

First Fish: Morning.

Second Fish: Morning.

Third Fish: Morning.

Fourth Fish: Morning.

Third Fish: Morning.

First Fish: Morning.

Second Fish: Morning.

Fourth Fish: What's new?

First Fish: Not much.

Fifth and Sixth Fish: Morning.

The Others: Morning, morning, morning.

First Fish: Frank was just asking what's new.

Fifth Fish: Was he?

First Fish: Yeah. Uh huh...

Third Fish: Hey, look. Howard's being eaten.

Second Fish: Is he?

[They move forward to watch a waiter serving a large grilled fish to a large man.]

Second Fish: Makes you think doesn't it?

Fourth Fish: I mean... what's it all about?

Fifth Fish: Beats me.

Why are we here, what is life all about?
Is God really real, or is there some doubt?
Well tonight we're going to sort it all out,
For tonight it's the Meaning of Life.

What's the point of all these hoax?
Is it the chicken and egg time, are we all just yolks?
Or perhaps, we're just one of God's little jokes,

Well ca c'est the Meaning of Life.

Is life just a game where we make up the rules
While we're searching for something to say
Or are we just simple spiralling coils
Of self-replicating DNA?

What is life? What is our fate?
Is there Heaven and Hell? Do we reincarnate?
Is mankind evolving or is it too late?
Well tonight here's the Meaning of Life.

For millions this life is a sad vale of tears
Sitting round with really nothing to say
While scientists say we're just simply spiralling coils
Of self-replicating DNA.

So just why, why are we here?
And just what, what, what, what do we fear?
Well ce soir, for a change, it will all be made clear,
For this is the Meaning of Life - c'est le sens de la vie -
This is the Meaning of Life.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PART I

THE MIRACLE OF BIRTH

[Hospital corridor. A mother-to-be is being wheeled very fast down the corridor on a trolley, which crashes through several sets of doors. A nurse with her slippers slips into a consultant's room, where one doctor is throwing beer mats through the crooked arm of another.]

First Doctor: One thousand and eight!

Nurse: Mrs Moore's contractions are more frequent, doctor.

First Doctor: Good. Take her into the foetus-frightening room.

Nurse: Right.

[They pass through the delivery room.]

First Doctor: Bit bare in here today. isn't it?

Second Doctor: Yees.

First Doctor: More apparatus please, nurse.

Nurse: Yes doctor.

First Doctor: Yes, the EEG, the BP monitor and the AVV, please.

Second Doctor: And get the machine that goes 'Ping'!

First Doctor: And get the most expensive machines in case the administrator comes.

[Apparatus starts pouring into the room. The mother is lost behind various bits of equipment.]

First Doctor: That's better, that's much better.

Second Doctor: Yeeees. More like it.

First Doctor: Still something missing, though. [They think hard for a few moments.]

First and Second Doctors: Patient?

Second Doctor: Where's the patient?

First Doctor: Anyone seen the patient?

Second Doctor: Patient!

Nurse: Ah, here she is.

First Doctor: Bring her round.

Second Doctor: Mind the machine!

First Doctor: Come along!

Second Doctor: Jump up there. Hup!

First Doctor: Hallo! Now, don't you worry.

Second Doctor: We'll soon have you cured.

First Doctor: Leave it all to us, you'll never know what hit you.

First and Second Doctors: Goodbye, goodbye! Drips up! Injections.

Second Doctor: Can I put the tube in the baby's head?

First Doctor: Only if I can do the epesiotomy.

Second Doctor: Okay.

First Doctor: Now, legs up.

[The legs are put in the stirrups, while the Doctors open the doors opposite.]

First and Second Doctors: Come on. Come on, all of you. That's it, jolly good. Come on. Come on. Spread round there.

[A small horde enters, largely medical but with two Japanese with cameras and video equipment. The first doctor bumps into a man.]

First Doctor: Who are you?

Man: I'm the husband.

First Doctor: I'm sorry. only people involved are allowed in here.

[The husband leaves.]

Mrs Moore: What do I do?

Second Doctor: Yes?

Mrs Moore: What's that for?

[She points to a machine.]

First Doctor: That's the machine that goes 'Ping'!

[It goes 'Ping'.]

First Doctor: You see. It means that your baby is still alive.

Second Doctor: And that's the most expensive machine in the whole hospital.

First Doctor: Yes, it cost over three quarters of a million pounds.

Second Doctor: Aren't you lucky!

Nurse: The administrator's here, doctor.

First Doctor: Switch everything on!

[They do so. Everything flashes and beeps and thuds.
Enter the administrator...]

Administrator: Morning, gentlemen.

First and Second Doctors: Morning Mr Pycroft.

Administrator: Very impressive. What are you doing this morning?

First Doctor: It's a birth.

Administrator: And what sort of thing is that?

Second Doctor: Well, that's when we take a new baby out of a lady's
tummy.

Administrator: Wonderful what we can do nowadays. Ah! I see you
have the machine that goes 'Ping'. This is my favourite. You
see we lease this back to the company we sold it to. That
way it comes under the monthly current budget and not the
capital account. [They all applaud.] Thank you, thank you. We
try to do our best. Well, do carry on.

[He leaves.]

Nurse: Oh, the vulva's dilating, doctor.

First Doctor: Yes, there's the head. Yes, four centimetres, five,
six centimetres...

First and Second Doctors: Lights! Amplify the ping machine. Masks
up! Suction! Eyes down for a full house! Here it comes!

[The baby arrives.]

First Doctor: And frighten it!

[They grab the baby, hold it upside down, slap it, poke
tubes up its nose, hose it with cold water. Then the baby
is placed on a wooden chopping block and the umbilicus
severed with a chopper.]

And the rough towels!

[It is dried with rough towels.]

Show it to the mother.

[It is shown to the mother.]

First and Second Doctors: That's enough! Right. Sedate her, number the child. Measure it, blood type it and... *isolate* it.

Nurse: OK, show's over.

Mrs Moore: Is it a boy or a girl?

First Doctor: Now I think it's a little early to start imposing roles on it, don't you? Now a world of advice. You may find that you suffer for some time a totally irrational feeling of depression. PND is what we doctors call it. So it's lots of happy pills for you, and you can find out all about the birth when you get home. It's available on Betamax, VHS and Super 8.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

THE MIRACLE OF BIRTH

PART 2

THE THIRD WORLD

Yorkshire

[A northern street. Dad is marching home. We see his house. A stork flies above it, and drops a baby down the chimney.]

Dad: Oh bloody hell.

[Inside the house. A pregnant woman is at the sink. With a cry a new-born baby, complete with umbilical cord, drops from between her legs onto the floor.]

Mother: Get that would you, Deirdre...

Girl: All right, Mum.

[The girl takes the baby. Mum carries on.]

[Dad comes up to the door and pushes it open sadly. Inside there are at least forty children, of various ages, packed into the living room.]

Mum: [with tray] Whose teatime is it?

Scores of Voices: Me, mum...

Mum: Vincent, Tessa, Valerie, Janine, Martha, Andrew, Thomas, Walter, Pat, Linda, Michael, Evadne, Alice, Dominique, and Sasha... it's your bedtime!

Children: [all together] Oh, Mum!

Mum: Don't argue... Laura, Alfred, Nigel, Annie, Simon, Amanda...

Dad: Wait...

[They all listen.]

I've got something to tell the whole family.

[All stop... A buzz of excitement.]

Mum: [to her nearest son] Quick... go and get the others in, Gordon!

[Gordon goes out. Another twenty or so children enter the room. They squash in at the back as best they can.]

Dad: The mill's closed. There's no more work, we're destitute.

[Lots of cries of 'Oh no!'... 'Cripes'... 'Heck'... from around the room.]

I've got no option but to sell you all for scientific experiments. [The children protest with heart-rending pleas.] No no, that's the way it is my loves... Blame the Catholic church for not letting me wear one of those little rubber things... Oh they've done some wonderful things in their time, they preserved the might and majesty, even the mystery of the Church of Rome, the sanctity of the sacrament and the indivisible oneness of the Trinity, but if they'd let me wear one of the little rubber things on the end of my cock we wouldn't be in the mess we are now.

Little Boy: Couldn't Mummy have worn some sort of pessary?

Dad: Not if we're going to remain members of the fastest growing religion in the world, my boy... You see, we believe... well, let me put it like this...
[sings]

There are Jews in the world,
There are Buddhists,
There are Hindus and Mormons and then,
There are those that follow Mohammed,

But I've never been one of them...

I'm a Roman Catholic,
And have been since before I was born,
And the one thing they say about Catholics,
Is they'll take you as soon as you're warm...

You don't have to be a six-footer,
You don't have to have a great brain,
You don't have to have any clothes on -
You're a Catholic the minute Dad came...

Because...

Every sperm is sacred,
Every sperm is great,
If a sperm is wasted,
God gets quite irate.

Children: Every sperm is sacred,
Every sperm is great,
If a sperm is wasted,
God gets quite irate.

Child: [solo] Let the heathen spill theirs,
On the dusty ground,
God shall make them pay for,
Each sperm that can't be found.

Children: Every sperm is wanted,
Every sperm is good,
Every sperm is needed,
In your neighbourhood.

Mum: [solo] Hindu, Taoist, Mormon,
Spill theirs just anywhere,
But God loves those who treat their
Semen with more care.

Men neighbours: [peering out of toilets]
Every sperm is sacred,
Every sperm is great,

Women neighbours: [on wall]
If a sperm is wasted,

Children: God get quite irate.

Priest: [in church] Every sperm is sacred,

Bride and Groom: Every sperm is good.

Nannies: Every sperm is needed.

Cardinals: [in prams] In your neighbourhood!

Children: Every sperm is useful,
Every sperm is fine,

Funeral Cortège: God needs everybody's,

First Mourner: Mine!

Lady Mourner: And mine!

Corpse: And mine!

Nun: [solo] Though the pagans spill theirs,
O'er mountain, hill and plain,

Various artefacts in a Roman Catholic Souvenir Shop:
God shall strike them down for
Each sperm that's spilt in vain.

Everybody: Every sperm is sacred,
Every sperm is good,
Every sperm is needed,
In your neighbourhood.

Even more than everybody, including two fire-eaters, a juggler, a clown at a piano and a stilt-walker riding a bicycle:
Every sperm is sacred,
Every sperm is great,
If a sperm is wasted,
God gets quite irate.

[Everybody cheers (including the fire-eaters, the juggler, the clown at the piano and the stilt-walker riding the bicycle). Fireworks go off, a Chinese dragon is brought on and flags of all nations are unfurled overhead.]

[Back inside.]

Dad: So you see my problem, little ones... I can't keep you here any longer.

Shout from the back: Speak up!

Dad: [raising his voice] I can't keep you here any longer... God has blessed us so much that I can't afford to feed you anymore.

Boy: Couldn't you have your balls cut off...?

Dad: It's not as simple as that Nigel... God knows all... He would see through such a cheap trick. What we do to ourselves, we do to Him...

Voice: You could have them pulled off in an accident?

[Other voices suggest ways his balls can be removed.]

Dad: No... no... children... I know you're trying to help but believe me, my mind's made up. I've given this long and careful thought. And it's medical experiments for the lot of you...

[The children emerge singing a melancholy reprise of 'Every Sperm is Sacred.']

[They are being watched from another Northern house.]

Mr Blackitt: Look at them, bloody Catholics. Filling the bloody world up with bloody people they can't afford to bloody feed.

Mrs Blackitt: What are we dear?

Mr Blackitt: Protestant, and fiercely proud of it...

Mrs Blackitt: Why do they have so many children...?

Mr Blackitt: Because every time they have sexual intercourse they have to have a baby.

Mrs Blackitt: But it's the same with us, Harry.

Mr Blackitt: What d'you mean...?

Mrs Blackitt: Well I mean we've got two children and we've had sexual intercourse twice.

Mr Blackitt: That's not the point... We *could* have it any time we wanted.

Mrs Blackitt: Really?

Mr Blackitt: Oh yes. And, what's more, because we don't believe in all that Papist claptrap we can take precautions.

Mrs Blackitt: What, you mean lock the door...?

Mr Blackitt: No no, I mean, because we are members of the Protestant Reformed Church which successfully challenged the autocratic power of the Papacy in the mid-sixteenth century, we can wear little rubber devices to prevent issue.

Mrs Blackitt: What do you mean?

Mr Blackitt: I could, if I wanted, have sexual intercourse with you...

Mrs Blackitt: Oh, yes... Harry...

Mr Blackitt: And by wearing a rubber sheath over my old feller I could ensure that when I came off... you would not be impregnated.

Mrs Blackitt: Ooh!

Mr Blackitt: That's what being a Protestant's all about. That's why it's the church for me. That's why it's the church for anyone who respects the individual and the individual's right to decide for him or herself. When Martin Luther nailed his protest up to the church door in 1517, he may not have realised the full significance of what he was doing. But four hundred years later, thanks to him, my dear, I can wear whatever I want on my John Thomas. And Protestantism doesn't stop at the simple condom. Oh no! I can wear French Ticklers if I want.

Mrs Blackitt: You what?

Mr Blackitt: French Ticklers... Black Mambos... Crocodile Ribs... Sheaths that are designed not only to protect but also to enhance the stimulation of sexual congress...

Mrs Blackitt: Have you got one?

Mr Blackitt: Have I got one? Well no... But I can go down the road any time I want and walk into Harry's and hold my head up high, and say in a loud steady voice: 'Harry I want you to sell me a *condom*. In fact today I think I'll have a French Tickler, for I am a Protestant...'

Mrs Blackitt: Well why don't you?

Mr Blackitt: But they... [He points at the stream of children still pouring past the house.]... they cannot. Because their church never made the great leap out of the Middle Ages, and the domination of alien episcopal supremacy!

the Adventures of

MARTIN
LUTHER
in

Reform-O-Scope

presented by
The Protestant Film Marketing Board
in association with
Sol. C. Ziegler, Andy Rotbeiner
and the people of Beirut

GERMANY
in the grip of the 16th century

An exciting and controversial examination of the Protestant reformer whose re-assessment of the role of the individual in Christian belief shook the foundations of a post-feudal Germany in the grip of the sixteenth century.

It was a day much like any other in the quiet little town of Wittenberg. Mamie Meyer was preparing fat for the evening meal when the full force of the Reformation struck.

[A woman and two rather plain daughters are sitting outside their house with bowls. A man arrives breathless.]

Hymie: Mamie! Martin Luther's out!

[Consternation amongst the womenfolk.]

Mamie: Oh! Martin Luther!

[She hurries her daughters inside.]

Did you get the suet, Hymie?

Hymie: Oy vay - the suet I clean forgot!

Mamie: The suet you forgot!

Hymie: The lard, the fish oil, the butter fat, the dripping, the wool grease I remember... [Hands over the shopping]... but the suet... oy vay...

Mamie: [pointing to his head] So what'd keep up there? Adipose tissue?

Hymie: Look out! Here he comes.

[Mamie goes inside shouting.]

Mamie: Girls, girls! Your father forgot the suet!

[Groans from the girls inside.]

[Martin Luther is at the gate. His ears prick up at the female voices. His eyes flick from side to side.]

Hymie: Hallo Martin.

Martin Luther: Where's the john?

Hymie: We don't have one.

Martin Luther: No john? What d'you do?

Hymie: We eat fat.

Martin Luther: And that stops you going to the john?

Hymie: It's a theory.

Martin Luther: Yeah, but does it work?

Hymie: We ain't got no john.

Martin Luther: Yeah, but d'you need to go?

Hymie: You know how it is with theories - some days it's fine... maybe one, two... three days... and then just when it looks like you're ready for to publish... [Expression of resignation and disgust.]... Whoosh! You need a new kitchen floor.

Martin Luther: Oh you should be so lucky!

[A girl's laugh from inside. Martin Luther looks up - alert.]

Martin Luther: D'you need any cleaning inside?

Hymie: Oh no... today it's all going fine.

Martin Luther: Oh well, how's about showing me the cutlery?

Hymie: Martin - I got a woman and children in there.

Martin Luther: So there's no problem... I just look at a few spoons... and...

[Martin Luther starts to go in. Hymie stops him.]

Hymie: I got two girls in there, Martin... you know what I mean.

Martin Luther: Honest! I don't look at your girls! I don't even think about them! There! I put them out of my mind! Their arms, their necks... their little legs... and bosoms... I *wipe* from my mind.

Hymie: You just want to see spoons?

Martin Luther: My life! That's what I want to see.

Hymie: I know I'm going to regret this.

Martin Luther: No, listen! Cutlery is really my thing now. Girls with round breasts is over for me.

Hymie: What am I doing? I know what's going to happen.

Martin Luther: I'll crouch behind you.

[He goes in. Martin Luther follows, crouching.]

Hymie: Mamie! Guess who's come to see us!

Mamie: Hymie! Are you out of your mind already? You know how old your daughters are?

Hymie: He only wants to see the spoons.

Mamie: What you have to bring him into my house for?

Hymie: Mamie, he doesn't even think about girls any more.

Martin Luther: Mrs Meyer - as far as girls is concerned, I shot my wad!

Mamie: You shot your *wad*?

Martin Luther: Def - in - ately...

[Pause.]

Mamie: Which spoons you wanna view?

Martin Luther: Eh... [shrugs]... I guess the soup spoons...

Mamie: [suddenly interested] Ah! Now they're good spoons.

Martin Luther: You got them arranged?

Mamie: No, but I could arrange them for you.

Martin Luther: Don't put yourself to no bother, Mrs Meyer.

Mamie: It's no bother... I want for you to see those spoons like I would want to see them myself.

Martin Luther: Oh you're too kind, Mrs Meyer... You could get your daughters to show me them...

Mamie: Hymie get him out of here.

Hymie: Mamie, he only said for Myrtle and Audrey to show him the *spoons*.

Mamie: Like you think I run some kind of bordello here...

Martin Luther: Mrs Meyer! How can you say such a thing?

Mamie: Listen Martin Luther! I know what you want to do with my girls!

Martin Luther: Show me the spoons...

Mamie: You want for them to pull up their shirts and then lean over the chair with their legs apart...

Hymie: Mamie don't get excited...

Mamie: I'm getting excited? It's him that's getting excited!

Martin Luther: My mind is on the spoons.

Mamie: But you can't stop thinking of those little girls over the chairs.

[Luther is struggling with himself.]

Hymie: I got to go to the bathroom.

Mamie: [grabs him] Hymie! I'm a married woman!

Hymie: So... just show him the spoons.

[Hymie goes.]

Mamie: And you don't want to put nothing up me?

Martin Luther: Mrs Meyer - you read my mind.

Mamie: Oh...

[They go out discreetly.]

But despite the efforts of Protestants to promote the idea of sex for pleasure, children continued to multiply everywhere.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PART II

GROWTH AND LEARNING

[A school chapel.]

Headmaster: And spotteth twice they the camels before the third hour. And so the Midianites went forth to Ram Gilead in Kadesh Bilgemath by Shor Ethra Regalion, to the house of Gash-Bil-Betheul-Bazda, he who brought the butter dish to Balshazar and the tent peg to the house of Rashomon, and there slew they the goats, yea, and placed they the bits in little pots. Here endeth the lesson.

[The Headmaster closes the Bible. the Chaplain rises.]

Chaplain: Let us praise God. Oh Lord...

Congregation: Oh Lord...

Chaplain: Oooh you are so big...

Congregation: Oooh you are so big...

Chaplain: So absolutely huge.

Congregation: So ab - solutely huge.

Chaplain: Gosh, we're all really impressed down here I can tell you.

Congregation: Gosh, we're all really impressed down here I can tell you.

Chaplain: Forgive Us, O Lord, for this dreadful toadying.

Congregation: And barefaced flattery.

Chaplain: But you are so strong and, well, just so super.

Congregation: Fan - tastic.

Headmaster: Amen. Now two boys have been found rubbing linseed oil into the school cormorant. Now some of you may feel that the cormorant does not play an important part in the life of the school but I remind you that it was presented to us by the Corporation of the town of Sudbury to commemorate Empire Day, when we try to remember the names of all those from the Sudbury area so gallantly gave their lives to keep China British. So from now on the cormorant is strictly out of bounds. Oh... and Jenkins... apparently your mother died this morning. [He turns to the Chaplain.] Chaplain.

[The congregation rises and the Chaplain leads them in singing.]

Chaplain and Congregation:

Oh Lord, please don't burn us,
Don't grill or toast your flock,
Don't put us on the barbecue,
Or simmer us in stock,
Don't braise or bake or boil us,
Or stir-fry us in a wok...

Oh please don't lightly poach us,
Or baste us with hot fat,
Don't fricassee or roast us,
Or boil us in a vat,
And please don't stick thy servants Lord,
In a Rotissomat...

[A classroom. The boys are sitting quietly studying.]

Boy: He's coming!

[Pandemonium breaks out. The Headmaster walks in.]

Headmaster: All right, settle down, settle down. [He puts his papers down.] Now before I begin the lesson will those of you who are playing in the match this afternoon move your clothes down on to the lower peg immediately after lunch before you write your letter home, if you're not getting your hair cut, unless you've got a younger brother who is going out this weekend as the guest of another boy, in which case collect his note before lunch, put it in your letter after you've had your hair cut, and make sure he moves your clothes down onto the lower peg for you. Now...

Wymer: Sir?

Headmaster: Yes, Wymer?

Wymer: My younger brother's going out with Dibble this weekend, sir, but I'm not having my hair cut today sir, so do I move my clothes down or...

Headmaster: I do wish you'd listen, Wymer, it's perfectly simple. If you're not getting your hair cut, you don't have to move your brother's clothes down to the lower peg, you simply collect his note before lunch after you've done your scripture prep when you've written your letter home before rest, move your own clothes on to the lower peg, greet the visitors, and report to Mr Viney that you've had your chit signed. Now, sex... sex, sex, sex, where were we?

[Silence from form. A lot of hard thinking of the type indulged by schoolboys who know they don't know the answer.]

Well, had I got as far as the penis entering the vagina?

Pupils: Er... er... no sir. No we didn't, sir.

Headmaster: Well had I done foreplay?

Pupils: ...Yes sir.

Headmaster: Well, as we all know about foreplay no doubt you can tell me what the purpose of foreplay is... Biggs.

Biggs: Don't know, sorry sir.

Headmaster: Carter.

Carter: Er... was it taking your clothes off, sir?

Headmaster: And after that?

Wymer: Putting them on the lower peg sir?

[Headmaster throws a board duster at him and hits him.]

Headmaster: The purpose of foreplay is to cause the vagina to lubricate so that the penis can penetrate more easily.

Watson: Could we have a window open please sir?

Headmaster: Yes... Harris will you?... And, of course, to cause the man's penis to erect and har...den. Now, did I do vaginal juices last week oh do pay attention Wadsworth, I know it's Friday afternoon oh watching the football are you boy - right move over there. I'm warning you I may decide to set an exam this term.

Pupils: Oh sir...

Headmaster: So just listen... now did I or did I not do vaginal juices?

Pupils: Yes sir.

Headmaster: Name two ways of getting them flowing, Watson.

Watson: Rubbing the clitoris, sir.

Headmaster: What's wrong with a kiss, boy? Hm? Why not start her off with a nice kiss? You don't have to go leaping straight for the clitoris like a bull at a gate. Give her a kiss, boy.

Wymer: Suck the nipple, sir.

Headmaster: Good. Good. Good, well done, Wymer.

Duckworth: Stroking the thighs, sir.

Headmaster: Yes, I suppose so.

Another: Bite the neck.

Headmaster: Good. Nibbling the ear. Kneading the buttocks, and so on and so forth. So we have all these possibilities before we

stampede towards the clitoris, Watson.

Watson: Yes sir. Sorry sir.

Headmaster: All these form of stimulation can now take place.

[The Headmaster pulls the bed down.]

... And of course tonguing will give you the best idea of how the juices are coming along. [Calls.] Helen... Now penetration and coitus, that is to say intercourse up to and including orgasm.

[Mrs Williams has entered.]

Ah hallo, dear.

[The pupils have shuffled more or less to their feet.]

Do stand up when my wife enters the room, Carter.

Carter: Oh sorry, sir. Sorry.

Mrs Williams: Humphrey, I hope you don't mind, but I told the Garfields we *would* dine with them tonight.

Headmaster: [starting to disrobe] Yes, yes, I suppose we must...

Mrs Williams: [taking off her clothes] I said we'd be there by eight.

Headmaster: Well at least it'll give me a reason to wind up the staff meeting.

Mrs Williams: Well I know you don't like them but I couldn't make another excuse.

Headmaster: [he's got his shirt off] Well it's just that I felt - Wymer. This is for your benefit. Will you kindly wake up. I've no intention of going through this all again. [The boys are no more interested than they were in the last lesson on the Binomial Theorem, though they pretend, as usual.] Now we'll take the foreplay as read, if you don't mind, dear.

Mrs Williams: No of course not, Humphrey.

Headmaster: So the man starts by entering, or mounting his good lady wife in the standard way. The penis is now as you will observe more or less fully erect. There we are. Ah that's

better. Now... Carter.

Carter: Yes sir.

Headmaster: What is it?

Carter: It's an ocarina... sir.

Headmaster: Bring it up here. The man now starts making thrusting movements with his pelvic area, moving the penis up and down inside the vagina so... put it there boy, put it there... on the table... while the wife maximizes her clitoral stimulation by the shaft of the penis by pushing forward, thank you dear... now as sexual excitement mounts... what's funny Biggs?

Biggs: Oh, nothing sir.

Headmaster: Oh do please share your little joke with the rest of us... I mean, obviously something frightfully funny's going on...

Biggs: No, honestly, sir.

Headmaster: Well as it's so funny I think you'd better be selected to play for the boys' team in the rugby match against the masters this afternoon.

Biggs: [looks horrified] Oh no, sir.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PART III

FIGHTING EACH OTHER

Biggs: [now a soldiers-in-arms] O.K. Blackitt, Sturridge and Walters you take the buggers on the left flank. Horder, Spadger and I will go for the gunpost.

Blackitt: [a Deptford Cockney] Hang on, you'll never make it, sir... Let us come with you...

Biggs: Do as you're told man.

Blackitt: Righto, skipper. [He starts to go, then stops.] Oh, sir, sir... if we... if we don't meet again... sir, I'd just like to say it's been a real privilege fighting alongside you, sir...

[They are continually ducking as bullets fly past them and shells burst overhead.]

Biggs: Yes, well I think this is hardly the time or place for a goodbye speech... eh...

[Biggs is clearly anxious to go.]

Blackitt: No, me, and the lads realise that but... well... we may never meet again, sir, so...

Biggs: All right, Blackitt, thanks a lot.

Blackitt: No just a mo, sir! You see me and the lads had a little whip-round, sir, and we bought you something, sir... we bought you this, sir...

[He produces a handsome ormolu clock from his pack. Biggs is at a loss for words. He is continually ducking.]

Biggs: Well, I don't know what to say... It's a lovely thought... thank you... thank you *all*... but I think we'd better... get to cover now...

[He starts to go.]

Blackitt: Hang on a tick, sir, we got something else for you as well, sir.

[Two of the others emerge from some bushes with a grandfather clock.]

Sorry it's another clock, sir... only there was a bit of a mix-up... Walters thought *he* was buying the present, and Spadger and I had already got the other one.

Biggs: Well it's beautiful... they're both beau -

[A bullet suddenly shatters the face of the grandfather clock.]

... But I think we'd better get to cover now, and I'll thank you properly later...

[Biggs starts to go again but Blackitt hasn't finished.]

Blackitt: And Corporal Sturridge got this for you as well, sir. He didn't know about the others, sir - it's Swiss.

[He hands over a wristwatch.]

Biggs: Well now that is thoughtful, Sturridge. Good man.

[A shell bursts right overhead. Biggs flings himself down into the mud.]

Blackitt: And there's a card, sir... from all of us... [He produces a blood-splattered envelope.]... Sorry about the blood, sir.

Biggs: Thank you all.

[He pockets it and tries to go on.]

Blackitt: Squad, three cheers for Captain Biggs. Hip Hip -

All: Hooray!

Blackitt: Hip Hip -

All: Hoor...

[An almighty burst of machine-gun fire silences most of them... Blackitt is hit.]

Biggs: Blackitt! Blackitt!

Blackitt: [hurt] Ah! I'll be all right, sir... Oh there's just one other thing, sir. Spadge, give him the cheque...

Spadger: Oh yeah...

Biggs: Oh now this is really going to far...

Spadger: I don't seem to be able to find it, sir... [Explosion.]
Er, it'll be in Number Four trench... I'll go and get it. [He starts to crawl off.]

Biggs: [losing his cool] Oh! For Christ's sake forget it, man.

[The others all look at Biggs after this outburst, as if they can't believe this ingratitude.]

Blackitt: Oh! Ah!

Spadger: You shouldn't have said that, sir. You've hurt his feelings now...

Blackitt: Don't mind me, Spadge... Toffs is all the same... One minute it's all 'please' and 'thank you', the next they'll kick you in the teeth...

Walters: Let's not give him the cake...

Biggs: I don't want *any* cake...

Spadger: Look, Blackitt cooked it specially for you, you bastard.

[They all look at Blackitt rolling in the mud.]

Sturridge: Yeah, he saved his rations for six weeks.

Biggs: I'm sorry, I don't mean to be ungrateful...

Blackitt: I'll be all right.

[Shell crashes. Blackitt dies.]

Spadger: Blackie! Blackie! [He turns to Biggs with tears in his eyes.] Look at him... [He pulls up the supine form of Blackitt.] He worked on that cake like no-one else I've ever known. [He props him in the mud again.] Some nights it was so cold we could hardly move, but Blackie'd de out there - slicing lemons, mixing the sugar and the almonds... I mean you try getting butter melted at fifteen below zero! There's love in that cake... [He picks up Blackitt again.] This man's love and this man's care and this man's - Aarggh!
[He gets shot.]

[Biggs runs over to them in horror.]

Biggs: Oh my Christ!

Sturridge: You bastard.

Biggs: All right! All right! We will eat the cake. They're right... it's too good a cake not to eat. get the plates and knives, Walters...

Walters: Yes, sir... how many plates?

Biggs: Six.

[A shot rings out. Walters drops dead.]

Biggs: Er... no... better make it five.

Sturridge: Tablecloth, sir...?

Biggs: Yes, get the tablecloth...!

[Explosion. Sturridge gets shot.]

Biggs: No no no, I'll get the tablecloth and you'd better get the gate-leg table, Hordern.

[Hordern is shot in the leg.]

Hordern: I'll bring two sir, in case one gets scrumped...

[Suddenly we find this has all been a film, which a General now stops.]

General: Well, of course, warfare isn't all fun. Right, stop that. It's all very well to laugh at the Military, but when one considers the meaning of life it is a struggle between alternative viewpoints of life itself. And without the ability to defend one's own viewpoint against other perhaps more aggressive ideologies then reasonableness and moderation could quite simply disappear. That is why we'll always need an army and may God strike me down were it to be otherwise.

[The Hand of god descends and vaporizes him.]

[The audience of two old ladies and two kids applauds hesitantly.]

[Outside the hut RSM Whateverhisnameis is drilling a small squad of recruits.]

RSM: Don't stand there gawping like you've never seen the Hand of God before. Now! Today we're going to do marching up and down the square. That is unless any of you got anything better to do? Well, anyone got anything they'd rather be doing than marching up and down the square?

[Atkinson puts his hand up.]

Yes? Atkinson? What would you rather be doing, Atkinson?

Atkinson: Well to be quite honest, Sarge, I'd rather be at home with the wife and kids.

RSM: Would you now?

Atkinson: Yes, sarge.

RSM: Right off you go. [Atkinson goes.] Now, everybody else happy with my little plan of marching up and down the square a bit?

Coles: Sarge...

RSM: Yes?

Coles: I've got a book I'd quite like to read...

RSM: Right! You go read your book then! [Coles runs off.] Now everybody else quite content to join in with my little scheme of marching hup and down the square?

Wycliff: Sarge?

RSM: Yes, Wycliff, what is it?

Wycliff: [tentatively] Well... I'm... er... learning the piano...

RSM: [with contempt] 'Learning the piano'?

Wycliff: Yes, sarge...

RSM: And I suppose you want to go and practise eh? Marching up and down the square not good enough for you, eh?

Wycliff: Well...

RSM: Right! Off you go! [Turns to the rest.] Now what about the rest of you? Rather be at the pictures I suppose.

Squad: Ooh, yes, ooh rather.

RSM: All right off you go. [They go.] Bloody army! I don't know what it's coming to... Right, Sgt Major, marching up and down the square... Left-right-left... left... left... left-right-left...

[The RSM marches himself off into the distance of the barracks square.]

Democracy and humanitarianism have always been tarde marks of the British Army and have stamped its triumph throughout history, in the furthest-flung corners of the Empire. But no matter where or when there was fighting to be done, it has always been the calm leadership of the officer class that has made the British Army what it is.

The First Zulu War.

Natal 1879 (not Glasgow)

[Inside a tent.]

Pakenham-Walsh: Morning Ainsworth.

Ainsworth: Morning Pakenham-Walsh.

Pakenham-Walsh: Sleep well?

Ainsworth: Not bad. Bitten to shreds though. Must be a hole in the bloody mosquito net.

Pakenham-Walsh: Yes, savage little blighters aren't they?

First Lieut Chadwick: [arriving] Excuse me, sir.

Ainsworth: Yes Chadwick?

Chadwick: I'm afraid Perkins got rather badly bitten during the night.

Ainsworth: Well so did we. Huh.

Chadwick: Yes, but I do think the doctor ought to see him.

Ainsworth: Well go and fetch him, then.

Chadwick: Right you are, sir.

Ainsworth: Suppose I'd better go along. Coming, Pakenham?

Pakenham-Walsh: Yes I suppose so.

[Chadwick leaves. Ainsworth and Pakenham-Walsh thread their leisurely way through the line of assegais. Pakenham-Walsh's valet is speared by a Zulu warrior but Pakenham-Walsh valiantly saves his jacket from the mud. They enter Perkins's tent. Perkins is on his camp bed.]

Ainsworth: Ah! Morning Perkins.

Perkins: Morning sir.

Ainsworth: What's all the trouble then?

Perkins: Bitten sir. During the night.

Ainsworth: Hm. Whole leg gone eh?

Perkins: Yes.

[As they talk, the din of battle continues outside.
Screams of dying men, crackling of tents set on fire.]

Ainsworth: How's it feel?

Perkins: Stings a bit.

Ainsworth: Mmm. Well it would, wouldn't it. That's quite a bite
you've got there you know.

Perkins: Yes, real beauty isn't it?

All: Yes.

Ainsworth: Any idea how it happened?

Perkins: None at all. Complete mystery to me. Woke up just now...
one sock too many.

Pakenham-Walsh: You must have a hell of a hole in your net.

Ainsworth: Hm. We've sent for the doctor.

Perkins: Ooh, hardly worth it, is it?

Ainsworth: Oh yes... better safe than sorry.

Pakenham-Walsh: Yes, good Lord, look at this.

[He indicates a gigantic hole in the mosquito net.]

Ainsworth: By jove, that's enormous.

Pakenham-Walsh: You don't think it'll come back, do you?

Ainsworth: For more, you mean?

Pakenham-Walsh: Yes.

Ainsworth: You're right. We'd better get this stitched.

Pakenham-Walsh: Right.

Ainsworth: Hallo Doc.

Livingstone: [entering the tent with Chadwick] Morning. I came as fast as I could. Is something up?

Ainsworth: Yes, during the night old Perkins had his leg bitten sort of... off.

Livingstone: Ah hah!? Been in the wars have we?

Perkins: Yes.

Livingstone: Any headache, bowels all right? Well, let's have a look at this one leg of yours then. [Looks around under sheet] Yes... yes... yes... yes... yes... yes... well, this is nothing to worry about.

Perkins: Oh good.

Livingstone: There's a lot of it about, probably a virus, keep warm, plenty of rest, and if you're playing football or anything try and favour the other leg.

Perkins: Oh right ho.

Livingstone: Be as right as rain in a couple of days.

Perkins: Thanks for the reassurance, doc.

Livingstone: Not at all, that's what I'm here for. Any other problems I can reassure you about?

Perkins: No I'm fine.

Livingstone: Jolly good. Well, must be off.

Perkins: So it'll just grow back then, will it?

Livingstone: Er... I think I'd better come clean with you about this... it's... um it's not a virus, I'm afraid. You see, a virus is what we doctors call very very small. So small it could not possibly have made off with a whole leg. What we're looking for here is I think, and this is no more than an educated guess, I'd like to make that clear, is some multi-cellular life form with stripes, huge razor-sharp teeth, about eleven foot long and of the genu *felis horribilis*. What we doctors, in fact, call a tiger.

All in tent: A tiger...!!

[Outside, everyone engaged in battle, including the Zulus, breaks off and shouts in horror:]

All: A tiger!

[The Zulus run off.]

Pakenham-Walsh: A tiger - in Africa?

Ainsworth: Hm...

Pakenham-Walsh: A tiger in Africa...?

Ainsworth: Ah... well it's probably escaped from a zoo.

Pakenham-Walsh: Well it doesn't sound very likely.

Ainsworth: [quietly] Stumm, stumm...

[A severely-wounded Sergeant staggers into the tent.]

Sergeant: Sir, sir, the attack's over, sir! the Zulus are retreating.

Ainsworth: [dismissively] Oh jolly good. [He turns his back to the group around Perkins.]

Sergeant: Quite a lot of casualties though, sir. C Division wiped out. Signals gone. Thirty men killed in F Section. I should think about a hundred - a hundred and fifty men altogether.

Ainsworth: [not very interested] Yes, yes I see, yes... Jolly good.

Sergeant: I haven't got the final figures, sir. There's a lot of seriously wounded in the compound...

Ainsworth: [interrupting] Yes... well, the thing is, Sergeant, I've got a bit of a problem here. [With gravity.] One of the officers has lost a leg.

Sergeant: [stunned by the news] Oh *no*, sir!

Ainsworth: [gravely] I'm afraid so. Probably a tiger.

Sergeant: In Africa?

Ainsworth and Pakenham-Walsh: Stumm, stumm...

Ainsworth: The M.O. says we can stitch it back on if we find it

immediately.

Sergeant: Right sir! I'll organise a party right away, sir!

Ainsworth: Well it's hardly time for that, is it Sergeant...?

Sergeant: A search party...

Ainsworth: Ah! *Much* better idea. I'll tell you what, organise one straight away.

Sergeant: Yes sir!

[Outside dead British bodies (of the other ranks) are everywhere.]

Sergeant: [apologetically] Sorry about the mess, sir. We'll try and get it cleared up, by the time you get back.

[They walk through the carnage. Orderlies are cheerfully attending to the equally cheery wounded and the only slightly less cheery dead.]

A dying man: [covered in blood] We showed 'em, didn't we, sir?

Ainsworth: Yes.

[He gives a thumbs up and dies.]

Sergeant: [addressing a soldier who is giving water to a dying man] We've got to get a search party, leave that alone.

Another cheery cockney: [with an assegai sticking out of his chest] This is fun, sir, init... all this killing... bloodshed... bloody good fun sir, init?

Ainsworth: [abstracted] Yes... very good.

[He waves and moves on.]

A severed head: Morning, sir!

Ainsworth: Nasty wound you've got there, Potter.

Severed head: [cheerily] Thank you very much sir!

Ainsworth: Come on private - we're making up a search party.

Another terrible casualty: Better than staying at home, eh sir! At

home if you kill someone they arrest you. Here they give you a gun, and show you what to do, sir. I mean, I killed fifteen of those buggers sir! Now at home they'd hang me. *Here* they give me a fucking medal sir!

[The search party for Perkins's leg is passing through thick jungle. As they emerge into a clearing they suddenly see a tiger's head sticking out of some bushes.]

Ainsworth: Look!

[Their eyes follow along the bushes to where the tiger's tail is sticking out several yards away. For a moment it looks like a very long tiger.]

My God, it's *huge*!

[The tiger's head rises up out of the thicket with its paws up. The tiger's rear end backs out of the thicket further down.]

Rear end: Don't shoot... don't shoot. We're not a tiger. [Takes off head.] We were just... um...

Ainsworth: Why are you dressed as a tiger?

Rear end: Hmmm... oh... why! Why why... isn't it a lovely day today...?

Ainsworth: Answer the question.

Rear end: Oh we were just er...

Front end: Actually! We're dressed like this because... oh no that's not it.

Rear end: We did it for a lark. Part of a spree. High spirits you know. Simple as that.

Front end: Nothing more to it...

[All stare.]

Well *actually*... we're on a mission for British Intellingence, there's a pro-Tsarist Ashanti Chief...

Rear end: No, no.

Front end: No, no, no.

Rear end: No, no we're doing it for an advertisement...

Front end: Ah that's it, forget about the Russians. We're doing an advert for Tiger Brand Coffee.

Rear end: 'Tiger Brand Coffee is a real treat
Even tigers prefer a cup of it to real meat'.

[Pause.]

Ainsworth: Now look...

Rear end: All right, all right. we are dressed as a tiger because he had an auntie who did it in 1839 and this is the fiftieth anniversary.

Front end: No. We're doing it for a bet.

Rear end: God told us to do it.

Front end: To tell the truth, we are completely mad. we are inmates of a Bengali psychiatric institution and we escaped by making this skin out of old cereal packets...

Perkins: It doesn't matter.

Ainsworth: What?

Perkins: It doesn't matter why they're dressed as a tiger, have they got my leg?

Ainsworth: Good thinking. Well have you?

Rear end: Actually!

Ainsworth: Yes.

Rear end: It's because we were thinking of training as taxidermists and we wanted to get a feel of it from the animal's point of view.

Ainsworth: Be quiet. Now, look we're just asking you if you have got this man's leg...

Front end: A wooden leg?

Ainsworth: No, no, a proper leg. Look he was fast asleep and someone or something came in and removed it.

Front end: Without waking him up?

Ainsworth: Yes.

Front end: I don't believe you.

Rear end: We found the tiger skin in a bicycle shop in Cairo, and the owner wanted to take it down to Dar Es Salaam.

Ainsworth: Shut up. Now look, have you or have you not got his leg?

Rear end: Yes.

Front end: No. No no no.

Both: No no no no no no. Nope. No.

Ainsworth: Why did you say 'yes'?

Front end: I didn't.

Ainsworth: I'm not talking to you...

Rear end: Er... er...

Ainsworth: Right! Search the thicket.

Front end: Oh come on, I mean do we look like the sort of chaps who'd creep into a camp at... night, steal into someone's tent, anaesthetise them, tissue-type them, amputate a leg and run away with it?

Ainsworth: Search the thicket!

Front end: Oh *leg*! You're looking for a *leg*. Actually I think there is one in there somewhere. Somebody must have abandoned it here, knowing you were coming after it, and we stumbled across it actually and wondered what it was... They'll be miles away by now and I expect we'll have to take all the blame.

[During the last exchange a native turns and leers at the camera, while the dialogue continues behind him. Then he unzips his body to reveal a fully dressed white announcer in dinner jacket and bow tie underneath.]

Zulu announcer: Hallo, good evening and welcome to the Middle of the Film.

Lady TV presenter: Hallo and welcome to the Middle of the Film. The moment where we take a break and invite you, the audience, to join us, the film-makers, in 'Find the Fish'. We're going to show you a scene from another film and ask you to guess where the fish is. But if you think you know, don't keep it to yourselves - YELL OUT - so that all the cinema can hear you. So here we are with 'Find the Fish'.

THE
MIDDLE
OF THE FILM

FIND THE FISH

Man: I wonder where that fish has gone.

Woman: You did love it so.
You looked after it like a son.

Man: [strangely] And it went wherever I did go.

Woman: Is it in the cupboard?

Audience: Yes! No!

Woman: Wouldn't you like to know.
It was a lovely little fish.

Man: [strangely] And it went wherever I did go.

Man in audience: It's behind the sofa!

[An elephant joins the man and woman.]

Woman: Where can the fish be?

Man in audience: Have you thought of the drawers in the bureau?

Woman: It is a most elusive fish.

Man: [strangely] And it went wherever I did go!

Woman: Oh fishy, fishy, fishy, fish.

Man: Fish, fish, fish, fishy oh!

Woman: Oh fishy, fishy, fishy fish.

Man: [strangely] That went wherever I did go.

First fish: That was terrific!

Second fish: Great!

Third fish: Best bit so far.

Fishes: Yeah! Absolutely... ! Terrific! Yeah!... Fantastic...
Really great

[Whistles 'More'... Pause.]

Fifth fish: They haven't said much about the Meaning of Life so far, have they...?

First fish: Well, it's been building up to it.

Second fish: Has it?

Fifth fish: yeah, I expect they'll get on to it now.

Third fish: Personally I very much doubt if they're going to say anything about the Meaning of Life at all.

Fourth fish: Oh, come on... they've got to say something...

Other fishes: ... Bound to... yeah... yeah...

[They swim around a bit.]

Second fish: Not much happening at the moment, is there...?

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PART IV

MIDDLE AGE

[A hotel lobby. The lift doors open.]

[Mrs Hendy is bending down in front of Mr Hendy, doing something of an intimate nature to his camera lens.]

Mr Hendy: Oh that's much better. Thank you honey.

Mrs Hendy: You're welcome.

Mr Hendy: It was sort of misty before. That's fine.

[A strange girl in a crinoline steps forward. This is M'Lady Joeline. played by Mr Gilliam.]

Joeline: Hi! How are you?

Mr Hendy: We're just fine.

Joeline: So what kind of food you like to eat this evening?

Mr Hendy: Well we sort of like pineapples...

Mrs Hendy: Yeah anything with pineapples in is great for us...

Joeline: Well, how about the Dungeon Room?

Mr Hendy: Oh that sounds fine...

Joeline: Sure is. It's real Hawaiian food served in an authentic medieval English dungeon atmosphere...

[Suddenly a red hot brand sears the flesh of some poor wretch. This is the restaurant. Dark, full of torture instruments, stocks, Chamber of Horrors stuff.]

[They sit down. A waitress dressed in a grotesque travesty of a Beefeater's outfit, comes up.]

Waitress: Hello, I'm Diana, I'm your waitress for tonight... Where are you from?

Mr and Mrs Hendy: We're from Room 259.

Mr Hendy: Where are you from?

Waitress: [pointing to kitchen] Oh I'm from the doors over there...

Mr Hendy: Oh.

Mrs Hendy: Great...

Waitress: [reaching across to the central serving table] Iced Water...

Mrs Hendy: Oh thank you...

Waitress: Coffee...

Mr Hendy: Than you *very* much...

Waitress: Ketchup...

Mr Hendy: Oh lovely... real nice

Waitress: T.V....?

Mr Hendy: Oh... that's fine...

Mrs Hendy: Yeah that's swell

[The Waitress dumps a T.V. down on the table.]

Waitress: Telephone...

Mr Hendy: Er... telephone...?

Waitress: You can phone any other table in the restaurant after
six.

Mr Hendy: Oh that's great...

Mrs Hendy: Some choice...

Mr Hendy: Yeah, right...

Waitress: O.K.... D'you want any food with your meal?

Mr Hendy: Well, what d'you have?

Waitress: Well we have things shaped like this in green or we have
things shaped like that in brown...

Mr Hendy: What d'you think darling?

Mrs Hendy: Well it *is* our anniversary, Marvin...

Mr Hendy: Yeah... what the hell... we'll have a couple of the
things shaped like that in brown, please...

Waitress: O.K. fine... thank you sir... [She writes]... 2 brown
Number 259... and will you be having intercourse tonight...?

Mr Hendy: Er... do we have to decide now...?

Mrs Hendy: Sounds a good idea honey. I mean it sounds swell. I mean
why not?

Mr Hendy: Yeah, right... could be fun...

[Waitress takes out a condom and slaps it on the table.]

Waitress: Compliments of the Super Inn - Have a nice fuck!

Mr Hendy: Oh, thank you.

Waitress: You're welcome...

[She leaves.]

Mr Hendy: [reads:] 'Super Inn Skins' - that's nice.

[Suddenly a Hawaiian band comes through the door and surrounds Mr and Mrs Hendy at their table, before leaving them to their own devices, which are not many. There is a long silence.]

Waiter: Good evening... would you care for something to talk about?

[He hands them each a menu card with a list of subjects on.]

Mr Hendy: Oh that would be wonderful.

Waiter: Our special tonight is minorities...

Mr Hendy: Oh that sounds interesting...

Mrs Hendy: What's this conversation here...?

Waiter: Oh that's football... you can talk about the Steelers-Bears game, Saturday... or you could reminisce about really great World Series -

Mrs Hendy: No... no, no.

Mr Hendy: What's this one here?

Waiter: That's philosophy.

Mrs Hendy: Is that a sport?

Waiter: No it's more of an attempt to construct a viable hypothesis to explain the Meaning of Life.

[The fish in the tank suddenly prick up their fins.]

Fish: What's he say, eh?

Mr Hendy: Oh that sounds wonderful... Would you like to talk about the Meaning of Life, darling...?

Mrs Hendy: Sure, why not?

Waiter: Philosophy for two?

Mr Hendy: Right...

Waiter: You folks want me to start you off?

Mr Hendy: Oh really we'd appreciate that...

Waiter: OK. Well er... look, have you ever wondered just why you're here?

Mr Hendy: Well... we went to Miami last year and California the year before that, and we've...

Waiter: No, no... I mean why **we're** here. On this planet?

Mr Hendy: [guardedly]... N... n... nope.

Waiter: Right! Have you ever **wanted** to know what it's all about?

Mr Hendy: [emphatically] No!

Waiter: Right ho! Well, see, throughout history there have been certain men and women who have tried to find the solution to the mysteries of existence.

Mrs Hendy: Great.

Waiter: And we call these guys 'philosophers'.

Mrs Hendy: And that's what we're talking about!

Waiter: Right!

Mrs Hendy: That's neat!

Waiter: Well you look like you're getting the idea, so why don't I give you these conversation cards - they'll tell you a little about philosophical method, names of famous philosophers... there y'are. Have a nice conversation!

Mr Hendy: Thank you! Thank you very much.

[He leaves.]

Mrs Hendy: He's cute.

Mr Hendy: Yeah, real understanding.

[They sit and look at the cards, then rather formally and uncertainly Mrs Hendy opens the conversation.]

Mrs Hendy: Oh! I never knew that *Schopenhauer* was a
philosopher...

Mr Hendy: Oh yeah... He's the one that begins with an S.

Mrs Hendy: Oh...

Mr Hendy: ... Um [pause]... like Nietzsche...

Mrs Hendy: Does Nietzsche begin with an S?

Mr Hendy: There's an S in Nietzsche...

Mrs Hendy: Oh wow! Yes there is. Do all philosophers have an S in
them?

Mr Hendy: Yeah I think most of them do.

Mrs Hendy: Oh!... Does that mean Selina Jones is a philosopher?

Mr Hendy: Yeah... Right, she could be... she sings about the
Meaning of Life.

Mrs Hendy: Yeah, that's right, but I don't think she writes her own
material.

Mr Hendy: No. Maybe Schopenhauer writes her material?

Mrs Hendy: No... Burt Bacharach writes is.

Mr Hendy: There's no 'S' in Burt Bacharach...

Mrs Hendy: ... Or in Hal David...

Mr Hendy: Who's Hal David?

Mrs Hendy: He writes the lyrics, Burt just writes the tunes... only
now he's married to Carole Bayer Sager...

Mr Hendy: Oh... Waiter... this conversation isn't very good.

Waiter: Oh, I'm sorry, sir... We *do* have one today that's not on the menu. It's a sort of... er... speciality of the house. Live Organ Transplants.

Mrs Hendy: Live Organ Transplants? What's *that*?

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PART V

LIVE ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

[A photo of the Emperor Haile Selassie hangs on the wall of a suburban house. Upstairs 'Hava Nagila' is being played on a lone violin. The door bell rings.]

Mr Bloke: Don't worry dear, I'll get it!

[He opens the door.]

Mr Bloke: Yes!

First Man: Hello, er can we have your liver...?

Mr Bloke: My what?

First Man: Your liver... it's a large glandular organ in your abdomen... you know it's a reddish-brown and it's sort of -

Mr Bloke: Yes, I know what it is, but I'm using it.

Second Man: Come on sir... don't muck us about.

[They move in.]

Mr Bloke: Hey!

[They shut the door behind him.]

[The first man makes a grab at his wallet and finds a card in it.]

First Man: Hallo! What's this then...?

Mr Bloke: A liver donor's card.

First Man: Need we say more?

Second Man: No!

Mr Bloke: Look, I can't give it to you now. It says 'In The Event of Death'...

First Man: No-one who has ever had their liver taken out by us has survived...

[The second man is rummaging around in a bag of clanking tools.]

Second Man: Just lie there, sir. it won't take a minute.

[They throw him onto the dining room table and, without any more ceremony, start to cut him open. A rather severe lady appears at the door.]

Mrs Bloke: 'Ere, what's going on?

First man: He's donating his liver, madam...

Mr Bloke: Aarrgh... oh!... aaargh ow! Ow!

Mrs Bloke: Is this because he took out one of those silly cards?

First Man: That's right, madam.

Mr Bloke: Ow! Oooh! Oohh! Oh... oh... God... aargh aargh...

Mrs Bloke: Typical of him. He goes down to the public library - sees a few signs up... comes home all full of good intentions. He gives blood... he does cold research... all that sort of thing.

Mr Bloke: Aaaagh... oh... aaarghh!

Mrs Bloke: What d'you do with them all anyway?

Second man: They all go to saving lives, madam.

Mr Bloke: Aaaaargh! Oh... ow! Oh... oh my God!

Mrs Bloke: That's what *he* used to say... it's all for the good of the country, he used to say.

Mr Bloke: Aaaargh!... Ow! Ooh!

Mrs Bloke: D'*you* think it's *all* for the good of the country?

First Man: Uh?

Mrs Bloke: D'*you* think it's *all* for the good of the country?

First Man: Well I wouldn't know about that, madam...we're just doing our jobs, you know...

Mr Bloke: Owwwwweeeeeeeeh! Ow!

Mrs Bloke: You're not doctors, then?

First Man: Oh!... Blimey no...!

[The second man grins and raises his eyes as he digs around in the stomach. They laugh. A head comes round the door... It's a young man.]

Young Man: Mum, Dad,... I'm off out... now. I'll see you about seven...

Mrs Bloke: Righto, son... look after yourself.

Mr Bloke: Aaargh... ow! Oh... aaargh aargh!

Mrs Bloke: D'you er... fancy a cup of tea...?

First Man: Oh well, that would be very nice, yeah... Thank you, thank you very much madam. Thank you. [Aside.] I thought she'd never ask...

[She takes him into the kitchen... shuts the door. She bustles about preparing the tea...]

You do realise... he has to be... well... dead... by the terms of the card... before he donates his liver.

Mrs Bloke: Well I told him that... but he never listens to me... silly man.

First Man: Only... I was wondering what you was thinking of doing after that... I mean... will you stay on your own or... is there someone else... sort of... on the horizon...?

Mrs Bloke: I'm too old for that sort of thing. I'm past my prime...

First Man: Not at all... you're a very attractive woman.

Mrs Bloke: [laughs a little] Well... I'm certainly not thinking of getting hitched up again...

First Man: Sure?

Mrs Bloke: Sure.

First Man: [coming a little closer] Can we have your liver then?

Mrs Bloke: No... I don't want to die.

First Man: Oh come on, it's perfectly natural. Only take a couple of minutes.

Mrs Bloke: Oh... I'd be scared.

First Man: All right, I'll tell you what. Look, listen to this -

[A man in pink evening dress emerges from the fridge.]

Man in Pink Evening Dress: Whenever life gets you down, Mrs Brown
And things seem hard or tough
And people are stupid obnoxious or daft
And you feel that you've had quite enough...

[As he starts to sing, the wall of the kitchen disintegrates to reveal a magnificent night sky. The vocalist in pink escorts Mrs Bloke up into the stars.]

Just remember that you're standing on a planet that's evolving
And revolving at 900 miles an hour,
That's orbiting at 19 miles a second, so it's reckoned,
A sun that is the source of all our power.
The sun and you and me and all the stars that we can see,
Are moving at a million miles a day
In an outer spiral arm, at 40,000 miles an hour,
Of the galaxy we call the Milky Way.

Our galaxy itself contains 100 billion stars
It's 100,000 light years side to side.
It bulges in the middle, 16,000 light years thick
But out by us its just 3,000 light years wide
We're 30,000 light years from galactic central point,
We go round every 200 million years
And our galaxy is only one of millions of billions
In this amazing and expanding Universe.

The Universe itself keeps on expanding and expanding
In all of the directions it can whizz

As fast as it can go, at the speed of light you know,
12 million miles a minute, and that's the fastest speed there
is.

So remember when you're feeling very small and insecure
How amazingly unlikely is your birth
And pray that there's intelligent life somewhere up in space
Because there' bugger all down here on earth.

[The vocalist in pink climbs back into the fridge and the door
slams to.]

Mrs Bloke: Makes you feel so sort of insignificant, doesn't it?

First Man: Yeah yeah... Can we have your liver, then?

Mrs Bloke: Yeah. All right, you talked me into it.

First Man: Eric!

[A lettering artist is just finishing painting the words
'Liver Donors Inc' onto a wall plaque enumerating all the
subsidiaries of the Very Big Corporation of America.]

Chairman: [of the Very Big Corporation of America]... which brings
us once again to the urgent realisation of just how much there
is still left to own. Item 6 on the Agenda, the Meaning of
Life... Now Harry, you've had some thoughts on this...

Harry: That's right, yeah. I've had a team working on this over the
past few weeks, and what we've come up with can be reduced to
two fundamental concepts... One... people are not wearing
enough hats. Two... matter is energy; in the Universe there
are many energy fields which we cannot normally perceive. Some
energies have a spiritual source which act upon a person's
soul. However, this soul does not exist *ab inito*, as
orthodox Christianity teaches; it has to be brought into
existence by a process of guided self-observation. However,
this is rarely achieved owing to man's unique ability to be
distracted from spiritual matters by everyday trivia.

[Pause.]

Max: What was that about hats again?

Harry: Er... people aren't wearing enough.

Chairman: Is this true?

Edmund: [who is sitting next to Harry] Certainly. Hat sales have

increased, but not *pari passu... as our research -

Bert: When you say 'enough', enough for what purpose...?

Gunther: Can I ask with reference to your second point, when you say souls don't develop because people become distracted... has anyone noticed that building there before?

[They all turn towards the window to see a building approaching or sliding into position outside.]

All: Gulp! What? Good Lord!

THE CRIMSON
PERMANENT ASSURANCE

A tale of piracy
on the high seas
of finance

London, England

In the bleak days of 1983, as England languished in the doldrums of a ruinous monetarist policy, the good and loyal men of the Permanent Assurance Company - a once-proud family firm recently fallen an hard times - strained under the yoke of their oppressive new corporate management...

Pushed beyond the bounds of decent and reasonable victimisation - the aged retainers take their destiny in their own hands and...
MUTINY!

And so - the Crimson Permanent Assurance was launched upon the high seas of international finance!

There it lay, the prize they sought - the richest jewel in the crown of the IMF - a financial district swollen with multi-nationals, conglomerates and fat, bloated merchant banks.

Hidden behind the faceless towering canyons of glass, the world of high finance sat smug and self-satisfied as their future, in the shape of their past, slipped silently through the streets - returning to wreak a terrible revenge.

Adopting, adapting, and improving traditional business practices the Permanent Assurance puts into motion an audacious and totally unsuspected Take Over Bid.

And so, heartened by their initial success, the desperate and

reasonably violent men of the Permanent Assurance battled on, until... as the sun set slowly in the west the outstanding return on their bold business venture became apparent... the once proud financial giants lay in ruins - their assets stripped - their policies in tatters.

[They sing]

It's fun charter an accountant
And sail the wide accountan-cy,
To find, explore the funds offshore
And skirt the shoals of bankruptcy.

It can be manly in insurance:
We'll up your premium semi-annually,
It's all tax-deductible,
We're fairly incorruptible,
Sailing on the wide accountan-cy!

And so... they sailed off into the ledgers of history - one by one the financial capitals of the world crumbling under the might of their business acumen - or so it would have been... if certain modern theories concerning the shape of the world had not proved to be... disastrously wrong.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PART VI

THE AUTUMN YEARS

[Elegant restaurant. A man in a dressing gown, who is not Noel Coward sits at a piano.]

Not Noel Coward: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Here's a little number I tossed off recently in the Caribbean. [Sings]

Isn't it awfully nice to have a penis,
Isn't it frightfully good to have a dong?
It's swell to have a stiffy,
It's divine to own a dick,
From the tiniest little tadger,
To the world's biggest prick.

So three cheers for your Willy or John Thomas,
Hooray for your one-eyed trouser snake,
Your piece of pork, your wife's best friend,
Your Percy or your cock,

You can wrap it up in ribbons,
You can slip it in your sock,
But don't take it out in public,
Or they will stick you in the dock,
And you won't come back.

[Spontaneous applause breaks out all over the restaurant.]

Oh... thank you very much.

Woman: Oh what a frightfully witty song.

[Clapping.]

[Mr Creosote enters.]

First Fish: [in tank] Oh shit! It's Mr creosote.

[All the fish disappear with six flicks of the tail.]

Maitre D: Ah good afternoon, sir, and how are we today?

Mr Creosote: Better...

Maitre D: Better?

Mr Creosote: Better get a bucket, I'm going to throw up.

Maitre D: Gaston! A bucket for monsieur!

[They seat him at his usual table. A gleaming silver bucket is placed beside him and he leans over and throws up into it.]

Maitre D: Merci Gaston.

[He claps his hands and the bucket is whisked away.]

Mr Creosote: I haven't finished!

Maitre D: Oh! Pardon! Gaston!... A thousand pardons monsieur. [Puts the bucket back.]

[The Maitre D produces the menu as Mr Creosote continues spewing.]

Maitre D: Now this afternoon we monsieur's favourite - the jugged hare. The hare is *very* high, and the sauce is very rich with truffles, anchovies, Grand Marnier, bacon and cream.

[Mr Creosote pauses. The Maitre D claps his hands and signs to Gaston, who whisks away the bucket.]

Maitre D: Thank you, Gaston.

Mr Creosote: There's still more.

[Gaston rapidly replaces the bucket.]

Maitre D: Allow me! A new bucket for monsieur.

[The Maitre D picks the bucket up and hands it over to Gaston. Mr Creosote leans over and throws up onto the floor.]

And the cleaning woman.

[Gaston hurries off. The Maitre D takes care to avoid the vomit and places the menu in front of Mr Creosote.]

And maintenant, would monsieur care for an apéritif?

[Creosote vomits over the menu. It is covered.]

Or would you prefer to order straight away? Today for appetizers... er... excuse me...

[The Maitre D leans over and wipes away the sick with his hand so that the words of the menu are readable.]

... moules marinieres, pate de foie gras, beluga caviar, eggs Benedictine, tart de poireaux - that's leek tart - frogs' legs amandine or oeufs de caille Richard Shepherd - c'est a dire, little quails' eggs on a bed of pureed mushrooms, it's very delicate, very subtle...

Mr Creosote: I'll have the lot.

Maitre D: A wise choice, monsieur! And now, how would you like it served? All mixed up in a bucket?

Mr Creosote: Yes. With the eggs on top.

Maitre D: But of course, avec les oeufs frites.

Mr Creosote: And don't skimp on the pate.

Maitre D: Oh monsieur I can assure you, just because it is mixed up

with all the other things we would not dream of giving you less than the full amount. In fact I will personally make sure you have a *double* helping. Maintenant quelque chose a boire - something to drink, monsieur?

Mr Creosote: Yeah, six bottles of Chateau Latour '45 and a double Jeroboam of champagne.

Maitre D: Bon, and the usual brown ales...?

Mr Creosote: Yeah... No wait a minute... I think I can only manage six crates today.

Maitre D: Tut tut tut! I hope monsieur was not overdoing it last night...?

Mr Creosote: Shut up!

Maitre D: D'accord. Ah the new bucket and the cleaning woman.

[Gaston arrives. The Cleaning Woman gets down on her hands and knees. Mr Creosote vomits over her.]

[Some guests at another table start to leave. The Maitre D approaches.]

Maitre D: Monsieur, is there something wrong with the food?

[The Maitre D indicates the table of half-eaten main courses. The guests shrink from his vomit-covered hand. The Maitre D realises and shakes a little off. It hits another guest, who wipes his eye.]

Guest: No. The food was... excellent...

Maitre D: Perhaps you are not happy with the service?

Guest: Er no... no... no complaints.

Guest's Wife: It's just we have to go - um - I'm having rather a heavy period.

[A slight embarrassed silence while the rest of the party look at her.]

Guest: And... we... have a train to catch.

Guest's Wife: [as if covering for her previous gaffe] Oh! Yes! Yes... of course! We have a train to catch... and I don't want

to start bleeding over the seats.

[An awkward pause. The Maitre D gropes for words.]

Guest: Perhaps we should ne going...

[They start to go. The Maitre D follows.]

Maitre D: Very well, monsieur. Thank you so much, so nice to see you and I hope very much we will see you again very soon. Au revoir, monsieur.

[He pauses. A look of awful realization suffuses his face.]

Maitre D: ... Oh dear... I've trodden in monsieur's bucket.

[The Maitre D claps his hands.]

Another bucket for monsieur...

[Mr Creosote is sick down the Maitre D's trousers.]

and perhaps a hose...

[Someone at another table gently throws up.]

Companion: Oh Max, really!

[At another table someone else has really thrown up all over the place. His mother and brother look at him incredulously. Meanwhile Mr Creosote has scoffed the lot. The Maitre D approaches him with a silver tray.]

Maitre D: And finally, monsieur, a wafer-thin mint.

Mr Creosote: No.

Maitre D: Oh sir! It's only a tiny little thin one.

Mr Creosote: No. Fuck off - I'm full... [Belches]

Maitre D: Oh sir... it's only *wafer* thin.

Mr Creosote: Look - I couldn't eat another thing. I'm absolutely stuffed. Bugger off.

Maitre D: Oh sir, just... just *one*...

Mr Creosote: Oh all right. Just one.

Maitre D: Just the one, sir... voila... bon appetit...

[Mr Creosote somehow manages to stuff the wafer-thin mint into his mouth and then swallows. The Maitre D takes a flying leap and cowers behind some potted plants. There is an ominous splitting sound. Mr Creosote looks rather helpless and then he explodes, covering waiters, diners, and technicians in a truly horrendous mix of half digested food, entrails and parts of his body. People start vomiting.]

Maitre D: [returns to Mr Creosote's table] Thank you, sir, and now the check.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PART VI B

THE MEANING OF LIFE

[Some time later.]

[The Cleaning Woman is still on her knees, cleaning up the remains of Mr Creosote. The Maitre D lights up a cigarette in pensive mood.]

Maitre D: You know, Maria, I sometimes wonder whether we'll ever discover the meaning of it all working in a place like this.

Maria: [shrugs] Oh, I've worked in worse places... philosophically speaking.

Maitre D: Really, Maria?

Maria: Yes... I used to work in the Academie Francaise
But it didn't do me any good at all...
And I once worked in the library in the Prado in Madrid,
But it didn't teach me nothing, I recall...
And the Library of Congress, you'd have thought would hold
some key...
But it didn't. And neither did the Bodleian Library.
In the British Museum I hoped to find some clue,
I worked there from 9 till 6 - read every volume through,
But it didn't teach me nothing about Life's mystery...
I just kept getting older, and it got more difficult to see.

Until eventually me eyes went and me arthritis got bad,
And so now I'm cleaning up in here - but I can't really be
sad,
Cause you see I feel that Life's a game
You sometimes win or lose,
And though I may be down right now
At least I don't work for Jews...

[The Maitre D pours the bucket over her head and turns to
the camera looking most upset.]

Maitre D: I'm so sorry... I had no idea we had a racist working
here... I apologise... most sincerely... I mean... where are
you going - I can explain... oh, quel dommage...

[The camera pans off the Maitre D and alights on Gaston,
smoking a cigarette.]

Gaston: As for me... if you want to know what I think... I'll show
you something... come with me...

Maitre D: [out of shot] I was saying that - hallo... hallo...

Gaston: Come on... this way.

[He nods to the camera and walks out of the restaurant
and the camera follows him.]

Voice of Maitre D: I can explain everything.

Gaston: Come on - don't be shy. Mind the stairs... All right. I
think this will help explain.

[He walks through the town.]

Gaston: Come along... Come along... Over here... Come on... Come
on... This way... Come on... Stay by me, uh? Nearly there now.

[Eventually Gaston comes over a hill and nods down to a
little thatched cottage nestling idyllically in a valley.
Smoke rises up from the chimney.]

You see that? That's where I was born. You know, one day, when
I was a little boy, my mother she took me on her knee and she
said: 'Gaston, my son. The world is a beautiful place. You
must go into it, and love everyone, not hate people. You must
try and make everyone happy, and bring peace and contentment
everywhere you go.' And so... I became a waiter...

[There is a rather long pause, while he looks a bit self-deprecating and nods shyly at the live.]

Well... it's... it's not much of a philosophy, I know... but... well... fuck you... I can live my own life in my own way if I want to. Fuck off! Don't come following me!

THE MEANING OF LIFE

PART VII

DEATH

Distraught Male Voice: I just can't go on. I'm not good any more, goodbye... goodbye... aaaargh!... Aaaargh!

[A leaf falls to the ground.]

Distraught Female Voice: Oh my God! What'll I do!? I can't live without him... I... aaaargh!

[Another leaf falls.]

Distraught Children's Voices: Mummy... Mummy... Mummy... Daddy...

[Two more leaves fall.]

More Distraught Voices: Oh no! Aaaargh!

[All the remaining leaves fall with one accord.]

This man is about to die. In a few moments now he will be killed. For Arthur Jarrett is a convicted criminal who has been allowed to choose the manner of his own execution.

Governor: Arthur Charles Herbert Runcie MacAdam Jarrett, you have been convicted by twelve good persons and true, of the crime of first degree making of gratuitous sexist jokes in a moving picture.

Padre: Ashes to ashes, dust to dust...

[Ingmar Mergman now takes over the direction of the film and re-invokes one of his greatest triumphs on a low budget. Bare windswept trees starkly silhouetted against the... oh you know. Lots of good sound effects, too: howling wind, howling dogs, howling sabre-toothed field mice. Suddenly we see the Grim Reaper. He is hooded, in

a black cloak with a sackcloth jock-strap, and bearing...
a scythe.]

[He materializes outside a lowly cottage and strikes the door with his scythe. Geoffrey, who is Marketing Director of Uro-Pacific Ltd, opens the door. From inside the house comes the sound of a dinner party.]

Geoffrey: Yes?

[Pause. The Reaper breathes death-rattlingly.]

Is it about the hedge?

[More breathing.]

Look, I'm awfully sorry but...

Grim Reaper: I am the Grim Reaper.

Geoffrey: I am Death.

Geoffrey: Yes well, the thing is, we've got some people from America for dinner tonight...

[Geoffrey's wife, Angela is coming to see who is at the door. She calls:]

Angela: Who is it, darling?

Geoffrey: It's a Mr Death or something... he's come about the reaping... [To Reaper.] I don't think we need any at the moment.

Angela: [appearing] Hallo. Well don't leave him hanging around outside darling, ask him in.

Geoffrey: Darling, I don't think it's quite the moment...

Angela: Do come in, come along in, come and have a drink, do. Come on...

[She returns to her guests.]

It's one of the little men from the village... Do come in, please. This is Howard Katzenberg from Philadelphia...

Katzenberg: Hi.

Angela: And his wife, Debbie.

Debbie: Hallo there.

Angela: And these are the Portland-Smythes, Jeremy and Fiona.

Fiona: Good evening.

Angela: This is Mr Death.

[There is a slightly awkward pause.]

Well do get Mr Death a drink, darling.

[The Grim Reaper looks a little startled.]

Angela: Mr Death is a reaper.

Grim Reaper: The Grim Reaper.

Angela: Hardly surprising in this weather, ha ha ha...

Katzenberg: So you still reap around here do you, Mr Death?

Grim Reaper: I am the Grim Reaper.

Geoffrey: [sotto voce] That's about all he says... [Loudly] There's your drink, Mr Death.

Angela: Do sit down.

Debbie: We were just talking about some of the awful problems facing the -

[The Grim Reaper knocks the glass off the table. Startled silence.]

Angela: Would you prefer white? I'm afraid we don't have any beer.

Jeremy: The Stilton's awfully good.

Grim Reaper: I am not of this world.

[He walks into the middle of the table. There is a sharp intake of breath all round.]

Geoffrey: Good Lord!

[The penny is beginning to drop.]

Grim Reaper: I am Death.

Debbie: [nervously] Well isn't that extraordinary? We were just talking about death only five minutes ago.

Angela: [even more nervously] Yes we were. You know, whether death is really... the end...

Debbie: As my husband, Howard here, feels... or whether there is... and one so hates to use words like 'soul' or 'spirit'...

Jeremy: But what *other* words can one use...

Geoffrey: Exactly...

Grim Reaper: You do not understand.

Debbie: Ah no... obviously not...

Katzenberg: Let me tell you something, Mr Death...

Grim Reaper: You do not understand!

Katzenberg: Just one moment. I would like to express on behalf of everyone here, what a really unique experience this is...

Jeremy: Hear hear.

Angela: Yes, we're *so* delighted that you dropped in, Mr Death...

Katzenberg: Can I finish please...

Debbie: Mr Death... is there an after-life?

Katzenberg: Dear, if you could just wait please a moment...

Angela: Are you sure you wouldn't like some sherry?

Katzenberg: Angela, I'd like just to say at this time...

Grim Reaper: Be quiet!

Katzenberg: Can I just say this at this time, please...

Grim Reaper: Silence!!! I have come for you.

[Pause as this sinks in. Sidelong glance. A stifled fart.]

Angela: ... You mean to...

Grim Reaper: ... Take you away. That is my purpose. I am Death.

Geoffrey: Well that's cast rather a gloom over the evening hasn't it?

Katzenberg: I don't see it that way, Geoff. Let me tell you what I think we're dealing with here, a potentially positive learning experience...

Grim Reaper: Shut up! Shut up you American. You always talk, you Americans, you talk and you talk and say 'Let me tell you something' and 'I just wanna say this', Well you're dead now, so shut up.

Katzenberg: Dead?

Grim Reaper: Dead.

Angela: All of us??

Grim Reaper: All of you.

Geoffrey: Now look here. You barge in here, quite uninvited, break glasses and then announce quite casually that we're all dead. Well I would remind you that you are a guest in this house and...

[The Grim Reaper pokes him in the eye.]

Grim Reaper: Be quiet! You Englishmen... You're all so fucking pompous and none of you have got any balls.

Debbie: Can I ask you a question?

Grim Reaper: What?

Debbie: ... How can we all have died at the *same* time?

Grim Reaper: [pointing] The salmon mousse! [They all goggle.]

Geoffrey: [to Angela] Darling, you didn't use tinned salmon did you?

Angela: [unbelievably embarrassed] I'm most dreadfully embarrassed...

Grim Reaper: Now, the time has come. Follow... follow me...

[Geoffrey suddenly runs forward with a revolver. He looses four shots at the Grim Reaper from about three feet. They pass through him. Pause. Everyone is rather embarrassed.]

Geoffrey: Sorry... Just... testing... Sorry... [He sits.]

Grim Reaper: Come! [Out of their bodies, spirit forms arise and follow the Grim Reaper.]

Angela: The fishmonger promised me he'd have some fresh salmon and he's normally *so* reliable...

Jeremy: Can we bring our glasses?

Fiona: Good idea.

Debbie: Hey I didn't even eat the mousse... [They follow the Grim Reaper out of the house.]

Angela: Honestly, darling, I'm so embarrassed... I mean to serve salmon with botulism at a dinner party is social death...

Jeremy: Shall we take our cars?

Geoffrey: Why not?

[Slightly to the Grim Reaper's surprise, they follow him up to heaven in a Porsche, a Jensen and a Volvo.]

Grim Reaper: Behold... Paradise!

[Heaven bears a striking resemblance to a Holiday Inn.]

Mr Hendy: I love it here, darling.

Mrs Hendy: Me too, Marvin.

Receptionist: Hello. Welcome to Heaven. Excuse me, could you just sign here, please sir? Thank you. There's a table for you through there in the restaurant. For the ladies...

Fiona: [reading the box of chocolates that has been handed to her] 'After Life Mints'.

Receptionist: Happy Christmas.

Debbie: Oh is it Christmas today?

Receptionist: Of course madam, it's Christmas, *every* day, in Heaven.

Debbie: How about that?

[A restaurant in Heaven. It is full of all the characters who have died in the film. Plus some of the naked girls, because... well, we don't have to give a reason, do we?]

Tony Bennett: Good evening ladies and gentlemen, it's truly a real honourable experience to be here this evening a very wonderful and emotional moment for all of us, and I'd like to sing a song for all of you: [sings]

It's Christmas in Heaven: all the children sing

It's Christmas in Heaven
Hark hark those church bells ring'

It's Christmas in Heaven
The snow falls from the sky...

But it's nice and warm and everyone
Looks smart and wears a tie

It's Christmas in Heaven
There's great films on TV...
'The Sound of Music' *twice* an hour
And 'Jaws' I, II, *and* III

There's gifts for all the family
There' toiletries and trains...

There's Sony Walkman Headphones sets
And the latest video games!

It's Christmas It's Christmas in Heaven
Hip hip hip hip hip hooray
Every single day
Is Christmas Day!

It's Christmas It's Christmas in Heaven
Hip hip hip hip hip hooray
Every single day
Is Christmas Day!'

[But before we get to the end of this chorus the TV set

is switched off and the whole picture collapses into a little spot and we pull out to find that we have been watching a TV set in front of the Middle of the Film lady.]

THE END
OF THE FILM

Lady Presenter: [briskly] Well, that's the End of the Film, now here's the Meaning of Life.

[An envelope is handed to her. She opens it in a business-like way.]

Thank you Brigitte. [She reads.]... Well, it's nothing special. Try and be nice to people, avoid eating fat, read a good book every now and then, get some walking in and try and live together in peace and harmony with people of all creeds and nations. And finally, here are some completely gratuitous pictures of penises to annoy the censors and to hopefully spark some sort of controversy which it seems is the only way these days to get the jaded video-sated public off their fucking arses and back in the sodding cinema. Family entertainment bollocks! What they want is filth, people doing things to each other with chainsaws during tupperware parties, babysitters being stabbed with knitting needles by gay presidential candidates, vigilante groups strangling chickens, armed bands of theatre critics exterminating mutant goats - where's the fun in pictures? Oh well, there we are - here's the theme music. Goodnight.