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YOUR UNFORTUNATE SERVANTS

by

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SCENE 3

**FADE IN. HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF TWENTY MEN
CRAMMED INSIDE A ROOM THAT'S TOO SMALL
FOR THEM. SQUEEZING AND STRUGGLING
THROUGH THEM, IS PRUDENCE - THE MAID OF ALL
WORK.**

**SHE BREAKS AWAY AT LAST TO WHERE THE
CHAIRMAN, PRIDE, AND HER MASTER, DAVIES,
ARE SAT.**

PRUDENCE: Should I be preparing tea, Mr Davies, sir?

BIRD: *(INTERRUPTING)* Here – are you sure you own enough cups?

DAVIES: I think we'll be alright, thank you Prudence. Perhaps one for the chairman.

PRUDENCE: Right away, sir.

PRUDENCE TOTTERS OFF BACK THROUGH THE CROWD.

DAVIES: Quiet gentlemen, quiet, please.

THE CROWD OBEDIENTLY SETTLES – A FEW COUGHS, SOME SHUFFLING.

Has everyone got somewhere to-? Well... Standing is fine.

Welcome to the fortnightly meeting of Cardiff Union's Board of Guardians. You will forgive, I hope, our unusual situation.

How many of us in attendance?

BIRD: I count eleven heads in the living room and another six in the hallway. Is it worth checking the pantry for stragglers?

DAVIES: *(IGNORING HIM)* -Present among us as usual, Chairman Mister Pride-

PRIDE: Aye.

A FEW PLEASANTRIES FROM THE CROWD 'MR CHAIRMAN'; 'GOOD MORNING SIR'.

DAVIES: And let me introduce you gentlemen to Mister Aiden Richmond, who's standing in as clerk while Martyn recovers.

SOME MORE GUARDED PLEASANTRIES; 'MORNING', 'AYE'.

BIRD: Dear me, what's Martyn got? Nothing catching, I hope.

DAVIES: I believe just a common cold; rest assured, his understudy here is quite capable and quite sanitary.

A FEW LAUGHS FROM THE CROWD. RICHMOND STARTS TO SCRIBBLE MINUTES – HE CONTINUES THROUGHOUT, BUT THE NOISE SHOULD BE FADED DOWN.

DAVIES (CONT'D): Now we have the fortnightly reports prepared, but I should think it crass of me, gentlemen, to proceed without addressing our change of scenery - an adjustment I hastened to make in the wake of... developments to this week's unfortunate...

PRIDE: Letters, aren't they?

DAVIES: The letters, chairman yes, some of us have been posted. Anonymous letters, but only this morning, Bird, I believe, was making a start deciphering the handwriting.

BIRD: *(PLAYING FOR THE CROWD)* I am indeed... come from the House with Missus John!

A WOLF-WHISTLE.

I notified her of the usual suspects – one in particular... A 'Carys Cory' by name.

A FEW KNOWING GROANS AS IF TO SAY 'TYPICAL!'

We took her aside. I'm afraid the scheming mare wouldn't let up.

PRIDE: You don't trust her?

BIRD: To say the least.

END OF EXTRACT