

# Noises Off

by Michael Frayn

*In the opening scene of this British farce play-within-a-play, we see veteran actress Dotty's character, Mrs. Clackett the housekeeper, answering the phone and speaking to the caller.*

## **DOTTY**

Hello... Yes, but there's no one here, love... No, Mr. Brent's not here... He lives here, yes, but he don't live here now because he lives in Spain... Mr. Philip Brent, that's right... The one who writes the plays, that's him, only now he writes them in Spain... No, she's in Spain, too, they're all in Spain, there's no one here.. Am I in Spain? No, I'm not in Spain, dear. I look after the house for them, but I go home at one o'clock on Wednesday, only I've got a nice plate of sardines to put my feet up with, because it's the royal what's it called on the telly - the royal - you know - where's the paper then...?

...And if it's to do with letting the house then you'll have to ring the house agents, because they're the agents for the house... Squire, Squire, Hackham and who's the other one...? No, they're not in Spain, they're next to the phone in the study. Squire, Squire, Hackham, and hold on, I'll go and look.

Always the same, isn't it. Soon as you take the weight off your feet, down it all comes on your head.

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

by William Shakespeare



*Friends Hermia and Helena become rivals when the mischievous fairy, Puck, mistakenly makes Hermia's love fall for Helena. Hermia retaliates thinking Helena, the taller of the two, has stolen Lysander for herself.*

## HERMIA

O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!  
You thief of love! what, have you come by night  
And stolen my love's heart from him?

Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.  
Now I perceive that she hath made compare  
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;  
And with her personage, her tall personage,  
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.  
And are you grown so high in his esteem;  
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?  
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;  
How low am I? I am not yet so low  
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!  
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?  
Let me come to her.

# The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

by Mark Haddon, Adapted by Simon Stephens



*During an investigation of the death of his neighbor's dog, Christopher, a high-functioning child with autism, discovers letters from his mother whom he thought had died. Instead, his father has been hiding the letters from his mother.*

## **JUDY/CHRISTOPHER**

Dear Christopher, I said that I wanted to explain to you why I went away when I had the time to do it properly. Now I have lots of time. So I'm sitting on the sofa here with this letter and the radio on and I'm going to try and explain.

I was not a very good mother Christopher. Maybe if things had been different, maybe if you'd been different, I might have been better at it. But that's just the way things turned out.

I'm not like your father. Your father is a much more patient person. He just gets on with things and if things upset him he doesn't let it show.

But that's not the way I am and there's nothing I can do to change it.

And I remember looking at the two of you and seeing you together and thinking how you were really different with him. Much calmer.

And I think then I realized you and your father were probably better off if I wasn't living in the house.

And it broke my heart but eventually I decided it would be better for all of us if I went.

And I meant to say goodbye.

But when I rang your father he said I couldn't –

He was really angry. He said I couldn't –

He said I couldn't talk to you.

And I didn't know what to do.

He said I was being selfish and that I was never to set foot inside the house again.

And so I haven't.

I wonder if you can understand any of this. I know it will be difficult for you.

I thought what I was doing was the best for all of us. I hope it is.

Christopher I never meant to hurt you.

# A Singular Kinda Guy

by David Ives



*Mitch is a young guy talking to a girl in a bar. She's nice, but he's got this sort of confession, see. There's something she ought to know—on the inside, he isn't really a guy at all. He's an Olivetti electric self-correcting typewriter.*

## MITCH

I know what you're thinking. You're looking at me and you're saying to yourself: average guy. Well, that's what I thought too for lots of years, and boy, was I wrong. Now I look back, I think I always really knew the truth about myself, underneath. I'd be standing in a crowd of people at a party, and suddenly I'd get this idea like I was standing in a huge empty space and there wasn't anybody around me for miles.

And then one day I had a ... I don't know what you'd call it. A mystical experience? I was walking down Lex over in the thirties when I go by this office supply shop. Just a crummy little place. But I turn and I look and I see... an Olivetti model 250 portable electric typewriter.

Have you ever seen the old Olivetti 250? Well, let me tell you – it's sublime. The lines. The shape. The slant of the keyboard. It's all there! It's a thing of beauty! Anyway, I'm standing there looking at this thing, and it's like I recognize it from someplace, like I'm seeing some long-lost brother for the first time, and suddenly I realize: That's me, right there. That thing in the window is exactly what I feel like, on the inside. Same lines, same shape, same aesthetic. And what I realized was: I...am a typewriter. No, really! A typewriter! All those years I thought I was a human being, on the inside I was really a portable Olivetti 250 with automatic correctibility. And you know what? I can't even type!

# Othello

by William Shakespeare

*Iago's plot to convince the Moor Othello that his friend, Cassio, is having an affair with Othello's wife Desdemona is going well, so Iago muses to himself why anyone would call him a villain for this when he only wants Desdemona for himself.*

## IAGO

And what's he then that says I play the villain?  
When this advice is free I give and honest,  
Probal to thinking and indeed the course  
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy  
The inclining Desdemona to subdue  
In any honest suit: she's framed as fruitful  
As the free elements. And then for her  
To win the Moor—were't to renounce his baptism,  
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,  
His soul is so enfetter'd to her love,  
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
Even as her appetite shall play the god  
With his weak function. How am I then a villain  
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,  
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!  
When devils will the blackest sins put on,  
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,  
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool  
Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes

And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,  
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear,  
That she repeals him for her body's lust;  
And by how much she strives to do him good,  
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.  
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,  
And out of her own goodness make the net  
That shall enmesh them all.

# Uncle Vanya

by Anton Chekhov, translation by Stark Young

*Sonya realizes that there is no marriage in her future and that she will live out her days as a spinster on her father's estate. Here, she commiserates with Uncle Vanya, who shares a similar fate.*

## SONYA

But what can we do, Uncle? We're alive. *(A pause.)* We'll live, through a long chain of days, endless nights. We'll bear patiently whatever happens; we'll work for others, until we die, with no rest, and when our hour has come we'll go without a murmur. But in the next world, Uncle, we'll say that we suffered, that we were miserable, and God will have pity on us. Then, dear Uncle, a new life will start – radiant, beautiful; we'll rejoice and we'll remember these sufferings with a smile; we'll rest. I believe that, Uncle, with all my heart. *(She kneels in front of him and puts her hand on her uncle's hands. She speaks in a tired voice.)* We'll rest. *(Tyelyegyin quietly plays the guitar.)* Yes, rest! We'll hear the angels sing, the sky will be filled with diamonds.

All our trouble and pain will melt, there'll be compassion. Our lives will be calm and gentle, sweet as a caress.... I believe that, Uncle, I believe it. *(With her handkerchief she wipes away her uncle's tears.)* Dear, poor Uncle Vanya, you're crying. *(Through her own tears)* You've had no joy in your life, but wait, Uncle, just wait.... We'll rest... *(She embraces him.)* We'll rest. *(We hear the tapping of the night watchman. Tyelyegyin plays softly. Mariya Vasilyevna writes in the margins of her pamphlet. Maryina knits a stocking.)* We'll rest.



# The Glass Menagerie

by Tennessee Williams



*In the closing scene of Williams' memory play about family and sacrifice, Tom laments the time he spent neglecting his sister, Laura, and the guilt he feels in abandoning his family just like his father.*

## TOM

I didn't go to the moon. I went much further, for time is the longest distance between two places... I left St. Louis. I descended these steps of this fire escape for the last time and followed from then on, in my father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space... I traveled around a great deal. The city swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly colored but torn away from the branches. I would have stopped but I was pursued by something. It always came upon me unawares, taking me altogether by surprise. Perhaps it was a familiar bit of music. Perhaps it was only a piece of transparent glass... Perhaps I'm walking along the street at night, in some strange city, before I have found companions, and I pass a lighted window of a shop where perfume is sold. The window is filled with pieces of colored glass, tiny transparent bottles in delicate colors, like bits of a shattered rainbow. Then all at once my sister touches my shoulder. I turn around and look into her eyes... Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried so hard to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be! I reach for a cigarette, I cross a street, I run into a movie or a bar. I buy a drink. I speak to the nearest stranger – anything that will blow your candles out – for nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles Laura... And so – goodbye.