

PIERRE. We will be alright.

IRA. You said that already.

PIERRE. Charles won't go on.

IRA. Fine.

PIERRE. Bernard is not so...

IRA. We'll find it.

PIERRE. I think...a little friendly advice, only my opinion, you are the artiste but...it's important to play a little carefully to start. One step at a time. You're always the lion. You roar and give everything. The whole performance. But they need a bit more of the...kid gloves. A little...gently to start.

IRA. Have you read the play Pierre?

PIERRE. I'm just saying, really, a suggestion... This audience, they're older, not so pliant, nervous but they will accept if we tread carefully. Give them time. Just to start – softly, softly. For me oui?

IRA. Alright. We'll reel them in gently.

PIERRE. Bien.

(A nervous silence.)

PIERRE. Do you remember the first time we came here...?
'The Red...?

IRA. 'Harlequin...

PIERRE. ...'and the Red Dwarf'.

IRA. We sat there.

PIERRE. Curtain up and...merde!

IRA. Queen Ronabellyana, the ugliest woman.

PIERRE. The shock!

IRA. No one told us she was a man...

PIERRE. They're all laughing and we're...horrified.

IRA. Don't, you'll make me laugh and I feel sick already.

PIERRE. And then, out of the blue, he just fell off the stage straight into that gentleman's lap.

IRA. Was that the moment...?

PIERRE. Skirts over his head, feet in the air, all was revealed.

IRA. I've never laughed so hard.

PIERRE. I remember you grabbed my arm, tears in your eyes – unable to speak.

IRA. Grimaldi...

PIERRE. ...a genius.

IRA. The greatest clown of them all.

(Silence.)

IRA. ...these are big shoes to fill.

PIERRE. Edmund? He's just a man.

IRA. Who acts like lightening...

PIERRE. And you are the thunder to follow.

IRA. Are we doing the right thing?

PIERRE. We'll find out soon enough.

IRA. How long since Grimaldi?

PIERRE. Six years?

IRA. Eight I think.

PIERRE. 1824.

IRA. Nine years.

PIERRE. Mon dieu. Here.

(PIERRE helps IRA on with his costume coat.)

IRA. Thank you.

PIERRE. You are every inch the moor.

(The sound of rapturous applause.)