

The People at no. 19

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THE PEOPLE AT NO. 19

1949

CROWN FILM UNIT

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About three o'clock he's in bed, and suddenly hears a voice say: "There's only thee and me". So he jumped out of bed and put his shirt on. And he heard this voice again and he said: "There's only thee and me." He said: "I don't know, get me pants on and it'll only be thee." Well, you know, we hope you're very happy when you're married and you're a grand lass. We recommend marriage very highly. It's a fine institution. I'm not joking, now it is. In my opinion, no family should be without it.

"If you was my boy.

- Hm?
- I said: 'If you was my boy'
- Glad I'm not.
- So am I. You'd get up and get your own tea.
- What, me? In my state of health?
- You know what I'm going to do when you two get a place of your own? Have a nice quiet listen to the wireless and some of my own sugar ration.
- Hey, hey, that's ours.
- How'd you know?
- Smell of course. Turn it off.
- No, it's company.
- Which is more that you can say of your own son-in-law?
- I suppose she could have done worse.
- She likes it.

- I've never known anyone so wrapped up in somebody as she is you. You listen to me, Ken. She wants a place of her own. It isn't right to be stuck here with her Mum and Dad ten months after she's married.
- You're doing us proud, though.
- Just the same though.
- Hm, as a matter of fact, I, I saw a place today.
- Already took, I suppose, not?
- Would have, should have as I stand on the ground. Thirty-seven and six a week.
- You won't do better than that nowadays.
- Three rooms. So, I said: 'I, I'll take it.' She said: 'Well, of course, you'll buy the furniture.' So I said: 'Furniture? Where?'
- They always do come the old acid.
- One old electric fire and the curtain rods. 200 quid?
- Oh, get you, don't it."

This is the BBC Light Programme...

"That the wrong time?"

The time is now 7.30.

"Something's serious wrong with that clock, Mum. It's dead right.

- It isn't. Is it?
- Yeah.
- Oh! I bet Dad stopped on the way home with that Scotchman. Where's she gone?
- Out?
- Really. I did ask where she was going in all that soaking rain but of course, I'm only a Mum so she wouldn't say. If you ask me, she's been a bit funny lately.
- Ah, no she's parked it.
- Nervy one minute like a dog with two tails and the next... I know them signs.
- You don't.
- I had three of my own, didn't I? That's what it is, hey? Sugar?
- Oh, bribery. Alright, Mum, you won't tell her I told you, will you? But she went to see the doctor last week.
- I knew she was up to something.
- Yeah, he took a blood test and all sorts of things.
- What'll they think of next? When I had my own...
- So she's gone tonight, just to be sure.
- Well, I never did. My Joan going to have a baby. Seems just like yesterday. How time flies!
- Oh, aren't you gonna congratulate me?
- You? What for?
- Didn't Teacher tell you? Well, you see, Mum, it's, it's like this. But first, you're gonna learn all about flowers.
- Oh, don't be soppy! I can't believe it, really I can't. I suppose it's all the more reason to get a place of your own but...Nice to have it here though. And that reminds me. I wonder if I've still got those woollies. For the life of me I can't remember if Mrs Perry gave 'em back. It's eleven years if it's a day. And she did promise to. They wouldn't be in your chest of drawers, would they? No, I emptied that when you came.
- Joan, ah, you're wet through. Well, what did he say? Well, uh. Everything's alright?

- It was awful.
- Something's wrong.
- It couldn't happen to me.
- Joan, I can guess. He said "nothing doing", a mistake.
- No mistake.
- Well, then he's been frightening you. I know, he's put the wind up you...
- No!
- Joan, you've been upset. Tell me from the beginning. Well, come on, say something, anything. For goodness sake don't make me keep me on guessing. If he said you won't be having a baby then...
- I'm having a baby.
- Or that it isn't gonna be normal?
- It'll be normal. The doctor says he thinks so.
- Well, then, something will go wrong with you?
- Nothing will go wrong with me. He doesn't think so.
- Well, then, there can be nothing else to worry about. No, I don't mean that. You're bound to be a bit scared. Any girl would be. But nowadays, what with all these new drugs... Well, I tell you, everything will be alright. It's just that I was sure you'd rush in all eager like and shout "it's a boy" or something. But of course, it's not me that's gonna have...
- I'm not scared.
- Well, then you've gotta believe me. Everything's going to be alright.
- That is what the doctor says. Everything's going to be alright.
- Well, then, there can be absolutely nothing else to worry about. Cause "strike me up a gum-tree", as your dad would say. I can't believe it. Me. A father. Joan, you're shivering. You've caught cold. Now, sit down and I'll tell you what...
- Please, don't touch me.
- Joan, I'm only...
- Please.
- Where are you going?
- Out.
- In this rain?
- I want to go out.
- Alright, we can celebrate if you like. What do you say we go into town?
- I'd hate it.
- We missed the show but we could go up to the Royal just to say we'd celebrated. Hey?
- I want to go out alone.
- Whatever for?
- That's how I'm going to live. Alone.
- Joan, you're feverish.
- Watch you don't touch me! And you'd better find a room for yourself.
- Why all this? Why?
- I hate even to say. You must know anyway. But the doctor made me promise to tell you. He wants to see you.
- See me? What for?
- Well... Well, you gave it to me.
- Gave you what? A baby? 'Course I did.
- Not the baby.
- Then what?

- Syphilis.
- Oh, I didn't hear the door, girl. Fancy leaving me to guess.
- Oh, Mum!
- Shhh! Just her hormones, it's not real crying, not sad like. It's only excitement. Your Mum's here, shhh. When Ken told me, I was that excited I went straight up to look out these woollies. There's not a moth in them. They're as good as new. And not the muck you get nowadays. Cutting some bread, dear? I'll do it. I wish I was young again. They're such lovely company. One boy and a couple of girls, that's the way to arrange it. I'd 'change it for grown-up company any day.
- Company is the word, Mum. It'll certainly be a change from the old days. I met Doris the other day.
- Doris who?
- I don't know who. A friend of Joan's. She was in town. Walking. Just walking up and down as far as I could see.
- Oh, she came to no good.
- Yeah.
- I remember Joan saying in a letter once how good a friend Doris was. When I was in the army.
- Then afterwards she got, well, she got into bad ways, and Joan threw her over.
- They stuck together quite a while.
- Goodness, you're not quarrelling over a little thing like that.
- Never thought about it again.
- 'Course, you didn't. You know my Joan for what she is.
- You're right there, Mum.
- Oh, there's no cause to go over old sores. We ought to be celebrating. Remember that bottle of brandy we had when Dad was poorly? Let's chance it and have one. I am being a silly. You must have things you want to talk over, just you two. I'll go upstairs. Don't quarrel though. You never do. And not tonight of all nights.
- Didn't you use to go away to the seaside with Doris every year?
- Oh, what's that got to do with anything? That was ages ago.
- Two years ago, three years, four years. If what I think is right...
- You're suggesting that I...
- I'm more than suggesting.
- Don't touch me, I couldn't bear it.
- No, but that's not what you said to them, is it? "Please, don't touch me."
- To who?
- Men. Those filthy, dirty...
- You can't say things like that to me. But it must be you. It must be. You were in the army all that time.
- So you jump at conclusions. Well, you're wrong.
- But you can't know for certain it isn't you.
- Oh, yes, I can.
- How?
- A week before we were married, I went to the doctor for an examination. No, not just for that. A thorough examination. Blood tests and the whole works. He said I was alright, OK, A1.
- That, that doesn't prove anything.
- It proves everything. It proves that you went off skylarking. And all the time you were sending me those letters.
- I was sure it was you.

- What happened? What happened?
- I've forgotten. It was so long ago.
- What was so long ago?
- But I don't understand. How could it have happened to me?
- What do you think you are, hey? Somebody too high class to meet up with a common germ? But not too high class to pick up with every Tom, Dick or Harry that...
- No, it wasn't...
- No, butter couldn't melt in his mouth, could it? Go on. Pretend to be silly. Perhaps you are silly. Perhaps I'm too big a fool to notice it but you're going to tell me what happened.
- Oh, get down.
- Get out of it. Well?
- It was like a dream. Like a nightmare. One night, while we were on holiday, Doris and me, we couldn't get into the pictures, and we met a couple of her friends. We all went for a drink together.
- You won't drink with me though.
- They say I needn't if I didn't want to. But they did so I...I had to. Then she went off with one of them. Then all I can remember is, I started laughing. And he made me laugh more and more. And then, when they shouted "Time, gentlemen, please", I thought...It sounds silly but you'd been away so long. And I thought I was in love with him. And so I...
- So that's what you do when my back is turned.
- Only that once.
- Only that once? If you tell one lie, you tell others.
- I'm not lying. Really.
- How am I gonna believe you? Ever again? What are we gonna do? What are we gonna do? I read about it somewhere. Babies are born stupid or crippled or blind or something.
- The doctor says it'll be alright if I get attended to. And you too.
- That'll be nice, won't it? Going there every week.
- He says more than once a week.
- Fun!
- And he says if we really go like he says, we'll be cured for sure.
- So he can patch us up, can he? But can he patch up our marriage?
- Mum? Hello, lad. What are you doing with that knife? Mum?
- Cutting some bread.
- I've got some news for you.
- I've had enough news for one day.
- Oh, news from the brewer's!
- Do you remember that bloke, er... I've forgotten his name, whose boy's got a harelip and his girl got that fridge prize?
- Millison. I bet you'll remember his name when it's his turn to buy a round.
- Well, his brother's got a flat in, er... What's the name of the street?
- Colwith Road, no...Now, what's the number? And where's my other slipper?
- Where you put it, I suppose. Oy! 57A.
- That's right. You got that? Well, he says if you kids nip round there right away...
- Oh, does he? Here's your chance you two.
- Three rooms, a bath and a kitchen. He's moving because he wants a garden. But you don't want a garden, hey?
- Nursery more like it.

- Strike me up a gum-tree! Oh, good luck to you. Good luck to you! By the look of things, Ken's been strewing over flowers. Have you, lad?
- No, not exactly.
- Now then, you two nip along there double quick. You'll be wanting to settle down now, you know.
- It'll be on them before they know where they are.
- I'll go. Alone.
- Ken. Wait for me."

THE END

A CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION FILM
MADE FOR THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH
WITH THE COLLABORATION OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF HEALTH
EDUCATION

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