

*to exit when they realize their mistake. They turn the flat the correct way round, then exit not realizing that it is now upside-down.*

*Pre-show music ends with a fanfare. In the ensuing silence MRS REECE can be heard arguing with THELMA. They break off and come down to the front of the auditorium.*

**MRS REECE** Caught me on the hop. Sorry. Just one or two announcements before we begin: first of all some of you may have heard that we had a little calamity last night with the interval teas. Now we haven't as yet found out exactly who it was who misbehaved themselves in the tea urn. But we have spent all day scrubbing the thing out with Dettol. And I can assure you that there's nothing wrong with the water tonight. I passed it myself. Also I'd like to draw your attention to a change in the programme. The part of Inspector O'Reilly will not be played by Sylvia Frobisher. As you know Sylvia's not that quick on her feet, and that floodlight really did fetch her a heck of a thump on the head. But I spoke to her *au pair* this morning and apparently Sylvia has started forming sentences. Which is more than she could do when she was in the play. But with any luck she'll be up and about for the dinner dance. And stepping into the breach tonight is our stage manager Gordon Pugh. I know we're going to be behind him tonight because he hasn't acted since he played the second ox in *The Star of Bethlehem*. And finally those of you who were at this year's AGM will know that we had to cancel the traditional screening of Mrs Beasley's holiday movies due to the controversy surrounding the election of "Miss Farndale", an incident I won't elaborate on now because we don't want to open old sores. Suffice it to say that the title went *eventually* to Thelma Greenwood, our perennial leading lady. And perennial Miss Farndale. And I'm sure we all admire her diligence in demanding fourteen recounts. Even if it did mean missing the movie. Which Mrs Beasley had brought in specially. At great cost. And