

Love thy Enemy

[PATRICK and MARK enter severally, pass each other, look back, realise the other has seen them, and reluctantly go back to each other in the middle.]

PATRICK: Good hell, Mark.

MARK: Patrick! I've managed to avoid you for ages.

BOTH: I'm fine. Thanks for not asking.

PATRICK: Well, it really is a nuisance to see you again. I saw you actually across the road the other day, and I didn't shout, but you didn't see me.

MARK: *[Disappointed]* Oh, what a bit of luck.

PATRICK: You're in Brixton Road, now aren't you?

MARK: No, as a matter of fact I moved last –

PATRICK: You know, I've often passed your place, and I've thought 'I must walk on'. But I always have.

MARK: Well, you mustn't drop round some time.

[Pause]

PATRICK: Where are you working these days?

MARK: No. You.

PATRICK: I've got a cosy little nice in an internet company. Head of marketing. Just £120k a year, mustn't grumble.

MARK: Working your way down from the top? Good for you.

[Pause]

BOTH: I suppose you went somewhere tedious for your holidays? You mustn't tell me all about it.

PATRICK: Oh, I bombed down to Persepolis for a couple of months. Been thinking about it for ages, but you know how things are. Anyway, we finally managed it.

MARK: Again.

PATRICK: We all squeezed into this Land Rover.

MARK: How absolutely uncomfortable.

PATRICK: There was all the old crowd, you know, Peter and Richard and Fi and Lucie –

MARK: No, I don't know. I was very grateful Peter didn't invite me, and of course I couldn't come. But I'd loathe to hear about it some time. *[Pause]* My money only stretched as far Eastbourne this year.

PATRICK: Of course you know where you are with Eastbourne.

MARK: Yes. In Eastbourne.

PATRICK: It has that indefinable – tedium.

MARK: Yes, there's something about that part of the world, it's really so... it's so.... I don't know, I find it so.... Dull. I'd always dream of going anywhere else.

PATRICK: But at least you meet like-minded people, don't you?

MARK: No

PATRICK: I'm sure it did marvels for your bingo. *[Pause]* How's the car going? Expensive to run?

MARK: No she's flying like a bird.

PATRICK: I see. Ostrich, mm?

MARK: She's a bit heavy on oil, and in town of course she only does about 20 to the gallon, but get her on the motorway and she only needs a dribble and I can get her up to – oh, - 22 or 23 easily. Course, her big end's playing up – as who's isn't – and a couple of clutches set me back, oh and I fitted a set of those Cinturato tyres recently. So I wouldn't say she was at all expensive. On the contrary, she's quite – exorbitant.

PATRICK: You still with - ?

MARK: Your ex?

PATRICK: I can't remember his name.

MARK: Steve.

PATRICK: That's it! Steve. It's been all of two months, I can't really be expected to remember that far back. Mind you, I noticed he'd gone last Wednesday and I wondered what had happened to him.

MARK: He came to Brixton –

PATRICK: Now you mention it, he did say something about wanting to do Social Work.

MARK: Thank you so much for the present he brought from you.

PATRICK: You got it then?

MARK: The gonorrhoea? Yes thank you.

PATRICK: As a token of my longstanding aversion.

[Pause]

PATRICK: Well, I really must be escaping. I've got absolutely nothing to do this afternoon.

MARK: And I've got nobody to meet at half-past one.

PATRICK: Well, look. Why should you come round some time? Let me think, I'm busy on Fridays, Saturdays and Wednesdays.

MARK: Well, Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays are bad for me.

BOTH: Oh, and Thursdays too.

BOTH: Oh, what a relief. *[Pause]* Yes,

MARK: Well, it's been really embarrassing seeing you again, Patrick.

PATRICK: Yes indeed, buttock-clenching.

MARK: Hope not to run into you again soon.

PATRICK: I virtually never come this way, so it's very unlikely.

MARK: Good. I'll look forward to it. See you, Patrick

PATRIC: See you, Mark.

[They finish crossing the stage.]