

CONNIE What about your Sharon?

RITA She's six.

CONNIE And when she's twenty-six do you want her to be on eighty-seven per cent?

RITA She wants to be a doctor. Ha!

CONNIE She could be. Nothing changes if it isn't challenged.

CONNIE
 YOU CAN THE CHANGE THE STORY
 YOU CAN CHANGE THE TALE
 DON'T FALL FOR ALL THOSE REASONS
 THAT ARE THERE TO MAKE US FAIL
 WE HAVE TO MAKE IT OUR TIME
 CAN'T OUR TIME BE NOW?
 AIN'T GOT TIME FOR WAITING
 RITA MAKE IT NOW

(End of scene.)

SCENE ELEVEN

The management offices at Warley. Initially there are the three managers sat at a table. One of these is MR HOPKINS. MONTY, CONNIE and RITA arrive in the corridor outside this office.

Music No. 11: UNION SONG – Reprise

MEN / WOMEN
 BROTHERS AND SISTERS,
 COMRADES EVERYONE
 FIGHT FOR YOUR FUTURE
 AND THE UNION
 WHEN IT COMES DOWN TO MANAGEMENT (*manage-munt*)
 EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM'S
 A TOTAL . . .

- HOPKINS Come in, come in.
(Enter MONTY.)
- MONTY Afternoon, gentlemen.
- ALL Afternoon. / Monty. / Alright? *etc.*
- MONTY Right, today we've got the ladies.
- HUBBLE Wooooo!
- MONTY One shop steward, Connie, she's alright, she knows and respects the procedures, and er . . . one of the trouble makers.
- HUBBLE Are they fit?
- HOPKINS Hubble, please!
- HUBBLE Just a joke.
- HOPKINS They threatened to walk out yesterday, that is not a joke.
- MACER I'll have to lay off five thousand men if I don't get a continuous supply of Cortina seats.
- MONTY We can park this in the grievance procedure. Connie was instrumental in setting up the grievance procedure, so she ain't gonna argue against it.
- HOPKINS We can do what we like, then? They're under our thumbs.
- HUBBLE Ooh, Mucky.
- HOPKINS Hubble! That remark is not worthy of a Personnel Director.
- HUBBLE Sorry, just a joke.
- MONTY You're management, I'm union, but we're all men, and this is our world, the world of work. It's when we go home that we're in the dog house.
- MACER I hate going home.

(A beat of time. All three men drop their heads in a moment of tragic introspection.)

MONTY I'll go round them up.

HUBBLE Woof! Woof!

(In the corridor, CONNIE and RITA are waiting for MONTY.)

MONTY Now there's three of them and three of us, so it's a fair fight. Connie's done these meetings before. It's all collective agreements and procedures, so leave the talking to us, eh Rita?

RITA I'll keep me mouth shut, I'm just making up the numbers.

MONTY Terrific!

(MONTY turns and enters the room. This time the management stand.)

MONTY You know Connie Riley, shop steward, River Plant. This is Rita O'Grady, er . . . machinist. Rita, this is, Gregory Hubble, Personnel Director, Ron Macer, Production Manager and Jeremy Hopkins, Managing Director, Ford Dagenham.

RITA Oh! Never met you before. Hello. Sorry. I'll shut up now!

MACER The NUVB executive supported the job evaluation exercise.

MONTY True, but my members at the River Plant –

HUBBLE – the girls.

CONNIE Yes, the girls, are reluctant to sign it off.

RITA Yeah. Sorry.

HOPKINS Fortunately, we have a grievance procedure now, partly due to your efforts in the past, Connie.

CONNIE Yes. We do wish to register a formal grievance.

- HUBBLE We have no objections to grading grievance hearings being granted under the formerly agreed formal grievance procedure.
- MONTY So you agree to grant the girls their grading grievance before the grading committee on the grounds that their grading grievance gripes can be grieved in the grievance procedure if they're grave enough.
- HUBBLE Granted.
- MONTY Great. Grand. We're very grateful. Gregory.
- HOPKINS When is the next Grievance Committee?
- HUBBLE September?
- MONTY Agreed.
- RITA Hang on! I ain't working on a grade B for three months. We're skilled workers.
- HOPKINS That is to be discussed in September.
- RITA You have to take three tests before you get in the door. Ergo we must be skilled.
- HOPKINS Ergo?
- RITA Yes, bloody ergo.
- HOPKINS Do they take three tests?
- MACER Of course we test them.
- RITA He tests us cos he can't afford to let just anybody loose on his expensive leatherette. And what about the girls at Dunton? They got C grade.
- HUBBLE – there are only two girls at Dunton.
- RITA – what's that gotta do wiv anyfing?
- MACER Now come on, you're –

RITA – don't you dare tell me my outrage is misplaced. It's the principle.

MACER The girls at Dunton have to work under pressure.

RITA – I have to make three hundred pieces a day. You try working with that monkey on your back!

MACER Dunton is a Research and Development facility, there are no drawings –

RITA We ain't working from drawings neiver! Go through that shed, you won't find a single template.

MONTY Rita –

RITA (*To MONTY.*) – Don't you "Rita" me, Monty. Alright, so if we ain't skilled, yeah, you could do our jobs, yeah? That's what you're saying innit? (*Beat.*) So – what kind of needle would you use for leatherette?

(*Silence.*)

Ballpoint, or a crewel?

(*Silence.*)

MACER Look –

RITA – What would you set the dog teeth on for real leather? (*Beat.*) D'yer know what the dog teeth are? Alright. Last question. What kind of brush would you use to sweep the yard?

HUBBLE A yard brush?

RITA Correct! Well done, Mister Hubble, you could be a cleaner.

HOPKINS Every job has been analysed across twenty-eight characteristics.

RITA Twenty-eight characteristics and the sex of whoever does it.

MACER £17 for a forty-hour week is not –

RITA – Don't insult me, alright? You know what we want. Are you gonna give us equal pay or not?

HOPKINS Equal pay?!

MACER This isn't about equal pay?!

MONTY Connie?

CONNIE Why isn't this about equal pay?

HOPKINS This is not an equal pay issue.

RITA It wasn't, but it is now.

CONNIE You've made it one.

HOPKINS But the grievance procedure was your idea.

CONNIE Fifteen years ago. And you've been abusing ever since.

RITA Come on, Connie, we're going. You can stuff your grievance procedure where the sun don't shine.

(RITA and CONNIE stand and make for the door.)

Good to meet you. A cup of tea would've been nice, but I guess that's skilled work.

(RITA and CONNIE exit. End of scene.)

SCENE TWELVE

Music No. 11a: SKILLED WORK

Music underscore factory rhythm. All machines off. A tense silence. RITA stands on a box.

RITA So we met the management . . .

BERYL – Bastards!

SANDRA What did you say?