

(They move towards the Parliament gates where there are press gathered.)

HACK 1 Ladies, are you going to ask Barbara Castle for Equal Pay?

RITA 'Course we are, that's what we're striking for, innit?

HACK 2 And if she refuses, how will you cope with that?

RITA How will we cope? We're women! We always cope!

(They go into the building. End of scene.)

SCENE EIGHT

BARBARA CASTLE'S office. TEA LADY opens the doors and the girls come in.

BARBARA Come in! Rita, welcome. Sit down, all the furniture's old. And call me Barbara, not ma'am, I'm not the Queen, not yet. Ha, ha!

RITA This is Beryl.

BERYL Alright? That's C & A, innit?

BARBARA This? Yes.

BERYL I got one of them. The zip goes.

BARBARA It's only for work. Now girls I don't want to get your hopes up –

(Enter HAROLD WILSON. They all stand.)

HAROLD Don't stand, I wouldn't stand for you. I won't stay because I realise that having a handsome powerful man sucking suggestively on a pipe might be a distraction! Westminster is a boys' club, I'm afraid, the ladies' loos are in Clapham. But you can use the gents' if you don't mind standing up. I was breast fed and I like women, I've known several intimately, and my mother was a woman, though I never slept with her after puberty, because that's not normal, not yet, anyway. But I've also met countless women on the stairs during my lifetime up and down the length and great breasts of

this nation. Welcome, and I hope you have a good girly bitch about everything.

(He leaves.)

BARBARA

Sherry anyone!?

ALL

Oh, nice. / Lovely. / Please.

BARBARA

Now girls, I'm going to do something unusual for a politician. I'm not going to lie to you. I want you to go back to work. I've been talking to Ford American who are offering you ninety-two per cent of the male rate.

CLARE

Oh, that's great!

RITA

No, we ain't going back wivout equal pay.

BARBARA

When I was young, like you, I thought I could change the world overnight. I saw injustice all around me, lies, back-stabbing, nepotism, corruption – and that was just the Labour Party. But all my shouting, and banging tables, went for nothing. Real change takes time. How do you eat an elephant?

BERYL

In a bagel!

BARBARA

One bite at a time, and an awful lot of mastication.

CLARE

Ooh! *(Giggles.)*

RITA

We came here today because you're a woman, and Labour.

BARBARA

I can't do anything without the backing of the TUC, the men, and men don't see equal pay for women as a priority.

CASS

I'm an optimist –

RITA

– Cass wants to be an airline pilot.

BERYL

Before she's thirty-five.

BARBARA

That's fantastic. And when are you thirty five, Cass?

CASS Tuesday. But I'm not giving up. Because, that's not an option is it, giving up. Rita's right, we should all be working towards our ideal world.

Music No. 17: IDEAL WORLD

BARBARA Aye, the only problem with that, love, is that you don't live in an ideal world – you live in the real world, where if you ask for everything you get nowt.

BARBARA
 IN AN IDEAL WORLD
 EVERYTHING WOULD BE JUST GREAT
 IN AN IDEAL WORLD
 LOVE WOULD ALWAYS CONQUER HATE

IN AN IDEAL WORLD
 THE WORKERS, BOSS OR STAFF
 IN AN IDEAL WORLD
 THEY'D SIT AND HAVE A LAUGH

THE SUN WOULD ALWAYS RISE AND SHINE,
 THE SKIES WOULD BE DEEP BLUE
 THERE'D BE A CURE FOR CANCER
 AND THE COMMON COLD AND FLU
 THERE WOULD BE NO GUNS OR CRIME,
 THE STRONG WOULD HELP THE WEAK
 THE TRAINS WOULD ALWAYS RUN ON TIME,
 WE'D WORK A FOUR-DAY WEEK

WE'D GET TO MEET THE PRAT
 WHO PUT THE VAT UPON THE TAMPON
 WE'D HAVE A CHAT AND AFTER THAT
 HIS FACE WE'D DULY STAMP ON
 IMAGINE A GREAT WORLD OF UNIMAGINABLE BLISS
 WHERE MEN KNOW HOW AND WHERE TO FIND
 A WOMAN'S CLITORIS

IN AN IDEAL WORLD
EVERYTHING WOULD BE JUST GREAT
IN AN IDEAL WORLD
LOVE WOULD ALWAYS CONQUER HATE

IN AN IDEAL WORLD
WE'D CARE AND SHARE AND HEAL,
AND OUR DREAMS OF HAPPY ENDINGS
WOULD BE REAL

THE BERLIN WALL WOULD FALL
AND SO WOULD TYRANTS OVERSEAS
CIVIL RIGHTS WOULD FLOURISH WELL
IN ALL COMMUNITIES
NO BOMBING IN CAMBODIA,
NO WAR IN VIETNAM
INSTEAD OF MARTIN LUTHER KING
THEY'D SHOOT THE KU KLUX KLAN

THE PLANET WOULD REVOLVE AROUND
THE MEEKEST OF THE MEEK
AND PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS
WOULD KISS THE OTHER CHEEK
APARTHEID WOULD BE DULY CRUSHED
AND SO WOULD POVERTY
THE EAST AND WEST WOULD DO THEIR BEST
TO LIVE IN HARMONY

BUT IN THE REAL WORLD
IT'S A STRUGGLE EVERY DAY
IN THE REAL WORLD
YOU'RE LUCKY IF YOU MAKE OKAY

IN THE REAL WORLD
IT'S NOT ABOUT THE NICE
IT'S ABOUT TOUGH COMPROMISE
AND SACRIFICE

LET ME TELL YOU; IT WAS SO MUCH TOUGHER
 WHEN I STARTED OUT
 WOMEN'S RIGHTS – MY GOD, YOU'LL HAVE TO
 BEG AND BLEED AND SCREAM AND SHOUT
 THE BOTTOM OF THE BOTTOM,
 AND THE LOWEST OF THE LOW
 MIRED IN MISOGYNY,
 NO CHANCE TO RISE AND GROW

BUT YOU GOT TO KEEP ON GOING
 AND YOU GOT TO KEEP ON FIGHTING
 GOTTA PUNCH ABOVE YOUR WEIGHT,
 BELOW THE BELT AND DO SOME BITING
 I KNOW YOU ALL WANT SEXIST LAWS
 TO FALL AND BE REPEALED
 I KNOW ALL YOU'RE ASKING FOR
 IS JUST A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD,
 LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

IN OUR IDEAL WORLD,
 IT WILL SURELY COME TO PASS
 AND OUR IDEAL WORLD
 IS SO NEARLY IN OUR GRASP

AND OUR IDEAL WORLD,
 IF YOU'RE BRAVE AND TAKE THIS DEAL,
 ONE DAY THOSE HAPPY ENDINGS
 COULD BE REAL
 SHOULD BE REAL,
 WILL BE REAL
 WE'LL MAKE OUR WORLD
 IDEAL

RITA No! Did Martin Luther King ask for ninety-two per cent of rights
 for black people?

BARBARA (*Beat.*) You know they shot him.

RITA Yes, I do.

BARBARA You're saying no to ninety-two per cent?

RITA I'd say no to ninety-nine per cent.

BARBARA You're tough, Rita, but you've got a real fight on your hands because you'll never change Government policy without the backing of the TUC.

RITA I'm going to Eastbourne, to the TUC.

BARBARA I'll see you there, then.

Music No. 17a: INTO THE HOSPITAL

RITA Come on, girls.

Girls See you, Barbara. / Bye. / Thanks, Barbara.

BERYL I could murder a pint. Anyone?

CLARE What was all that in there about eating elephants?
god's / christ's / pete's

BERYL Oh Clare, for fuck sake.

(They're out the door. End of scene.)

SCENE NINE

The hospital. The screens around CONNIE'S bed are open but there is no bed there. MONTY is in the bedside chair, praying, in a secular kind of way. Enter RITA, carrying some fruit and a magazine.

RITA Where's Connie? *(Beat.)* Monty?! Oh, no. No, no, no!

MONTY We was talking. She seemed quite chipper. She smiled at me, and I was talking, and I held her hand, and then I realised she'd gone. *(Beat.)* I loved her.

RITA Yeah, we all loved her, Monty.

MONTY No, no. I loved her. I asked her to marry me, 1956. We had a thing, but it weren't love, not for her it weren't.