you to the modem theory of economics, old hags with old acts and rubbish songs attract old codgers with old purses and where does that leave us?

DOTTY

Where indeed Mr Propriety? Where indeed?

PROP

Well in the economic market of modem times. Skint.

DOTTY

Oh dear Mr Propriety, You are so clever with money.

PROP

Oh dear indeed Mrs Mullet. And you most certainly aren't modern.

PROP (CONT'D)

You represent the old Bijou and our takings are increasing no thanks to you, I've only kept you on after your husband died because he begged me to look out for you to keep you off the bread line and despite the fact he did teach me all I know, and I solemnly promised to keep my word I'm having to drop you.

DOTTY

Oooh.

(Does comedy faint.)

I see, well, dear old Bertie and all these years I thought it was because I was good. I thought the audiences liked me.

PROP

No. Never.

(Dotty does comedy faint and Prop catches her after chasing her around.)

You see what I need is a new act which will epitomise exactly what I want.

DOTTY

Money?

PROP

I couldn't have put it more coarsely myself.

DOTTY

So does this mean I'm out of my lodgings too?

PROP

Dotty, Dotty my dear. Dotty yes.

DOTTY

Oooh.

(Dotty does comedy faint and Prop catches her after chasing her around)

DOTH"

I am sorry. Well I have been here, what is it now? 45 years, I suppose it's time for pastures new. The street is exactly where?

PROP

Outside.

DOTTY

I haven't been outside since dear old Bertie took me for tea that day. You remember, just the three of us, and we went into that dear little grubbikens. The Turks Head.

(Laughs)

Do you remember you and Bertie said to the lady "I'm not my eating cakes amongst these vermin of humanity" and she shouted "Ma, Fa, Jim, John, Thomas, William, or was it. Walter?"

DOTTY□ (CONT'D)

Get upstairs we've got some proper customers and I don't, want them throwing their scones back up whilst looking on the lot of you." It was raining then, I really enjoyed myself and as we walked home, you, you were much younger than Bertie, and much slimmer than you are now, you and Bertie mucking about, and you shouting "I don't need you now old man, you've taught me everything you know." And dear old Bertie slipped under that horse, and died. I haven't been outside since.

PROP

Go on then, sling your hook. Thanks for not crying.

DOTTY

Well in moments of adversity, Bertie would always say, sing on, sing on,
La, la, la. Ooh.

(Does comedy faint and Prop misses her. She faints behind the table.)

(Change to Ginge and Stumpy. Stumpy goes behind the table.)

SCENE 5

STUMPY

Ginge, Ginge, are you all right?

GINGE

I'm sorry Stumps, I think I had a little too much to drink.

STUMPY

Too much, impossible. !t is to Gin that humankind is indebted for being the only creatures to drink without being thirsty.

JINGE

A man who is bored of drink is boring.

STUMPY

I 'would wager that that propriety there would only buy a drink on St Geoffrey's day in the reign of Queen Dick, which is never. I bet he only drinks cow juice. He is one of the most grotesquely ugly men I have ever seen. I reckon he must have killed a baboon and stole his face.

GINGE

I don't know what he did with the face but he uses it's arse to speak through. Still he has made all this possible for us and he did give us this bottle of lightening. A toast to the best cunt in Christendom.

STUMPY

Hnnmrmuphpmmmpr. A bulldog with it's face ripped off by the pox would find it revolting to gaze upon that propriety in the dark.

GINGE

You know I don't feel so bad about stealing from him now.

STUMPY

Ginge, Ginge FEEL! Us criminals have no feelings. It is theft that gives light to our step, and lie sacked poor sweet Dotty Mullet the only woman who ever made me cry.

GINGE

A bigger rogue there never was. And we don't even have to be any good 'cos...

STUMPY

There's little likelihood of that Ginge is there?

GINGE

...it's just a one off. Who cares if they boo us, we in the theatre aint we?

STUMPY

Ginge, I suppose now you are going to reveal some amazing hidden talent that you have practised secretly for years.

GINGE

No. I can't do anything. But as a babe just before my mum left me to fend for myself in the street, she said if you ever want, whistle for it.

STUMPY

Ginge, poor abandoned thing, what she meant was she could no longer support you and if you ever tried to ask her for anything ever again she would pretend she wouldn't know who you were, well in truth she probably wouldn't know who you were.

GINGE

Well I only met her the once, but it's an idea isn't it?

STUMPY

But can you whistle?
(Ginge does an amazing whistle call)

PROP

(On stage.)
Welcome to the stage 'Birds in the Black Forest' the amazing duo from Copenhagen who have whistled their amazing tunes in front of the crowned Princes of Europe.
(WHISTLING SKETCH,)

STUMPY

But I can't whistle, hence my need for a whistling partner.

GINGE

Oh

STUMPY

Not in public, or at all. I've got two left lips. In fact they're puckered What we can do is pickpocket, oh people love that.

GINGE

A pick-pocketing act

PROP

Please welcome Le Mans dans le Manteaux who have pick-pocketed the crowned princes of Europe.

GINGE

Good evening ladies et monsieurs.
 Bonjour et bonsoir, I wish to introduce to you
 the pocket genius Monsieur Le Mans who will
 come amongst you and pickpocket you unaware
 that he is there. Now please imagine
 yourselves in a busy Highway.

STUMPY

Merci, Madame Janet, you are not so bad
 yourself.

*(Stumpy goes into audience, very slowly and
 falls onto someone, obviously and aggressively
 steals a purse.)*

I have now pick-pocketed a member of zee
 audience. Sank you very much.

(Steals an umbrella and throws it to Ginge.)

Who me Constable?! I zink you have made a
 mistake.

*(Causes an almighty scene at the back meanwhile
 Ginge successfully nicks a bag, steals the
 purse then returns the bag.)*

GINGE

Can everyone please check for their purse. Ah
 you Madame? Is this yours?

STUMPY

Subterfuge!. I taught her everything she
 knows.

*(Ginge has really big fishing rod with big hook
 which Stumpy attaches to a thing.)*

GINGE

Look no hands.

(Pickpocket a dummy in the audience.)

STUMPY

Alia! I Have left the gentleman sleeping.

GINGE

Now madames and gentlemen earlier this evening
 when you came in we was in disguise and were
 in fact your ushers. I successfully shaved
 this item from one of you.

(Stumpy leads clapping, Stumpy stands.)

STUMPY

Hey that's my purse.

*(Skimpy still in the audience assumes the role
 of Prop.)*

GINGE

So what do you reckon then?

PROP

Love it, love it, love it. How much did you
 want again?

GINGE
A farthing and some gin?

PROP
Love it. And you want to be on in the first half.

GINGE
Er. Yes. Due to our inexperience.

PROP
See you tonight.
(Prop exits laughing. Ginge exits laughing.)

GINGE
Yessah, we're in. The bastardly scullion fell for it, the rhino's ours.

STUMPY
Not as ours as poverty yet. Look now, lets us add another wrinkle to our arses.

GINGE
Any more wrinkles and I'll have to cork my arse to keep my fartleberries in.

STUMPY
The plan, the plan. We must recap the fiddle. Back to the job my ginger-hackled wanderer. As soon as we have performed and the propriety is on stage calming the audience down after our debacle. What do you do?
Ginge
I make my way backstage to the Propriety's office, pretending to be lost. I cosh the cashier, scour his stash then bung it out of the window.
Stumpy
Where I will be waiting below to catch it and run off.

GINGE
And I peg it out of the theatre round the back entrance. To make my escape. Got it.

STUMPY
Now what, are the directions from the office to the window?

GINGE
I get out the door, I look about, then I take two spoons and a bowl.

STUMPY
What?

GINGE

(Miming eating.)

Spoon, spoon, bowl. That's how.. I.. tell my hands apart.

STUMPY

Alright then. But two spoons and a bowl would get you back on to the stage. It's spoon bowl spoon.

GINGE

But that is two spoons and a bowl.

STUMPY

Ginge, concentrate. Yes, it is two spoons and a bowl, but what is important is the order. Unfuddle your cap, now. Spoon, bowl, spoon.

GINGE

Spoon, bowl, spoon. Spoon, bowl, spoon. I've got it you can rely on me.

STUMPY

I hope so. We haven't got time to change the plan now.

GINGE

Spoon, bowl, spoon.
Musical interlude during which they do warm up exercises and put on costumes.

STUMPY

Right then Ginge, five minutes and we're on.

GINGE

Stumps?

STUMPY

Yes, my soon to be star.

GINGE

I feel ,well just ever so slightly, sort of well sick.

STUMPY

Nerves, that's what that'll be. Even the most professional and practised acts gets what is termed nerves, and seeing as we are not practised or indeed professional it is only to be expected that, we should be feeling sick and crapping ourselves. Not daring to trust our arses with a fart lest we unleash a wild squirt.

GINGE

No, we're about to commit my first ever willful wrongness and possibly become the most disreputable, nay nefarious blaggard this side of the Thames.

STUMPY

Point, there are similarities between crime and stage. Nerves being one.

GINGE

And the others?

STUMPY

Take this rake, it is a wonderful comedy object and also the name of a criminal.

GINGE

To crime.

STUMPY

To the stage.

GINGE

I still feel sick.

STUMPY

No, don't worry this isn't a crowd to be afearred of, no, if we ever get caught and sent to the gallows men the crowds number thousands and nerves yes play their part.

GINGE

I don't want to be hanged. Are we on soon?

STUMPY

Any minute, we are waiting to be called.

GINGE

Do you think well be good.

STUMPY

We'll be ants, Ginge. No, bees, insects with wings.

(Call from backstage. They go outside the door and reappear, with different lights.)

Do Act Finish act to applause. Bow, Stumpy leaves stage left, Ginge stage right. Prop enters stage left.

PROP

Thank you, tank you, tink you, you tinkers you. haaaaa.

Weren't they brilliant ladies and..

(Ginge enters with money bags,)

...they've come back to do... some... more... with my bloody money. Stop thief.

GINGE

Spoon, spoon, bowl. Ooer. STUMPY.
(Ginge is chased by Prop round table, runs offstage right. Prop follows but is thwarted by Dotty.)

PROP

Get out of my way, bitch.

DOTTY

Oh.
(Dotty does extended faint to be caught by Stumpy)
 Am I outside?

STUMPY

No. it's that way. Ginge where are you?
(Stumpy exits stage left, Dotty exits stage left, Ginge and Prop enter stage left and peg it across stage. Prop comes on stage right with policeman's arm.)

PROP

Come on Pig, get the thief.
(Prop exit's stage right, Mr Punch appears stage left.)

MR PUNCH

Urranghh! Big face you still here?
(Policeman enters stage right.)
 Alia! Mr Policeman Where's my stick?
(Mr Punch exits stage left.)

POLICEMAN

Hello Boys and Gals, I'm looking for a thief.
(Mr Punch enters with a stick.)
 Not you Mr Punch I'm not being hit again.
(Mr Punch chases across stage where he bumps into Prop.)

MR PUNCH

Hey you got any jobs?
(Prop Boots Mr Punch up arse, he forward-rolls. Mr Punch exits stage right. Prop stops gasping for breath. Enter Ginge stage left, Stumpy stage right.)

GINGE

Stumpy, I did two spoons and a bowl just like you said and then...

STUMPY

It doesn't matter, have you got the loot?
(Ginge holds up the loot and Stumpy takes it, both exit stage right. Enter Policeman chased by Mr Punch they exit. Enter Punch chased by Jack Ketch.)

JACK KETCH

Hang, hang, hang.

PUNCH

Hmranggg.

(Punch exits stage right Devil enters and chases Jack ketch off Stage. Enter Ginge.)

POLICEMAN

Gotcha

(Policeman ties Ginge's hands together and takes her out of the door and throws her into what is now the prison. Long pause.)

GINGE

(Stumpy enters from the back,)
Stumpy!

STUMPY

Ginge, my dear friend.

GINGE

Have you come to visit me. Look at me. Moves eyebrows up and down.
I've been polishing the Kings iron with my eyebrows. Looking through the bars of my gaol. I'm going to be hanged, I'm a famous criminal.

STUMPY

So am I, my little ginger slip gibbet. So am I.

GINGE

But they didn't catch you, I haven't said anything. I said it was just me. I didn't sing, I swear.

STUMPY

I know, I know. I gave myself up.

GINGE

What! Why?

STUMPY

Because Ginge, because.

GINGE

So we'll go together Stumps? I knew we'd always go together.

STUMPY

You don't know what it's like, do you Ginge?

GINGE

Yes I do, there's a big crowd, the biggest you've ever seen, I've been there, and they all cheer us as we go on the cart, saying them two they're thieves, brave thieves, And then they throw flowers and boo the hangman, I know. I know.

STUMPY

It's not like Mr Punch, Ginge. Mr Punch was a murderer. They boo murderers.

GINGE

But we're thieves. It's just a little drop. Ten minutes, dance the hangman's hornpipe, crying cockles, cockles. Chhhockkles.

STUMPY

Ginge, stop it.

GINGE

We'll go up the ladder to bed.

STUMPY

Stop it.

GINGE

We'll be kicking them clouds with our hempen cravats, and leave this solecase stretching.

STUMPY

STOP IT. You killed someone. Do you know what that means?

GINGE

No I didn't.

STUMPY

Yes you did. The cashier died.

GINGE

What like Mr Punch? He put Jack Ketch's head in the noose and hanged him. Ha ha, that's the way to do it.

STUMPY

I can't let you do I Ginge. It's too horrible a way to die.

GINGE

What are we going to do, get a stick and bosh, bosh, the hangman.

STUMPY

No Ginge,
(Stumpy lifts Ginge up.)

GINGE

Stumpy, what are you doing?
(Stumpy breaks Ginge's neck.)

STUMPY

This is so less painful, believe me= Believe me, my friend. My little ginger slip-gibbet. Even if I die a murderer. If I hang cursed at least I have saved you. Goodbye Ginge.

(Stumpy opens the door which has a noose hanging from the frame, Lights dim and sound effect of booing, shouts of murderer, a drop sound and a cheer as the curtains close.)

THE END