

*at too many lunchtime sessions with prospective customers. Secondary modern school self-made sales manager with an "improved" accent. Too improved. His clothing is a little too sharp, includes a light blue denim cap. He carries a sports bag. When he first appears, he looks decidedly seedy: but seeing the other two, he braces himself and steps up breezily*

**Dennis** Afternoon skip, afternoon old boy. (*Holding up his bag*) Any chance of a knock, is there?

*Roger, his arm still around Bob, regards Dennis with a mixture of surprise and delight*

**Roger** I thought you couldn't play this week?

**Dennis** Truth is, I suddenly thought to m'self, good God, what do I want with trailing round looking at houses? So I said to her, look love, you want to look at houses, you're quite capable of looking at the bloody things by yourself. So—(*with his big smile*)—if I'm too late for a knock, fair enough, bit of umpiring, whatever you fancy.

*Roger rejects Bob and moves across to take Dennis's bag*

**Roger** How d'you fancy a knock at number three?

**Dennis** (*withdrawing his bag*) Ah. Well ...

**Roger** Five?

**Dennis** (*letting Roger take the bag now*) Anywhere you fancy, old boy, you're the guv'nor.

**Roger** Five it is then. Super. Smashing. Good old Dennis.

*Roger moves cheerfully inside, putting the bag on the floor and going to the board to strike out Bob's name and insert Dennis's. Dennis nips inside after him, popping a sweet into his mouth, a habit of his, and winking at Bob. We sense an immediate current of dislike between these two men: nothing in particular, purely instinctive*

**Dennis** What's this then?

**Roger** (*writing*) Bob can't play.

**Dennis** Oh that's a bit of bad; not like you to let the side down, Bob, old boy.

**Bob** It so happens that my wife is rather ill. Well, a bit poorly.

**Dennis** A likely story.

**Bob** (*quickly, guiltily*) Waddaya mean, a likely story?

**Dennis** I think the beautiful Virginia is giving you a bit of stick—(*with a gross wink*)—send her round to your uncle Dennis, old boy, I'll soon have her straightened out. You've got to train 'em, you know. Not only do they expect it, they like it.

**Bob** Do they, do they really.

**Dennis** Ask Rog, he's got it all nicely organized haven't you Rog?

**Roger** (*staring at the list*) What? Oh. Yes.

**Bob** Ginie is ill and five minutes ago you weren't playing either. (*He stubs out his cigarette violently into an ashtray*)

**Dennis** Don't get so aeriated, old boy—just pulling your leg, that's all, just pulling your leg. So then—what's on the agenda?