

JUNIOR WORKSHOP

Based on THE CARETAKER by Harold Pinter

THEME: GOOD AND BAD BOUNDARY

SCENE 1

'Good'

Louis Armstrong's 'Wonderful World' plays as the scene is set.

An empty street. An old man, DAVIES, is sat snoring on a bench. He is scruffily dressed with an old tweed hat and a newspaper. He is mumbling as he sleeps.

DAVIES: *(asleep)* ...I want to ride the pony! *(laughs)*. Margaret! Margaret! *(snores, then giggles again)*.

Enter a young boy. He creeps up on DAVIES, slowly takes his hat off, and then takes the newspaper. He rolls it up and cracks him over the head with it. He wakes with a startle.

BOY: Come on, old man. Up y'get.

DAVIES: What is the meaning of this? Hey, give me back my hat!

BOY: You want it back, you're gonna have to pay.

DAVIES: What do you mean?

BOY: I'm talkin' about lolly, my friend. Cash. Cold hard money.

DAVIES: But I don't have any money.

Enter ASTON.

BOY: Well that's a shame. Guess I'm gonna have to beat it out of ya'.

He raises the newspaper and lunges at him.

ASTON: Hey!

The BOY drops the hat and newspaper and runs off.

Are you okay?

DAVIES: Yes, thank you. Thank you, sir. I thought he was going to kill me!

ASTON: Well I'm glad you're okay.

He hands him his newspaper and hat and turns to leave.

ASTON: Oh yes, the youth of today. Crazy, I tell you, crazy.

DAVIES: Yes, quite. Anyway . . .

He makes to leave.

DAVIES: Of course, back in my day, you would respect your elders. They'd spank you, no shilly-shallying about it.

ASTON: Of course.

Slightly impatiently, he turns to leave. He is almost off, when . . .

DAVIES: I don't suppose you could help an old man, could you?

ASTON: What do you mean?

DAVIES: Well, you see. I haven't eaten for three days, haven't had a good night's sleep either. You couldn't help an old man out, could you?

ASTON: Well, I . . . erm . . .

DAVIES *rubs his head where the boy hit him.*

DAVIES: Ouch! I really could do with a good lie down. I hope that boy doesn't come back here. God only knows what danger I am in!

ASTON: Well, I suppose . . . I could help you. Just for an evening.

Suddenly, full of life, DAVIES hops to his feet. They take a short stroll to ASTON'S house.

DAVIES: Ooop! Just a minute, let me just tie my shoelaces!

He sits on an audience member in the front row.

That's better! Oh, I say, this is a nice area you live in. What are the neighbours like?

ASTON: Most of them are Italian.

DAVIES: Yes, I can see that. Hold on a second, my back's hurting. Let me sit down for a minute.

He sits on another student and makes a further nuisance of himself.

ASTON: We're here now!

DAVIES: *(getting up)* Aaah! That's better. Okay, just coming.

They enter the house.

ASTON: Here, I have a spare bed here, if you want to sleep.

DAVIES: That is most kind of you, thank you sir. Listen. I don't suppose you have a spare pair of shoes do you? These ones don't fit very well, they are giving me blisters.

ASTON: I'll have a look.

DAVIES: Thank you. Here, I don't suppose I could make myself a cup of tea, could I?

ASTON: Of course, help yourself.

DAVIES *goes over to the kettle.* **ASTON** *returns with a pair of shoes.*

DAVIES: Here, I don't think this kettle is working, you know.

ASTON: Oh, must need a new fuse. Here, these were the best I could find.

DAVIES: Thank you.

He tries them on.

I'm very particular about my shoes, you know. Can't be too big, can't be too small.

He struggle putting them on.

ASTON: Well are they okay?

DAVIES: That's odd. This one's too big.

ASTON: And the other?

DAVIES: Well, this one's too small. I'm afraid they won't do.

ASTON: I am sorry.

DAVIES: I don't suppose you got some spare money, have you? It's just I'm a bit short at the moment.

ASTON: Well, here's a fiver.

DAVIES: Thank you, most kind.

ASTON *is growing slightly impatient and busies himself with a menial task.*

DAVIES: I don't suppose you could fix that kettle, could you? I could do with a cuppa in the morning.

ASTON: *(through gritted teeth)* Yes, I'll see what I can do.

DAVIES: Thanks.

ASTON: Don't let me stop you, if you are tired. Feel free to sleep.

DAVIES: You know what? I think I might just do that. Yes, I think I shall have some sleep.

He undresses and gets into bed.

Thanks once again, sir. For everything.

ASTON: Not a problem.

ASTON continues with his task as **DAVIES** falls asleep. Suddenly **DAVIES** lets out a huge snore. **ASTON** jumps out of his skin. Music as the scene fades.

END.

SCENE 2

'Bad'

ASTON and **DAVIES** are both sleeping. We hear a little lullaby playing as there is gentle snoring coming from **DAVIES**. This snoring grows louder and louder, and he starts mumbling some gibberish.

DAVIES: (*asleep*) No! No! Over that way! (*snores*) I want pizza, not spaghetti! (*snores, mumbling*) Si, si! Spaghetti a la ragu! (*snores louder*) Latte Macchiato! Profiteroles!

ASTON, who has awoken and has been patient, suddenly outbursts.

ASTON: HEY! KEEP IT DOWN, WILL YOU?!? I CAN'T SLEEP HERE!

DAVIES awakes with a start.

DAVIES: (*half awake*) Huh?! No spaghetti? Okay, lasagne is fine! What?

ASTON: WAKE UP!

DAVIES: What? What? What is it?

ASTON: You are snoring like a lion! I can't get any sleep over here!

DAVIES: (*angry*) Are you crazy?

ASTON: Me, crazy?! You're ordering a six-course Italian meal in your sleep! And you call *me* crazy?!

DAVIES: Well that's probably because I'm hungry! I haven't eaten for three days and you haven't fed me!

ASTON: I beg your pardon?! It isn't my job to feed you! You asked for somewhere to sleep!

DAVIES: You are just like these youngsters. No respect for your elders! Leave me alone! I'm going back to sleep!

ASTON: Okay. No snoring!

DAVIES: Don't worry, I won't! Honestly!

He mumbles something and then they both fall asleep. There is some gentle snoring as the lullaby music returns. This stops abruptly when DAVIES lets out a snore so loud it wakes ASTON like there is an earthquake. He jumps out of bed.

ASTON: AAAAARGGGGGGHHHHHHHHH!

He gets out of bed and paces up and down. He is very stressed.

DAVIES: Hey! What do you want me to do? Stop breathing?! Kill myself?! I can't help snoring!

ASTON: You're driving me mad!

DAVIES: You keep waking me up!

ASTON: Because you wake me up first, with your snoring! You sound like an elephant!

DAVIES: Why don't you go and sleep somewhere else then?!

ASTON: Somewhere else? It's my house!

DAVIES: Besides, it's freezing in here! You have no heating! I should sue you! Letting me sleep in a place like this! It's criminal!

ASTON: How dare you . . .

ASTON *moves towards DAVIES, who jumps back.*

DAVIES: Careful! I've got a gun here, I'm not afraid to use it!

He pulls out a banana from his left pocket. He realises, drops the banana on the floor and then produces a gun from his right pocket.

ASTON: This is ridiculous. I will not stand for this a moment longer. Kindly get out of here before I inform the police.

DAVIES: You don't scare me, sir. You think you are a big strong man, throwing your weight about. But I've got news for you.

'I Will Survive' by Gloria Gaynor begins. DAVIES sings along, directing it at ASTON.

At first I was afraid, I was petrified
Kept thinking I could never live without you by my side
But then I spent so many nights thinking how you did me wrong
And I grew strong, and I learned how to get along
And so you're back, from outer space
I just walked in to find you here with that sad look upon your face
I should have changed that stupid lock; I should have made you leave your key
If I'd have known for just one second you'd be back to bother me
Go on now, go! Walk out the door!

The music stops abruptly.

ASTON: YOU WALK OUT THE DOOR! I took you in, I gave you money, and I gave you a bed to sleep in! What thanks do you show for it? None!

DAVIES: Oh, pardon me, 'Robin Hood'. Shall I kiss your feet?

ASTON: I wasn't saying . . .

DAVIES: Oh no! You are the saviour of the people! Please, Robin Hood. Where are your merry men? We shall all do a dance for you!

ASTON: I wasn't suggesting . . .

DAVIES: *(to the audience)* Please, ladies and gentlemen. Put your hands together and give a warm welcome to Robin Hood!

ASTON: STOP CALLING ME ROBIN HOOD!

DAVIES: WELL DON'T TALK TO ME LIKE I NEED CHARITY! 'CAUSE I DON'T! I don't need charity, and I don't need you. Next time, I'll . . .

He lifts the gun.

ASTON: Yes?

DAVIES *moves in closer.*

DAVIES: Next time I'll . . .

ASTON: What?

They are face to face.

DAVIES: Next time I'll use it.

END.