

TALES FROM THE GOLDEN SLIPPER

BY ALAN PLATER

WITH MUSIC BY PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

17 October 2006

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TALES FROM THE GOLDEN SLIPPER

CAST LIST:

WILLIE FARQUHAR
MORAG
AL
VERA
GEORGE
IAN
MRS F
ARCHIBALD
JEANNIE
CORMACK
KEITH
McGINN
FLETT
McKAY
SARAH
RONNIE
FERGUSON (Non-speaking pianist)
SYLVIA
INGE
MARGARET
FIONA

TOURISTS
KIDS
MUSICIANS
SINGERS

St Magnus Festival 2007

Tales from the Golden Slipper

by **Alan Plater**
music by **Sir Peter Maxwell Davies**

first performed on Friday 22nd June 2007 at Orkney Arts Theatre, Kirkwall, Orkney

Director Penny Aberdein
Musical Director Glenys Hughes

Cast:

Willie Farquhar	Graham Garson
Morag	Carol Taylor
Al	Gareth Williams
Vera	Valerie Bleakley
George	Jim Chalmers
Ian	Iain Campbell
Mrs Farquhar	Naismi Flett
Sgt Archibald	Tommy Wylie
Bertha Cheyne	Shona Ritch
Chief Const. Cheyne	David Fidler
Sheriff Keith	Chris Matthews
Fiscal McGinn	Sandra Ballantine
Defence counsel	Gill Smee
Clerk of the Court	Geraldine Davies
McKay	Aidan Artymiuk
Sarah	Kirstin Fairnie
Ronnie	Matthias McGregor
Sylvia	Cally Bevan
Inge	Phyllis Brown
Margaret	Joey Tait
Fiona	Valerie Bleakley
Ivy	Jessica Flett
Hilda	Zoe Matthews

Musicians:

Fiddle	Kristan Harvey
Flute	David Griffith
Accordion	Kenny Ritch
Piano	Iain Campbell

Set design Leslie Burgher

Stage management: **Jude Barnes**
Phil Mackay
Margaret Sutherland

Lighting Chris Giles

Costumes Sarah Wallhead
Jane Harcus

Prompt Cynthia Chaddock

TALES FROM THE GOLDEN SLIPPER

Outside the Golden Slipper.

A group of KIDS enjoying a skipping game. As they do so they sing:

SONG: Wee Willie Farquhar
 Walks through the toon
 He's just out of bed
 Though it's afternoon
 Wee Willie Farquhar
 Looks you in the eye
 Sees if you are fat enough
 To bake in a pie

WILLIE comes out of the cottage. He wears a cap, a greasy apron and looks like a toby jug. He picks up the song.

WILLIE: Wee Willie Farquhar
 That's who I am
 Always ready with a smile
 And a peedie dram

He looks into the distance, reacts.

WILLIE: Everybody take cover! Here come the tourists!

WILLIE and the KIDS exit.

MORAG, a local tourist guide, enters, leading a group of TOURISTS through the audience and on to the stage. She's carrying a yellow parasol or some equivalent item so they know which direction to walk. The TOURISTS carry too many cameras and stop to take photographs of each other. The men wear inappropriate baseball hats.

They can be of any nationality but let's make the main speaking parts American in the cause of easy laughter. They are AL, who might or might not be big, and VERA.

MORAG: Now, before we move on to the many joys of leisure shopping in the picturesque main street of old Stromness, I would like to show you the Golden Slipper.

AL: Lady, I see no gold and I see no slipper.

MORAG: This is the site of the most famous night club in all of the islands.

VERA: It's a house.

MORAG: To be sure, it is a house.

AL: And with the greatest of respect, this is no night club. I have been to Vegas. I have seen Sir Tom Jones and Lord Elton John at The Sands and Caesar's Palace. I am not persuaded of the veracity of your claim.

VERA: And we'd rather go shopping. The girls and I have to buy our souvenirs of Shetland.

MORAG: Orkney.

VERA: Orkney?

AL: Shetland was Tuesday.

VERA: But they're all islands, right?

MORAG: Yes, they are all islands.

VERA: No offence, ma'am, but I am up to here with islands...

MORAG senses discontent in the ranks.

MORAG: Those of you who would prefer to go shopping for your souvenirs of Orkney might prefer to return to the bus, but those of you who would like to know the story of The Golden Slipper...

She breaks off as they all leave, apart from AL.

N.B. The actors playing the tourists will return playing assorted characters as the story unfolds.

Out of the silence:

AL: Looks like it's you and me against the world, lady.

MORAG: Trust me, we shall overcome.

AL: Will there be much in the way of photo opportunities?

MORAG: This is not a story for a camera lens. This is a story for the eyes, the ears and the soul.

AL: O.K. so I put the camera away.

Which he does.

MORAG: Imagine a summer evening sometime in the 1950s.

WILLIE emerges.

WILLIE: And The Golden Slipper is open for business.

The walls of the club open out to reveal the interior of the club.

It's an old-fashioned domestic interior: a fireplace with a kettle on the hob and a stove to keep the pies warm: a table and chairs: a mantelpiece with a clock, the hands permanently stuck at ten past five: an upright piano; and one or two mysterious boxes and packing cases.

It might also be noted that cleanliness is not high on the list of priorities.

That's the setting. But what's happening?

Well, a FIDDLER plays a traditional reel or jig. Some of the younger folk present are dancing - as many as our stage area can comfortably accommodate. Among those looking on are GEORGE, a poet, and IAN, a painter.

The music and the dancing come to an end. There's a round of applause then, on top of that sound, the blast of a police whistle.

Reactions all round.

WILLIE: Oh dear.

GEORGE: Was that a police whistle?

IAN: Well in my experience there are very few football matches played after midnight, even on the bright nights of an Orkney summer.

SGT ARCHIBALD enters.

WILLIE: So. Not a football match then?

ARCHIBALD: No, Willie, not a football match.

MRS F, WILLIE'S mother, arrives on the scene with a mug of tea.

MRS F: Will you take a cup of tea, constable?

ARCHIBALD: Sergeant. Sergeant Archibald.

MRS F: Will you take a cup of tea regardless of your rank?

ARCHIBALD: No, I will not.

MRS F: Sergeant Archibald? Now then, here is a question. Do you know Mansie Anderson of Birsay?

ARCHIBALD: I can't say that I do.

MRS F: Well, he doesn't know you either.

Which provokes laughter from those present who realise she's winding him up.

ARCHIBALD: And here is another question. Are you all drinking tea from those mugs?

IAN and GEORGE examine their mugs.

IAN: Unquestionably.

GEORGE: Typhoo, as I live and breathe.

IAN: Grown on the Assam plains unless I'm very much mistaken.

ARCHIBALD: So why can I smell whisky?

They all sniff the air.

WILLIE: It often happens when the wind is blowing from the direction of Kirkwall. Doesn't it boys?

IAN: Indeed it does. A strange phenomenon.

GEORGE: Something similar was observed in the days of St Magnus.

ARCHIBALD: This has nothing to do with Magnus!

IAN: Try telling a poet that.

ARCHIBALD: It has been reported to us that whisky is regularly consumed on these premises.

GEORGE: As it is on my premises.

IAN: And mine.

MRS F: And ours, when we are entertaining.

ARCHIBALD: Consumed, having first been paid for.

WILLIE: Oh I see. It has been reported to you that I sell whisky to the many friends who call on me here...

ARCHIBALD: Exactly that.

A pause. WILLIE is shocked.

WILLIE: But that would be illegal!

MRS F: *(Indicating WILLIE)* The very idea! Do you think I would allow my son to behave in such a manner?

GEORGE: *(Indicating IAN)* My friend is a respected artist and teacher. Would he be party to such an illicit transaction?

IAN: *(Indicating GEORGE)* And my friend is an eminent poet and historian. Are you honestly suggesting that he would participate in a criminal activity?

ARCHIBALD: Of course I am. According to everything I've been told the fact that you two are here is almost a guarantee of mischief.

GEORGE gets up to - so to speak -address the court.

GEORGE: But as the eminent English author, Miss Agatha Christie might say, you are overlooking one vital fact, inspector.

ARCHIBALD: Sergeant.

IAN: He's a poet.

ARCHIBALD: What vital fact might that be?

GEORGE: The presence in the room of that young woman!

With a flourish as he points to JEANNIE CORMACK, one of the dancers seen earlier.

GEORGE: Tell the sergeant your name.

JEANNIE: Jeannie Cormack.

ARCHIBALD: Cormack?

The name obviously has significance for him.

GEORGE: Tell the sergeant what your father does for a living.

JEANNIE: He's the chief constable.

ARCHIBALD: Ah. That Cormack.

There's a silence then:

MRS F: Will you take a pie before you leave?

ARCHIBALD: Thank you, no. I'll bid you...(Checks watch)...good morning.

IAN: Is it morning already?

ARCHIBALD: Yes. Twenty past one in the morning to be precise.

GEORGE: The clock says ten past five.

WILLIE: It always says ten past five. It's broken.

JEANNIE: How do you know what time it is?

MRS F: That's easy, dear. Eventually someone always says: My goodness, is that the time? And we say: what time is it? And they tell us and thus we always know what time it is.

WILLIE: You're still here, sergeant. Have you changed your mind about the pie?

ARCHIBALD: I certainly have not changed my mind. Neither about the pie nor about you, Willie Farquhar!

ARCHIBALD leaves.

WILLIE: Thank you Jeannie.

JEANNIE: All I did was tell the truth.

MRS F: Will you take a pie?

JEANNIE: Thank you, Mrs Farquhar.

MRS F: And it really is time you young folk were on your way home. Perhaps you'd all like a pie to help you on your way.

MRS F gives pies to JEANNIE and the young people as they leave.

We switch focus to MORAG and AL who have witnessed all this from one side of the action.

AL: So this guy was running a shebeen?

MORAG: According to the rumours circulating at the time. And when the case went to court a newspaper called Willie the Al Capone of Orkney.

AL: Hey...that's my name!

MORAG: Capone?

AL: No. Al.

MORAG: I do beg your pardon.

AL: So what's with this going to court? Let's cut to the chase.

MORAG: You must be patient. Life on our islands unfolds gently at its own chosen speed.

AL: I'm beginning to get that idea.

MORAG: It's another night at The Golden Slipper. Ten years have passed by though you wouldn't realise it at first glance.

WILLIE, GEORGE and IAN are sharing a dram, poured by WILLIE into the mugs they've been using throughout.

AL: Where's the old lady?

MORAG: Ah, Willie's mother has moved on to the great Golden Slipper in the sky.

AL: Rest her soul.

MORAG: Now pay attention. We are indeed about to cut to the chase.

They watch as the story unfolds.

WILLIE: Here's a toast to my new special arrangement.

IAN: What special arrangement?

WILLIE: Mr Cormack, the chief constable, frequently calls in for a nice cup of tea of a cold morning or a chilly evening.

GEORGE: There's nothing more warming than a nice cup of tea. This is the very proof.

He sips from his mug.

IAN: The hundred per cent proof, you might say.

WILLIE: If his tie is unfastened, his visit is deemed by both parties to be informal.

GEORGE: And if his tie is fastened?

WILLIE: He is here in an official capacity. And I give him a nice cup of tea.

Meaning: tea.

IAN: As opposed to tea.

Indicating the tea in his cup.

WILLIE: It's a very civilised arrangement.

At which point there's a knock at the door.

WILLIE goes to answer it. He returns with CORMACK, the Chief Constable, and ARCHIBALD.

WILLIE: Imagine. We were talking about Mr Cormack, were we not, and here he is.

IAN: Imagine.

WILLIE: And that's a very nice tie you're wearing.

GEORGE: We were having a cup of tea.

IAN: Would you like to join us?

CORMACK: No, I would not.

WILLIE: Perhaps you would hazard a pie?

CORMACK: This is an official visit, Willie.

WILLIE: I though as much. How official would that be?

CORMACK brings out a search warrant.

CORMACK: Have you seen a search warrant before?

WILLIE: I do believe I have.

CORMACK: Well here is another one.

CORMACK hands it over.

WILLIE: And very nice it is too.

He looks at it admiringly then passes it to IAN.

IAN: Indeed it is.

He passes it to GEORGE.

GEORGE: The prose leaves something to be desired but the meaning is clear and that is something these days.

He returns it to CORMACK.

WILLIE: Then you must do your duty.

CORMACK: Sergeant.

ARCHIBALD goes about searching the premises.

CORMACK: I think you know Sergeant Archibald.

WILLIE: Oh yes. He has paid me many a visit over the years and is always made welcome.

WILLIE, IAN and GEORGE remain phlegmatic about the situation.

WILLIE: I suppose justice must be done...

GEORGE: And be seen to be done...

IAN: This is not justice. This is the law which, as we all know, is no more than a tool of a capitalist society.

GEORGE: *(To CORMACK)* My friend is a socialist firebrand.

CORMACK: I would have made an educated guess to that effect.

IAN: *(To CORMACK)* And you, Mr Cormack, are a paid lackey of that corrupt society.

Meanwhile ARCHIBALD has gone into a back room. He pops his head through the door.

ARCHIBALD: Sir. There's something here you should see.

CORMACK exits into the back room with ARCHIBALD.

WILLIE: Well boys, do you suppose the game is up?

GEORGE: Oh no, the game is only just beginning.

GEORGE and IAN exit.

The KIDS return and sing.

SONG: Wee Willie Farquhar
Caught by the cops
For sharing the wine
Of the grain and the hops
Wee Willie Farquhar
Home to the folk
Who love late nights
With a song and a joke

WILLIE: Wee Willie Farquhar
Everybody's friend
No need to worry
I'll win in the end

By which time the Golden Slipper has been transformed into a courtroom, but using the same furniture.

The key characters are KEITH, the Sheriff; McGINN, the Fiscal; and FLETT, the lawyer acting for Willie. All three were men but depending on the exigencies of casting we might take liberties with history, much as we are everywhere else...

We also have as many spectators as the stage will accommodate, some of whom will become part of the action as the story unfolds.

MORAG and AL look on.

AL: Who are all these people?

MORAG: We have the Sheriff.

As KEITH bangs a gavel to bring the court to order.

AL: We're talking Clint Eastwood or John Wayne, right?

MORAG: No, not a Wild West Sheriff but a calm and collected Northern Sheriff. And over there is the Procurator Fiscal.

As McGINN stands up.

AL: What in God's name is a Procurator Fiscal?

MORAG: You would probably say District Attorney. And on the other side is Willie's defence counsel.

AL: And they were all women?

MORAG: Historically speaking, no. The way I tell the story, yes.

KEITH bangs the gavel again.

AL and MORAG settle down to observe.

KEITH: I will ask the Fiscal to tell us why we are here.

McGINN takes centre-stage.

McGINN: Mr Farquhar is charged with selling excisable liquor without holding a certificate.

WILLIE: Ah but we have a licence.

KEITH: You have a licence?

WILLIE: Indeed yes.

KEITH: Have you brought this licence to court?

WILLIE: Unfortunately it has been lost.

KEITH: Can anybody clarify this situation? Is there or has there ever been a licence? And if so, what kind of licence are we talking about?

FLETT stands up.

FLETT: I think, with the court's permission, I can elucidate.

KEITH: You are acting for Mr Farquhar?

FLETT: I am.

KEITH: Tell us about this licence.

FLETT: Mr Farquhar is, by trade, a cobbler.

KEITH: A cobbler.

WILLIE: Why else would I be wearing a cobbler's apron?

KEITH: Quite so.

FLETT: He moved into the premises now popularly known as The Golden Slipper in the 1930s, where he set up a workshop mending boots and shoes.

KEITH: Are we talking, therefore, about a cobbler's licence?

WILLIE: A cobbler's licence! Is there such a thing? If there is I'm in even greater jeopardy than I thought.

KEITH: As a matter of interest, when did you last cobble?

WILLIE: I think it was a Thursday. In 1938.

KEITH: Yet you still wear the cobbler's apron?

WILLIE: A man should always be prepared.

KEITH: Of course. *(To FLETT)* Please continue...

FLETT: In the 1930s the cobbler's shop became a popular meeting place in the evening and men

would stop here for a smoke and a yarn before going home from work. At that point Mr Farquhar's mother obtained a licence for the sale of tobacco, sweets and lemonade.

KEITH: And this is the licence we are talking about?

FLETT: It is.

McGINN: And is this the defence that Mr Farquhar is to offer the court? That a licence to sell sweets and lemonade granted to his mother thirty years ago somehow gives him the legal right to sell intoxicating liquor in the here and now? A licence which, in any case, cannot be produced and may well exist only in his imagination?

WILLIE: I have a great deal of faith in my imagination.

KEITH: What happens in your imagination, Mr Farquhar, is not the concern of this court.

WILLIE: But I didn't imagine the bomb.

WILLIE addresses the audience.

WILLIE: It's all the fault of Adolf Hitler.

And he sings:

WILLIE: Wee Willie Farquhar
 Stood at his door
 Staring at the water
 Early in the war
 Along came a German
 With a tale to tell
 Dropped a bomb and blew me
 Halfway to Hell.

The sound of an aeroplane and a loud explosion.

WILLIE falls to the floor.

FLETT continues the story, as if addressing the court.

FLETT: The bomb fell in March 1940. It destroyed a neighbour's house and killed a young man, John Isbister.

MORAG: *(To AL)* He was the first civilian casualty of the Second World War.

AL: Is that right?

MORAG: A fact frequently overlooked by military historians.

AL: Would they be English historians?

MORAG: Excellent. We'll make an Orcadian of you yet.

FLETT continues his story.

FLETT: Mr Farquhar was wounded by shrapnel and required thirty-eight stitches. But he recovered quickly...

WILLIE gets up.

FLETT: ...and with commendable patriotism threw open his doors to the servicemen who had now arrived in Orkney in their thousands.

Now we're back in The Golden Slipper.

WILLIE and MRS F stand by the door as a group of assorted SERVICEMEN and WOMEN, plus one or two locals, arrive at the club.

WILLIE: Come in boys, come in girls.

MRS F: Will you take some tea? Coffee? Or maybe a pie?

A soldier - a mainland Scot, maybe closely resembling SGT McKAY from BARRIERS? - asks a pertinent question.

McKAY: Is it possible you might be able to offer a man something a little stronger?

WILLIE: It is just possible.

He disappears into the back room.

McKAY: I have to say it was something of a shock for His Majesty's armed forces to discover Stromness is a dry town.

MRS F: It has been that way since 1922.

McKAY: The power of the kirk, no doubt.

MRS F: They move in mysterious ways.

WILLIE returns clutching a bottle.

WILLIE: But so do we.

He pours drinks into a number of mugs. Among the recipients are GEORGE and IAN.

WILLIE: Do you realise that in the year 1840 the town of Stromness had thirty-eight drinking houses?

MRS F: He knows all their names and can recite them in alphabetical order when the mood is upon him.

GEORGE: Thirty-eight? Is that not remarkable? The number of lost drinking houses in Stromness is the same as the number of stitches Willie required for his wounds?

IAN: It's not at all remarkable. It's a coincidence, no more, no less.

McKAY: Do they often go on like this?

WILLIE: Oh yes.

MRS F: Especially those two.

WILLIE: People need a place to argue without fear or favour. To tell their stories and sing their songs. I see it as my sacred responsibility to provide such a place.

McKAY: You make it sound like a religious calling.

MRS F: Willie is an elder of the kirk.

McKAY: The same kirk that decrees no drinking in the town?

WILLIE: My feelings are well known to my brothers and sisters at the kirk. But I am generally outvoted on the matter of alcohol.

He looks around as his visitors settle around the place.

WILLIE: Now where have you all been tonight?

McKAY: Some of us have been to the pictures.

SARAH: And some of us have been to the dance.

SARAH is a local girl, who seems to have made friends with a young SAILOR called RONNIE, who's English, preferably with an accent - Geordie, Yorkshire, even Cockney...

MRS F: And was it a good dance?

RONNIE: Bloody awful.

WILLIE and MRS F close in on him. They are not pleased.

WILLIE: It must be clearly understood, young man, that blasphemy and swearing are strictly forbidden on these premises.

MRS F: You will be asked to leave.

RONNIE: But you just told us it was open house. Anything goes.

MRS F: Then you were not paying proper attention.

GEORGE: We have a licence to discuss any matter of concern to the human race.

IAN: The treachery of the ruling classes.

GEORGE: The heritage of our Nordic ancestors.

WILLIE: But without profanity.

SARAH: I'm sure he can do it if he really tries.

McKAY: He'll do it. I give my personal guarantee.

RONNIE: Does an army sergeant outrank an ordinary seaman?

McKAY: I've drunk in bars across all five continents and never been outranked in any of them.

GEORGE: I can believe that.

MRS F: So tell us again...was it a good dance?

RONNIE: It was...unusual.

IAN: In what way unusual?

RONNIE: Well for a start, the band...

WILLIE: What band would that be?

RONNIE: No idea. Sarah says it was a bunch of blokes from the village.

SARAH: Ernie Marwick and his friends.

RONNIE: It was all fiddles and accordions.

GEORGE: And what is wrong with fiddles and accordions?

RONNIE: I've never heard nothing like it before.

IAN: Ignoring the double negative, isn't it a good thing to hear some different music? Enjoy a new experience? Expand your horizons?

RONNIE: Sorry, pal, don't know what you mean.

IAN: How can we hope to raise the consciousness of the proletariat if a simple musical discussion is beyond them?

MRS F: But would you not agree that fiddles and accordions play many of the same notes as the instruments that you prefer?

RONNIE: That's all very well but...well, they just didn't swing.

WILLIE: Swing?

RONNIE: Yes, that's right, they didn't swing.

McKAY: It was a dance, not a public execution.

SARAH: Ronnie likes American music. Glenn Miller, Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra.

RONNIE: The sort of stuff you hear on the wireless.

MRS F: But we are not the wireless.

IAN: It's all part of the capitalist conspiracy.

GEORGE: Do you know, I thought it might be.

IAN: The Americans would like to impose everything on us. Their moving pictures, their music, their food. It's cultural imperialism. Though of course, the English did it first.

RONNIE: What did we do?

IAN: You made us speak your language.

GEORGE: But we take our revenge by speaking it better than our teachers.

RONNIE, under siege, looks around helplessly.

RONNIE: I just said...I wasn't all that keen on the band.

McKAY: Dangerous words when you're North of the border.

SARAH: And you liked one or two of the songs, didn't you?

RONNIE: Yes, I suppose...

MRS F: (To SARAH) Sing us one of the songs, dear.

RONNIE: (To SARAH) Do you sing?

SARAH: Of course. Doesn't everybody?

RONNIE: Not where I live, they don't.

WILLIE: When you go home you must teach them better habits.

*Music starts. It would be good, if we have room on the stage, to replicate the Ernie Marwick sound.
Fiddle, accordion, double-bass, piano?*

The words feel like they're in three/four time but I never argue with composers because I generally lose.

*And without getting too arty about it, the intention is something that's halfway between a 1940s pop song
and traditional folk.*

SARAH: (Sings)
I met a boy with flaxen(raven) hair
All fresh of face and debonair
A sailor boy with skin so fair
From Finisterre

He wanted me to be his bride
And stand forever at his side
But he was sailing on the tide
To Finisterre

RONNIE, with a little encouragement, sings the next verse.

RONNIE: My ship is anchored in the flow
But on the morrow I must go
To battle with the foreign foe
Off Finisterre

SARAH: I watched the ship sail outward bound
It journeyed on past Plymouth Sound
Its destiny to run aground
Past Finisterre

And now my boy lies fathoms deep
At peace in the eternal sleep
While I am left alone to weep
Of Finisterre

But in my dreams his face I see
The boy who sang his song to me
And he'll be waiting there for me
In Finisterre

The song ends.

MRS F: My my, but that's a very sad song.

IAN: We live in sad times.

WILLIE: (To RONNIE) You're not from Finisterre, are you, young man?

RONNIE: No, I'm from Walthamstow.

McKAY: Never mind, son, everybody has to come from somewhere.

RONNIE: But I've sailed off Finisterre. It's a nice name, isn't it? Sort of romantic?

GEORGE: We'll make a poet of you yet.

IAN: The word Finisterre means the end of the earth.

McKAY: According to some of my men, Orkney is the end of the earth.

GEORGE: On the contrary, for us, Orkney is the beginning of the earth.

IAN: Armageddon. That's the end of the earth. And we're well on the way.

GEORGE: As the forces of capitalism cross swords upon the battlefield?

IAN: You noticed.

At which point KEITH bangs his gavel again.

KEITH: May I remind everyone this is a court of justice and we are gathered together to decide whether or not Mr Farquhar has broken the law.

WILLIE: I apologise to the court, but my friends, they do go on so.

KEITH: Their tongues lubricated by liquor no doubt.

WILLIE: Hardly ever, except perhaps at New Year.

KEITH refers to notes.

KEITH: We have heard that during the war you ran open house for the service people stationed on the islands, and that does you great credit.

WILLIE: Thank you.

KEITH: But you must be aware that the war ended in 1945?

WILLIE: To be sure, I read about it in The Orcadian. And there was great rejoicing.

KEITH: Rejoicing which seems to have continued for almost twenty years until the present day.

WILLIE: There is never any shortage of things to rejoice about.

(KEITH: Perhaps you'd like to give the court examples of these...things.

WILLIE) When our fishermen make a good catch. When our farmers have a good harvest. When one of our local friends wins a ploughing match. When my friend George publishes a book of his poems. When my friend Ian paints a picture. When Scotland wins a football match. When...

KEITH: (*Breaks in:*) How long a list is this likely to be?

WILLIE: I suppose it is...thirty years long.

KEITH: And these celebrations require the sale of whisky?

WILLIE: No. But they sometimes require the drinking of whisky. In the interest of good fellowship.

KEITH: (Mr McGinn.) I think we should hear what happened the night the police conducted their search of the Mr Farquhar's premises.

McGINN: As you wish. The Chief Constable, accompanied by Sergeant Archibald, searched the property popularly known as The Golden Slipper on February 1st. Sergeant, perhaps you would tell us what happened.

ARCHIBALD, so to speak, takes the stand, though we obviously don't have to observe proper legal procedures.

ARCHIBALD: In a back room I found a case containing several bottles of whisky. Mr Farquhar told me he thought there might be some in his son's bedroom and indeed there was. He then assured me that was all the whisky on his premises.

WILLIE: And it was.

ARCHIBALD: Apart from the outhouse.

KEITH: The outhouse?

ARCHIBALD: In the outhouse I found another crate of whisky.

KEITH: And how did Mr Farquhar explain the presence of a crate of whisky in the outhouse?

ARCHIBALD consults his notebook.

ARCHIBALD: He said...I must have forgotten about it.

WILLIE: It happens as you get older.

KEITH: Would you be good enough to tell the court the sum total of what you found?

ARCHIBALD: I found twenty-one bottles of whisky, unopened, four partly filled, three pint bottles of beer and a gill of rum, partly empty. I also found sixteen drinking glasses, seventeen empty whisky bottles and thirty-nine other empty bottles of various kinds.

KEITH makes a note.

KEITH: If we ignore the full bottles for the moment, I calculate that is a total of fifty-six empty bottles on the premises. That seems a very large number of empty bottles by any standards, Mr Farquhar.

WILLIE: People come to visit, they bring a peedie drink with them, the contents are consumed and they leave the empty bottle. I suppose that makes us guilty of untidiness but that, I think, is not an offence in law.

KEITH: These people who visit, bringing their bottles, they no doubt do so in the course of special rejoicing...

WILLIE: Generally, yes...

KEITH: Victory in the ploughing matches and so on...

WILLIE: And many other events. The summer solstice, the birthday of blessed St Magnus, the annual visit of the piano tuner...

Which stops KEITH in his tracks.

- (KEITH: I'm sorry...you did say the annual visit of the piano tuner?
 WILLIE: Yes. But only because that is the event I was referring to.)
 KEITH: We may well live to regret this but...would you enlighten us about the piano tuner?
 WILLIE: I'm happy to do so in the interests of justice.
 KEITH: Tell your tale and I will decide whether it is in the interests of justice.
 WILLIE: Of course you will.

Now we move back to The Golden Slipper.

- WILLIE: We are a musical race and across our islands there are many pianos. But no piano tuners.

FERGUSON enters, sits down at the piano and starts to play. I don't know what he plays. Farewell to Stromness?

This continues behind WILLIE'S speech.

- WILLIE: So once a year a piano tuner sails from mainland Scotland and travels the islands tuning our pianos.
 KEITH: Including yours?
 WILLIE: Oh yes. (Music must be kept in a good state of repair.) We have had many fine piano tuners over the years but Mr Ferguson, a Cowdenbeath man, comes to mind.

FERGUSON smiles an acknowledgement.

- WILLIE: Because he was the agent of many extraordinary discoveries.

FERGUSON finishes the piece, stands up, lifts the lid of the piano stool.

- WILLIE: Having completed his work he would look in the piano stool for a suitable piece to play as an encore. And you would not believe the family secrets that hide in a piano stool.

FERGUSON finds a photograph and hands it to SYLVIA, one of a trio of women - any age, it doesn't matter - now sitting in the room. The other two are called INGE and MARGARET.

Needless to say, GEORGE and IAN are still present. They're eternal.

- SYLVIA: Will you look at this photograph?
 INGE: Where did you find it?
 SYLVIA: Mr Ferguson found it in the piano stool.
 MARGARET: And who are the people in it?
 SYLVIA: Well the man is my grandfather.
 INGE: Would that be grandfather Corrigan?

SYLVIA: No, it's grandfather Linklater.

Clearly this has significance to MARGARET but not to INGE.

MARGARET: Is he the one who...?

SYLVIA: Yes, that's the one.

INGE: The one who what?

SYLVIA: The one who had another woman in Hobart in Tasmania.

MARGARET: He went to sea, of course.

INGE: Well I suppose that would make it easier.

MARGARET: But this doesn't look like Hobart in Tasmania.

SYLVIE: It isn't. On the back it says Bear Island.

INGE: Bear Island?

SYLVIA: It's in Canada. Before he went to sea, grandfather Linklater worked for the Hudson's Bay company.

INGE: In Canada?

SYVLIA: In Canada.

INGE: So who is the woman in the photograph?

SYLVIA: We think she must have been another other woman.

INGE: Another other woman? My my.

MARGARET: But not only that...look more closely...

They all look more closely.

MARGARET: We think...

SYLVIA: We are sure...

INGE: Pregnant?

MARGARET: Pregnant.

SYLVIA: I went to the library and apparently Bear Island is in Northern Ontario. And there you will find the chief of the Ojibway tribe of Canadian Indians.

INGE: So the other other woman was Ojibway?

SYLVIA: Seemingly. And it's possible that somewhere in Northern Ontario I have Ojibway cousins.

INGE: Do we know her name?

The men leap in, showing off, as men sometimes do.

IAN: It must be Minnehaha.
 GEORGE: Definitely Pocahontas.
 IAN: Or possibly Nokomis.
 SYLVIA: You're both wrong. She was called Mary.

She shows the men the photograph.

SYLVIA: It's written on the back.
 IAN: Poor lassie. Corrupted by the missionaries.
 GEORGE: Better than being corrupted by Karl Marx.
 MARGARET: And all because Mr Ferguson opened a piano stool.

FERGUSON plays another piece on the piano as WILLIE charges the mugs.

WILLIE: We should drink a toast to your long-lost family.
 GEORGE: To Mary and the tribes thereof.
 IAN: To the Orcadian and Ojibway tribes everywhere - may they always set an example to the nations of the world in how to live in peace and harmony.
 WILLIE: Hold your tongue, comrade. This is a toast not a general election.
 IAN: I stand rebuked.
 GEORGE: It's remarkable you can stand at all at this hour of the night.

They drink the toast.

FERGUSON finishes his piece and again opens the piano stool.

He finds a tattered sheet of paper - or possibly more - and hands them to INGE.

INGE: There now. Look what Mr Ferguson found in my piano stool.

She shows it to the others.

MARGARET: It looks like a poem.
 INGE: That is what I thought.
 WILLIE: We need a real-life poet to adjudicate.

They show it to GEORGE.

GEORGE: Oh yes, undoubtedly a poem. Written, if I'm any judge, in rhyming couplets.
 IAN: I think we should hear this poem.
 WILLIE: A few verses of an evening, they freshen a man no end.

INGE takes the poem and reads:

INGE: Lines written on the scuttling of the German Fleet in Scapa Flow in the year of 1919.
By William McGonagall, poet and tragedian.

IAN: McGonagall? Wasn't he from the mainland?

WILLIE: But he spent his childhood in Orkney.

GEORGE: This is obviously from his early period.

MARGARET: Hush your mouths and listen.

INGE: *(Recites)*
In nineteen-nineteen on midsummer's day
The German fleet lay in the bay
Known to all and sundry as Scapa Flow
But soon those ships were eighty feet below
The order given by Admiral Ludwig von Reuter
To scuttle quickly, no time to loiter
The ships that sank were in number fifty-two
Their scuppers opened by the crew
And others they were run aground
Or otherwise beached around the sound
Their names will live on in infamy
Too many to list in their entirety
But here is an edited selection
Of the Teutonic ironclad collection
The Kronprinz Wilhelm and the Kaiser
The Seydlitz are all now sadder but not wiser

INGE: *(Contd.)*
The Derflinger and Von Der Tann
Are well and truly sunk and gone
The Hindenburg, Bayern and Brummer
All scuttled on this day in summer
The Dresden, Emden and the Baden
Deprived for ever of the Kaiser's pardon
And there they lie for all eternity
To teach mankind 'tis better to live in peace
and fraternity

She takes a bow and FERGUSON adds a suitable flourish on the piano.

MARGARET: That was terrible.

GEORGE: I understand the received wisdom in literary circles is that McGonagall was so bad he was good. His work apparently requires an ironic ear, one that has spent too much time in London, preferably in Bloomsbury.

IAN: And we know it must have been an early work.

SYLVIA: The men, not for the first time, are talking arrant nonsense.

WILLIE: Men? Talking nonsense? The very idea.

SYLVIA: When I visited to library to find out about the Ojibway tribe, I also found out about William McGonagall. The man died in 1902, seventeen years before the Germans scuttled their fleet.

IAN: Obviously a poet of great vision.

SYLVIA: And the time he spent in Orkney was probably in the 1840s.

GEORGE: Poets see into the future. (The unacknowledged legislators of the world.)

INGE: Says who?

GEORGE: Shelley.

SYLVIA: Poets are liars.

IAN: All of them?

SYLVIA: The vast majority.

GEORGE: Including Shelley?

SYLVIA: I never met the man so I couldn't say.

MARGARET: But it's a very fair bet.

IAN: These are serious accusations. I am no lover of poets myself. They are generally the last to join the revolution and the first to betray it, but you should support your claim.)

SYLVIA: We are asked to believe that the boy McGonagall, living in Orkney, not only predicted the scuttling of the German fleet, an event that happened many years after his death, but also knew the names of the ships...

GEORGE: He was a visionary. Deluded but a visionary...

SYLVIA: A visionary who wrote his poem with a cheap ball-point pen?

She passes the poem around for everyone to examine.

IAN: Wasn't he something of an inventor too?

WILLIE: So who did write the poem?

Now the three women close in on GEORGE.

SYLVIA: We suspect it's the work of a local man. Probably a poet of sorts and a mischief-maker, without a proper job and with too much time on his hands.

MARGARET: A man who would happily waste time writing such doggerel and then secrete it in the nearest convenient piano stool prior to Mr Ferguson's visit.

INGE: Probably by calling in for a neighbourly cup of tea around that time.

SYLVIA: (To GEORGE) Can you think of a man who matches that description?

GEORGE shuffles a little then:

GEORGE: (To MARGARET) And what did Mr Ferguson find in your piano stool?

FERGUSON plays a little fragment: this time a touch spiritual - Abide with Me?

Then he stands up, opens the piano stool, takes out an envelope, gives it to MARGARET.

MARGARET takes it, opens it, peers inside, then shows it to WILLIE, GEORGE and IAN.

MARGARET: You may look inside but you may not touch.

The men gather round to examine the mysterious item.

GEORGE: What is it?

MARGARET: What does it look like?

IAN: It looks like a piece of metal.

MARGARET: It is indeed a piece of metal.

WILLIE: Why should we get excited about a piece of metal? My outhouse is full of such rubbish.

(IAN: Not to mention the crates of whisky?

WILLIE: Crates of whisky? I have no idea what you're talking about.)

GEORGE: Tell us about this piece of metal.

MARGARET: It was discovered by my great-grandfather.

IAN: Ah! An old piece of metal.

MARGARET: Older than you might suspect.

GEORGE: The age of the metal is obviously of some import.

MARGARET: If I may...?

She holds out her hand for them to return the envelope to her. They do so.

MARGARET: My great-grandfather worked in the building trade. One day in 1863 he was digging a trench in Kirkwall somewhere near the Bishops Palace. He found some fragments of metal. He thought they seemed very ancient so he showed them to a local schoolteacher, who showed them to a local historian, who showed them to a local clergyman. They came to the conclusion that these were fragments of the axe used to kill the blessed St. Magnus. But my great-grandfather kept this one piece for himself. After all, he it was who dug the trench.

GEORGE: You are telling us this is a holy relic?

MARGARET: This is a holy relic.

This renders them silent - an unusual event.

AL and MORAG react.

AL: Who is this guy Magnus?

MORAG: It's fully documented in the visitors' guide to the islands.

AL: Lady, I have more guidebooks than the Arctic has penguins.

MORAG: There are no penguins in the Arctic.

AL: O.K. delete Arctic, insert Central Park Zoo and tell me about Magnus.

MORAG: O.K.

Which cause AL to raise an eyebrow.

MORAG: In the twelfth century the islands were ruled by Norway. There were two Earls of Orkney.

AL: Power-sharing? That makes me nervous.

MORAG: Exactly. Magnus was, as you might say, the good guy. The other one, Haakon, was the bad guy.

AL: I thought all Norwegians were nice? Like Canadians?

MORAG: Not Haakon. In 1115 A.D. The two men arranged a meeting. A peace conference.

AL: Ho hum. Bound to end in tears.

MORAG: Haakon ordered his standard-bearer to kill Magnus but he was an honourable man and he refused. Instead the deed was done by Haakon's cook. He killed Magnus with an axe.

AL: A hatchet man, so to speak.

MORAG: Quite so.

(AL: Probably thinking about his pension rights.

MORAG: And his own neck.)

AL: But Magnus winds up with his own cathedral.

MORAG: Again as you might say, Al, that's how the cookie crumbles.

And we cut back to The Golden Slipper, where GEORGE and IAN are in full flow.

IAN: Magnus was a woolly-minded liberal who got what was coming to him.

GEORGE: I never heard such nonsense, even from you.

IAN: But we've always been suckers for woolly-minded liberals in the islands. We elect them to the British parliament with great regularity.

GEORGE: Magnus was centuries ahead of his time.

IAN: Was he going to give the land back to the people?

GEORGE: How could you expect a man to apply Marxist principles when Karl Marx wouldn't be born for another eight hundred years?

IAN: People have known what to do since primitive times. (To each according to his needs...

MARGARET: What about her needs?

IAN: Forgive me. To each according to his or her needs. From each according to his or her capabilities.

GEORGE: At which point, as I am constantly reminding you, comrade, Christianity and Marxism become one and the same thing.

- IAN: Leave the ordinary folk to themselves, that's how they operate.) All Marx did was write it down for us. He saw...that was the way, the truth and the light.
- GEORGE: Amazing, is it not, how political zealots always fall back on the language of the gospels?
- (IAN: And that's another thing...
- IVY: Do you know...I thought it might be.)
- IAN: The common people didn't need a bearded man in a long nightie to go up into a mountain top to tell them how to behave. They already knew it was wrong to covet their neighbour's wife or oxen or servants. And they were too busy trying to stay alive in the desert to waste their time making graven images. They didn't need Moses to tell them...
- GEORGE: You're getting your prophets mixed up but that's inevitable from a confused mind.
- IAN: Amazing, is it not, how religious zealots always fall back on mindless and personal abuse?
- GEORGE: Nobody could accuse me of being a zealot.
- IAN: I accuse you! J'accuse! You're like all zealots. You treble the effort when you've forgotten the point!
- IVY: Should I throw a bucket of water over them?
- WILLIE: Whatever for, woman?
- IVY: I would enjoy it.
- WILLIE: There's no need. They'll stop in a moment.
- MARGARET: I can stop them.
- INGE: Can you?
- IAN: Can you?
- GEORGE: This should be interesting.
- MARGARET: (*To GEORGE*) It seems clear that your friend is no admirer of St Magnus.
- GEORGE: I think he regards him as a running dog of capitalism.
- IAN: The peasants should have risen up in 1115 and taken an axe to the lot of them. Magnus, Haakon and all their toadies and lickspittles.
- MARGARET: So would you like to have this relic?
- She offers GEORGE the envelope.*
- GEORGE: Thank you. I would treasure such a gift.
- He takes it.*
- MARGARET: You may take it out of the envelope and touch it, if you wish. Look at it closely.

Gently and tenderly, GEORGE takes out the piece of metal. He looks at it closely, as instructed.

He frowns.

MARGARET: Is something wrong?

GEORGE: Written on this ancient relic are the words... Made in Sheffield.

He realises he's been suckered.

GEORGE: Drinks all round for a good story.

WILLIE pours drinks all round.

FERGUSON does a little play-out music to end this section of the piece. Colonel Bogey?

KEITH bangs the gavel and we're back in the court.

KEITH: May I review those items that this court has thus far settled beyond reasonable doubt? First, that Mr Farquhar stocks a considerable amount of liquor on and adjacent to his property. Second, that for many years people have been attending his premises where they have consumed this liquor, leaving behind an impressively large number of empty bottles. Mr Farquhar claims that this consumption is entirely in the cause of rejoicing and celebration. (Celebration of an extraordinary range of human activity.) From the New Year and the summer solstice to...the discovery of old photographs, forged poems and pieces of metal in piano stools. I will concede, to save Mr Farquhar the trouble of so doing, that these are not criminal offences. What we have to establish is whether or not money changed hands during the course of these many and diverse celebrations. (Mr McGinn.)

McGINN takes the floor.

McGINN: I would like to call Mrs Fiona Thomson.

FIONA THOMSON stands up. She's a local woman.

McGINN: Mrs Thomson. You visited The Golden Slipper in January of this year.

FIONA: I did.

McGINN: What was the purpose of your visit?

FIONA: I was looking for a missing person.

McGINN: Who were you looking for?

FIONA: My husband.

McGINN: Why were you looking for your husband?

FIONA: Because I did not know where he was.

McGINN: And did you find him in The Golden Slipper?

FIONA: No.

FLETT rises.

FLETT: Is this line of questioning destined to lead us anywhere, Mr Sheriff?

KEITH: Who knows? But we are in Orkney where speed is rarely of the essence. *(To McGINN)*
Do continue, (Mr McGinn) but ideally with a destination in view.

McGINN: How long had your husband been missing?

FIONA: Two days and two nights.

McGINN: And you thought he might be in The Golden Slipper?

FIONA: Oh no. My sister who works in the pie shop said I should ask Willie Farquhar. He knows where men are to be found.

McGINN: And did he?

FIONA: Yes. Mr Farquhar told me my husband was fishing. On the loch.

KEITH: For two days and two nights?

FIONA: Apparently men lose all sense of time when they are fishing.

KEITH: And not only fishing. But I digress. Do carry on... (, Mr McGinn.)

McGINN: Mrs Thomson, will you tell the court what you saw while you were in The Golden Slipper?

FIONA: I saw a man buying a bottle of whisky.

AL comments.

AL: Wow. Sensation in court.

MORAG: No, that isn't enough to make a sensation.

AL: I had the lady marked down as the surprise witness.

MORAG: We shall see.

Back in the court.

McGINN: Did you recognise this man?

(FIONA: No.

McGINN: Can you describe him?

FIONA: Yes.

She doesn't elaborate.

McGINN: Would you like to do so?

FIONA: Would I like to do so what?

McGINN: Describe this man.)

FIONA: Yes. He was a minister of the church.

McGINN: Let us be quite clear about this. You saw Mr Farquhar take money from a minister of the church and in exchange give him a bottle of whisky?

FIONA: I did.

McGINN looks across at FLETT.

McGINN: Does the defence have an explanation for this Phenomenon?

FLETT takes over.

FLETT: Mrs Thomson. This bottle of whisky. Was it wrapped up?

FIONA: Yes. It was in a brown paper bag.

FLETT: What you actually saw, therefore, was Mr Farquhar giving a brown paper parcel to a man dressed as a minister of the church?

FIONA: That is what I said.

FLETT: How do you know the parcel contained a bottle of whisky?

FIONA: Because it was shaped like a bottle of whisky.

FLETT: Did you see how much money changed hands?

FIONA: Of course not. That would have been nose-y.

FLETT: So as far as the actual evidence is concerned, this transaction could have been about, let us say, a bottle of milk?

FIONA: Why would anyone put a bottle of milk in a brown paper parcel?

WILLIE breaks in.

WILLIE: It wasn't milk. It was whisky.

KEITH: Are you entering a guilty plea, Mr Farquhar?

WILLIE: No. I'm telling the truth.

KEITH: Thank you, Mrs Thomson. We seem to have hit a diversion. Perhaps even a confession.

FIONA stands down.

KEITH: Now, Mr Farquhar. Tell us about this whisky.

WILLIE: One of the local ministers has an ageing mother who has difficulty sleeping at night. But she finds a dram of the single malt at bedtime works wonders.

KEITH: Are you claiming this whisky is medicinal?

WILLIE: A very good word for it. Medicinal.

KEITH: Could the minister not simply buy the whisky from a shop in the usual way?

WILLIE: In a community like ours, it is not seemly for a minister to be seen buying whisky from a shop. In public. At regular intervals. Not seemly at all.

KEITH: But if you buy whisky...?

WILLIE: Willie Farquhar buying whisky is a familiar sight to everyone. I am as familiar as the sunset.

KEITH: I'm sure you are.

McGINN stands up.

McGINN: The gist of it, according to my admittedly partial understanding of what we've heard, is this. You buy the whisky from your usual sources and you...look after one bottle for your friend the minister?

WILLIE: Yes. I look after it for him. I do the same for several people.

McGINN: You buy bottles of whisky and...look after them for people?

WILLIE: Yes.

McGINN: Who later buy them from you?

WILLIE: As their need arises.

McGINN: But you claim this is more of a...service to the community?

WILLIE: Very good, yes. A service to the community.

McGINN: And at no point do you make a profit on these transactions?

WILLIE: Maybe an odd sixpence for my trouble. But not what you would call a profit.

McGINN: The law might call it a profit.

WILLIE: That's for the law to decide. But do I look like a wealthy man? Does my house look like the house of a wealthy man?

McGINN turns to KEITH.

McGINN: (Mr Sheriff) I would submit that the court has heard all it needs to hear. If I buy an item wholesale...be it a bottle of whisky, be it a pork pie... and then sell it to a member of the public with a profit margin, even if I call it sixpence for my trouble, I am acting as a retailer. And in this case I am doing it on premises not licensed for that purpose. To claim that I am doing it as some kind of social service is hypocrisy of a high order. There is no doubt that Mr Farquhar commands a deal of affection and even a degree of grudging respect within the island, but we must not let those feelings obscure the simple, legal truth. He is guilty as charged. That concludes the case for the prosecution.

McGINN sits down.

AL and MORAG comment.

AL: Seems to me your guy's in trouble.

MORAG: Willie was in trouble most of his life.

AL: Don't tell me. With one bound he was free.

MORAG: Not exactly.

AL: It would have to be a hell of a bound.

MORAG: Listen.

The KIDS return and sing:

SONG: Wee Willy Farquhar
He's in a mess
Will he escape the law?
Will he confess?

Wee Willy Farquhar
Looks a little pale
Will he lose his freedom?
Will he go to jail?

WILLIE: Wee Willy Farquhar
Looks up at the stars
How will he see them from
Behind his prison bars?

IAN picks up a bentwood chair and holds it in front of WILLIE, so that he appears to be behind bars.

Then we resume courtroom normality.

FLETT rises to address the court.

FLETT: I would like to call a number of witnesses who will testify to the character of Mr Farquhar.

IAN steps forward.

FLETT: You, sir, are, I believe, a teacher and an artist?

IAN: I am.

FLETT: Tell us how you see Willie Farquhar.

IAN: I see him in the same light as Sir John Falstaff.

KEITH: Sir John Falstaff?

IAN: A character in a play by William Shakespeare...

McGINN: William Shakespeare?

IAN: A well-known English playwright...

McGINN: Thank you, I know who William Shakespeare is, but I'm somewhere perplexed that he should be mentioned in this context...

IAN: It will become clear.

(KEITH: And on a point of information, Falstaff is, if I was paying proper attention at school, in more than one of Shakespeare's plays.

IAN: Three, I believe. Henry the Fourth, Parts One and Two and The Merry Wives of

Windsor. And an offstage death in Henry the Fifth.

KEITH: And very movingly described, as I recall.

IAN: Indeed so...)

McGINN: With respect, (Mr Sheriff,) we are hearing a case about a man charged with selling liquor without a licence and we seem to be having a seminar on English literature...

KEITH: Yes, we do rather. But even officers of the law may pause to smell the flowers along the way...

To IAN.

KEITH: You were saying...Sir John Falstaff...

IAN: In Henry the Fourth, Part Two, Falstaff says...and I quote...'I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men.' Willie Farquhar is such a man.

KEITH: Witty?

IAN: In his own way. Let me demonstrate to the court...

IAN, in effect, walks us from the courtroom into The Golden Slipper.

IAN: Two or three nights ago I went to The Golden Slipper to spend the evening with a few friends.

IAN walks in on GEORGE, WILLIE and a selection of regulars already seen, including MARGARET, INGE and SYLVIA.

GEORGE: You have arrived just in time.

IAN: Why? Are you about to announce a few extra commandments, to go with the existing ten?

GEORGE: No. Willie is telling us about the events of last Sunday evening.

IAN: I wasn't aware that there were any events on a Sunday in Stromness.

WILLIE: It happened after the evening service at the kirk.

IAN: Evening service at the kirk does not qualify as an event.

MARGARET: Button your lips and pay attention.

WILLIE: I called at the hotel to collect some supplies...

He holds up a whisky bottle to indicate the nature of the supplies.

WILLIE: ...and was seen by Mrs Kerston.

GEORGE: A passionate abstainer I believe, Mrs Kerston.

WILLIE: I think she heard the clink of the bottles.

IAN: She can hear the clink of bottles from a distance of several miles in my experience.

WILLIE: 'Mr Farquhar,' she said to me, 'What would the Lord say if he saw you going directly

from the evening service to a licensed hostelry?'

GEORGE: And you said?

WILLIE: 'Mrs Kerston,' I said to her, 'The Lord would say that his good servant Willie Farquhar verily has a thirst after righteousness.'

Which causes laughter in the club and - who can tell? - maybe in the audience too.

IAN: That proves I'm right.

SYLVIA: You're always right.

INGE: You tell us so all the time.

GEORGE: He knows he's right, even when he's wrong.

MARGARET: And what are you right about on this occasion?

IAN: I am right in what I plan to tell the court when I testify about Willie's noble character.

GEORGE: And what would that be?

IAN: I shall claim him as Orkney's own Jack Falstaff.

WILLIE: Who is Jack Falstaff? Is he a local man?

INGE: He's a character in Shakespeare.

WILLIE: An Englishman?

MARGARET: He's big and fat and loud.

WILLIE: Do I really want to be like this man?

GEORGE: It's better than being Orkney's Al Capone.

WILLIE: That's true.

IAN: You tell stories and that reminds us of our own stories, and then we tell our stories and that reminds other people of their stories and...

GEORGE: Stories beget stories.

IAN: It's how you make your living.

GEORGE: I wouldn't go so far as to call it a living.

MARGARET: *(To WILLIE)* Tell them about the alarm clock.

INGE: The alarm clock?

WILLIE: Ah. That was my wife.

SYLVIA: I didn't know you had a wife.

WILLIE: It was a long time ago. She divorced me. We had differences...what was that long word they use?

GEORGE: Irreconcilable.

WILLIE: That's terrible, isn't it? We apparently had these differences and I can't even remember the word.

INGE: What was irreconcilable about your differences?

WILLIE: She was a woman and I was a man. But I miss the rows. They always brought the colour to my cheeks.

SYLVIA: I thought this was about an alarm clock.

WILLIE: I will tell you about the alarm clock. We were having a row...

SYLVIA: Can you remember what it was about?

WILLIE: I do. She claimed I never talked to her. And I said that was because I was too well-mannered to interrupt. So she threw an alarm clock at me. I ducked and as it passed over my head I said, 'Amazing how time flies.'

INGE: What did she say?

WILLIE: She didn't say anything. She threw the teapot. And this time I forgot to duck.

IAN: Women.

MARGARET: And I'm sitting here thinking...men.

WILLIE: Her name was Ivy. But that was her second name.

SYLVIA: What was her first name?

WILLIE:
IAN: (*TOGETHER*) Poison.
GEORGE:

This is obviously an old and well-honed routine.

MARGARET: You men should be ashamed of yourselves.

GEORGE: And yet we are not. Is it not strange?

INGE: And men are sometimes right.

MARGARET: Men? Right? I have never noticed that.

INGE: About stories begetting stories. I am reminded that my father was a drinker.

(SYLVIA: Aren't they all?

MARGARET: That's how you know he's a father.

INGE) A beer drinker.

WILLIE: Beer's not bad but only as a second choice.

IAN: In a serious emergency.

INGE: And one day my mother said she'd like to try a glass of beer. So my father brought a

bottle home and she tried it. She took one sip but she hated it. She spat it out into the sink. 'It's horrible,' she said. And my father said: 'Now do you understand what we men have to put up with?'

WILLIE: I hope she learned her lesson.

MARGARET: We never learn the lessons.

(GEORGE: That's what makes us human beings.

IAN: The prophet has spoken.)

GEORGE: The bible entreats us: look not upon the wine when it is red. But we take no notice.

IAN: I take notice. I never touch red wine.

WILLIE: Well it's foreign, isn't it?

IAN: Very often.

WILLIE: French, Italian, things of that kind.

SYLVIA: My mother used to make red wine.

MARGARET: Is she French?

INGE: Or Italian?

SYLVIA: You know perfectly well she's from Harray.

GEORGE: Did she have a vineyard in Harray?

SYLVIA: It was mostly beetroot she used in her wine. Sometimes with a little touch of parsnip.

IAN: I have drunk your mother's wine.

GEORGE: And lived to tell the tale?

IAN: Yes, but it was a damned close-run thing.

SYLVIA: But my Uncle Norman was a great admirer of my mother's wine.

GEORGE: Was he a connoisseur?

SYLVIA: No. He was a painter and decorator. He said my mother's wine stripped paint more efficiently than anything he could buy through the building trade.

They all laugh, apart from WILLIE, who's fallen quiet.

MARGARET: Willie? What's wrong?

SYLVIA: You've gone quiet.

INGE: That's not like you.

IAN: Years of single malt have finally taken effect.

MARGARET: Hush. Listen to the man.

A silence then:

WILLIE: It's not fair.

GEORGE: You may well be right but it does depend what you are talking about.

WILLIE: Everything.

IAN: Perhaps he means life.

GEORGE: Of course life isn't fair.

IAN: That's why we need a revolution.

GEORGE: Forgive me, comrade. I was forgetting. Once you have led the proletariat out of their misery, we will inherit the earth. Cheer up, Willie. It will not be long now.

MARGARET: You two! Listen to the man.

GEORGE: I'm sorry.

They listen to WILLIE.

WILLIE: Here we are, having a fine time. We eat and drink and tell our stories. And as we know the stories beget more stories. And yet the authorities are taking me to court and they want to stop all this. How can it be wrong?

IAN: Of course it isn't wrong.

MARGARET: But it might be illegal.

GEORGE: The law has very little to do with right and wrong.

(IAN: What do you expect? The laws are made by the ruling classes to keep the common people in their place.)

WILLIE: But here we are, in our place, and we're very happy here. Why do they want to stop me? I don't try to stop them doing whatever they want to do.

GEORGE: William Shakespeare...

(INGE: Him again...

GEORGE: He) recommended killing all the lawyers.

(SYLVIA: That's going a little too far.)

WILLIE: I wouldn't want anyone to kill my lawyer.

(MARGARET: I doubt whether it will happen.

WILLIE) She's the only one who's on my side.

(INGE: We're all on your side, Willie.

WILLIE: From a legal point of view I mean.

IAN: Of course he's on your side.) You're paying her to be on your side.

WILLIE: (No, he really is on my side.) We have discussed it at some length. But you would not believe some of the things I am learning about the law in the matter of food and drink.

GEORGE: Tell us some of these things. I daresay they are amusing.

WILLIE: Apparently in the larger public houses on the mainland, they have a special room for singing.

MARGARET: A singing room?

WILLIE: It is written on the door...Singing Room.

INGE: Does that mean you are not allowed to sing in any other room?

WILLIE: It means exactly that.

IAN: Does it also mean if you go into this Singing Room and do not sing...are you committing an offence?

GEORGE: They could well call the police.

IAN: I arrest you in the name of the law for not singing in the Singing Room.

MARGARET: I suppose it is like smoking on a train. You are in trouble if you smoke in a non-smoking compartment but you will not be in trouble if you go into a smoking compartment and do not smoke.

(SYLVIA: Isn't it also like homosexuality?

INGE: Not in the slightest.

WILLIE: We have no idea what you're talking about.

SYLVIA: The Westminster parliament made it legal but it didn't become compulsory.

GEORGE: And even my poetic imagination finds it difficult to see a connection between the legalisation of homosexuality and Willie's imminent appearance in court...

SYLVIA: That's probably because there isn't one.

WILLIE: I did take advice you know?

IAN: (Consult whom?) About what?

WILLIE: (I did consult my lawyer) About, well, becoming legitimate I suppose.

MARGARET: And the answer is...?

WILLIE: It really is very complicated.

GEORGE: There's a surprise.

WILLIE: Would you be looking to serve food, I was asked. Only a few pies, I said. And you would not believe the rules and regulations that apply to the serving of food.

IAN: Even your pies?

WILLIE: Even my pies.

INGE: What sort of regulations?

WILLIE: About hygiene. Cleanliness and such.

MARGARET: Ah. Cleanliness.

GEORGE: The unkindest cut of all.

They look around the place. Cleanliness is not its outstanding characteristic.

WILLIE: I pointed out (to him) that all my pies are thoroughly heated in the stove and that the heat kills all known germs.

SYLVIA: And what was the answer?

WILLIE: Oh, it wouldn't stop there. There are all kinds of other rules and regulations about toilet accommodation and ventilated lobbies and fire escapes and goodness knows what else.

IAN: And what about singing? Would they require a special room?

WILLIE: I did not even ask (him) whether I would have to provide a separate singing room. I was, by this stage of the conversation, beginning to lose heart. As I am now. Is it really all over?

A silence.

GEORGE: Nothing is ever over.

IAN: And the prophet opened his mouth and taught them, saying...

GEORGE: We have lived on these islands for at least five thousand years.

MARGARET: Is that all?

SYLVIA: Sometimes it seems longer.

GEORGE: Our history begins three thousand years before the birth of Christ. That being so, whether Willie Farquhar wins or loses a court case is a mere trifle...a tiny feather that drifts on the wind...

WILLIE: Me? A tiny feather?

IAN: It's poetic.

WILLIE: Well I suppose poetic is all right.

GEORGE: Whatever happens, the legend will endure.

MARGARET: What legend?

SYLVIA: I see no legend.

GEORGE looks around him.

GEORGE: The legend of a good earthy place to be, blessed by the hidden sun.

INGE: The man's been drinking.

IAN: Of course he's been drinking. Why else would he be here?

WILLIE: The question is...has he had enough or should I give him a peedie drop more?

GEORGE: Willie, there is only one answer to such a question.

GEORGE holds out his cup and WILLIE tops him up.

IAN: And the poet is right.

(GEORGE: You are agreeing with me?

IAN: I am.)

MARGARET: But you two never agree about anything.

(SYLVIA: You only come here to argue.

INGE: About politics and religion.)

IAN: We agree about the power of myth and legend.

GEORGE: Without them there would be no politics and no religion.

IAN: (*Indicating GEORGE*) My friend, the poet and prophet believes in the legends of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

GEORGE: (*Indicating IAN*) And my comrade, the artist and teacher believes in the legends of Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and the Tolpuddle Martyrs.

IAN: Without those legends we have nothing to believe in.

GEORGE: And nothing to argue about.

WILLIE: Well it's very nice of you, boys, but I don't see myself in the same class as those fellows.

MARGARET: Saint Willie of Brig-o-Waithe? It has a nice ring to it.

SYLVIA: You wouldn't get it past the committee.

INGE: And I still don't see this place as a legend.

GEORGE: We will make it so.

IAN: Descartes had the idea.

WILLIE: Who?

IAN: Descartes. A philosopher.

WILLIE: Never heard of him.

GEORGE: French.

WILLIE: Not local then.

IAN: Cogito ergo sum.

(SYLVIA: That's not French.
 INGE: It's Latin.
 WILLIE: A Latin-speaking Frenchman.
 IAN:) It means...I think, therefore I am.
 MARGARET: What has that got to do with The Golden Slipper?
 IAN: We think this place is a legend, ergo it is.
 SYLVIA: Well no disrespect but this all sounds to me like twaddle.
 GEORGE: Would you like me to prove it to you?
 SYLVIA: Prove what?
 GEORGE: The power of myth and legend.
 SYLVIA: Will it take long?
 (MARGARET: Some of us have to get up in the morning.
 INGE: What time is it?)

WILLIE looks at the clock.

WILLIE: Don't worry. It's only ten past five.
 IAN: I would be very interested to hear this proof.
 GEORGE: Very well.

GEORGE steps forward and, in effect, addresses the audience.

GEORGE: I will tell you a story.
 IAN: Here comes the ancient mariner. Lock up the spoons and keep one eye open for the albatross.
 MARGARET: Hush.
 GEORGE: Once upon a time it came to pass that there was a great war between the nations. It was said that its holy purpose was to protect the people of Poland, though this was quickly forgotten as Armageddon enveloped all the earth. And a small Northern island was peacefully invaded by thousands of young warriors, so they could sharpen their axes and arrowheads in preparation for the battles to come. One summer evening a young sailor, his day's work done, went to a dance in a nearby village, and there he met a girl.

Music starts on, say, piano - a REPRISE of the FINISTERRE theme.

SARAH and RONNIE enter and recreate their moment of dancing together.

GEORGE: The young sailor asked the girl to dance. And they danced and later they sang...
 SARAH: (*Sings*)
 I met a boy with flaxen hair
 All fresh of face and debonair

A sailor boy with skin so fair
From Finisterre

He wanted me to be his bride
And stand forever at his side
But he was sailing on the tide
To Finisterre

RONNIE: *(Sings)*
My ship is anchored in the flow
But on the morrow I must go
To battle with the foreign foe
Off Finisterre

MUSIC continues behind:

GEORGE: On the morrow the young man sailed on the tide and the girl waved to him from the shore...

RONNIE moves off into the darkness.

SARAH waves him off.

GEORGE: It was her last sight of him. His ship was sunk during a great sea battle in the Bay of Biscay.

SARAH sings - and maybe at this point the music slides into a minor key? At any rate we need a change of tone from the relative optimism of the first version of the song.

SARAH: *(Sings)*
And now my boy lies fathoms deep
At peace in the eternal sleep
While I am left alone to weep
Of Finisterre

But in my dreams his face I see
The boy who sang his song to me
And he'll be waiting here for me
In Finisterre

She remains standing in the spot where she waved him off to sea.

GEORGE: But that is not the end of the story. Once a year, on the anniversary of the day the young sailor left Scapa Flow, Sarah - for that was the girl's name - would walk to the edge of the water and look out and wave.

SARAH waves.

GEORGE: Then, on such an evening - and what anniversary was it? The first, the fifth, the tenth? Who knows? - she heard the music - their music - drifting across the water towards the shore, as if from a vast distance.

PIANO. That strain again!

GEORGE: And did she perhaps hear the sailor's voice?

RONNIE: *(Sings)*
And in my dreams her face I see
The girl who sang her song to me

And will she come to set me free
In Finisterre?

GEORGE: We will never know what she heard. What we do know is that she walked into the water.

SARAH walks into the darkness.

GEORGE: She was never seen again. Her body was never found. But even that is not the end of the story. It is said...and I have heard it said...that if you walk to the edge of the water on the anniversary of the young sailor's departure, you may see the two young lovers in the distance. They are dancing on the water.

And we see that. SARAH and RONNIE dancing on the water as the MUSIC plays a final coda.

GEORGE: So you see, there is no end to the story, just as there is no end to any story. Only the best ending of all...that the two young lovers, united in death, live happily ever after.

A silence.

Our attention switches to MORAG and AL.

AL: Hey, lady, that guy tells a seriously good story.

MORAG: I'm pleased you enjoyed it.

AL: Yeah...and kind of creepy.

MORAG: Creepy?

AL: Maybe you'll give me directions to the designated spot on the waterfront? I could go on down there and check out the ghosts.

MORAG: Oh. You believe in ghosts?

AL: I never have till now. How about you?

MORAG: I believe what I want to believe.

AL: Including ghosts?

MORAG: When it suits me. But wait...the story isn't yet finished.

AL: But your guy said...

MORAG: *(Breaks in)* Our stories never finish.

We return to The Golden Slipper.

WILLIE: That was well worth another drop.

He tops up GEORGE'S drink.

IAN: Well up to standard.

GEORGE: Thank you.

MARGARET: And total nonsense.

IAN: You can't say that about our island poet. He gets written about in the Manchester Guardian.

MARGARET: And no doubt he will tell us it is a true story.

GEORGE: If you believe it, it's true.

WILLIAM: I believe it. I remember the young couple coming in here during the war. It was not long after the bomb fell next door.

GEORGE: Yes, I remember the occasion too.

MARGARET: Correction, gentlemen. The girl who, according to your account, walked into the water, was my mother.

SYLVIA: But I saw your mother on Saturday. She was buying oatcakes.

INGE: She can't have been buying oatcakes if she also walked into the water.

IAN: The oatcakes would be very soggy, depending on the order of these events.

MARGARET: I will tell you the truth of what happened. To be sure, my mother did meet a young sailor at a dance in Dounby. And she brought him here afterwards.

WILLIE: You see? I was right.

MARGARET: And yes, he sailed a week later but he didn't die in a sea battle. And my mother didn't die of a broken heart. She married my father.

SYLVIA: It's such a comfort if your parents are married.

GEORGE: But the sailor could have died in a sea battle.

MARGARET: He could have but didn't. He survived the war. He wrote to my mother telling her so. Not only that, they exchanged Christmas cards for many years afterwards. He's married with three children and is now an estate agent in a town called Hemel Hempstead in the South of England.

WILLIE: England. Poor chap.

SYLVIA: Well, he is English.

WILLIE: I wonder whether he ever sings.

IAN: Only in the safe confines of the singing room of Hemel Hempstead, I expect.

INGE: How do you know all this?

MARGARET: I've seen the letters and the Christmas cards. We found them one day in the piano stool.

GEORGE: Which proves what I have always said. Piano stools are the enemy of literature.

IAN: (That isn't what you've always said.) I've been arguing with you since we were at primary school and at no point have you ever said: piano stools are the enemy of literature.

GEORGE: Well I shall always say it in future.

(SYLVIA: (To GEORGE) I think you lost that one.

GEORGE: I'm a good loser.

IAN: He's had years of practice.

GEORGE:) And I shall win in the end. People might remember my story about the young lovers dancing on the water. But who is going to tell a story about an estate agent in Hemel Hempstead?

MARGARET: There might be a drunken poet in Hemel Hempstead.

IAN: It doesn't seem likely.

INGE: True.

SYLVIA: It doesn't sound like the merriest place on earth.

MARGARET: But having sorted that out, it really is time I went home.

WILLIE: It's only ten past five. You must all have one for the road.

He charges all the cups. As he does so:

WILLIE: And let it be clearly understood. These are on the house.

MARGARET: On the house?

INGE: Are you feverish?

WILLIE: No. But I would like to propose a toast to all of you, my special friends. You see...it still hangs over my mind like a shadow that the authorities will close me down and if that is the case, this could be the last night of The Golden Slipper. And what a fine night we have had. To my friends...

GEORGE: And to you, Willie Farquhar...

ALL: Willie Farquhar.

They drink the toast.

MARGARET: We should have a song for the road.

INGE: Is this a singing room?

SYLVIA: That's for us to decide.

IAN: And we have decided.

WILLIE leads them into the song.

Gut feeling says this is traditional in feeling, maybe with fiddle accompaniment - cheerful and life-affirming.

Not sure who sings what: maybe it's passed around relay fashion with everyone joining in the chorus.

SONG: Here's to the place where a man called Willie
Gives us a licence to be silly
Here's to the place where joy and laughter

Sing us through to the morning after
 The farmer and the trawler skipper
 Beat a path to The Golden Slipper

Here's to the place that scoffs at sorrow
 Helps us all to brave the morrow
 Here's to the place where Romeo
 And his Juliet are safe to go
 The artist and the passing tripper
 Find themselves at The Golden Slipper

WILLIE sings:

WILLIE: Here's to my friends who down the years
 Have shared their laughter and their tears
 I broke the rules but I don't care
 Free as the birds up in the air
 The seagull, bonxie and the dipper
 Flap their wings at The Golden Slipper

And they all sing:

SONG: Here's to the place where commonfolk
 Can share a story and a joke
 Here's to the place where holy fools
 Can break the bread and break the rules
 The serious drinker and the sipper
 All equal at The Golden Slipper

And then a coda:

SONG: No sighs, no frowns
 No ties, no downs
 No meth, no strings
 No death, no stings
 No fears, no sighs
 No tears, just pies
 No scabs, no sores
 And no more wars
 And if this is the end
 May the Gods bless our friend
 The great Willie Farquhar

Well, something like that...

KEITH bangs his gavel, to signal we're back in the courtroom again.

IAN is, in effect, still on the witness stand.

KEITH: You have given eloquent testimony as to the character of Mr Farquhar...(He checks his notes:)...a Falstaff of the islands, a messenger of comfort and joy, a bringer of happiness, the stuff of myth and legend, even a prospective saint...is there anything you wish to add?

IAN: I think the claims of sanctity might be a little excessive but otherwise...that is a very fair summary of my feelings on the matter.

KEITH: Thank you. You may stand down. (*To McGINN*) (Mr McGinn.) Would you be good enough to sum up for the prosecution?

McGINN addresses the court.

McGINN: May I start by reminding the court why we are here today. There are two specific charges. First, that on January 14th of this year, Mr Farquhar sold whisky without a licence. Second, that on the same premises on February 1st of this year, the police seized a quantity of spirits, having reasonable grounds for believing that Mr Farquhar was trafficking in liquor. The defence case, to the extent that it can be discerned through the mists of romanticism which so often descend upon the tribes of Northern Europe, seems to be based on the idea that Mr Farquhar is some sort of holy innocent, dedicated to spreading good fellowship across the land. It is a point of view, but it has no meaning in law. The gist of the defence is to be found in the authorised version. We should forgive him for he knows not what he did.

McGINN: *(Contd.)*
The gist of the prosecution is, you will not be surprised to hear, the exact opposite. Mr Farquhar knew exactly what he was doing. He has been doing it for thirty years and will carry on doing it, unless he is stopped. He is guilty and he knows he is guilty. There is nothing more to be said.

McGINN sits down.

AL and MORAG comment.

AL: You're quite sure we're not getting a surprise witness?

MORAG: There is no surprise witness.

AL: In which case our guy is in deep trouble.

MORAG: Correct. Our guy is in deep trouble.

KEITH bangs his gavel.

KEITH: *(Mr Flett.)* Would you like to sum up for the defence?

(FLETT: Thank you Mr Sheriff.)

FLETT addresses the court.

FLETT: May I start with a confession. I have friends in England. I hope that will not prejudice the court. When my English friends ask me where I live and I tell them I live in Orkney, they say: Oh, is that near the isle of Skye? And I have to tell them: No, we do have bonny boats but not that particular bonny boat. I refer them instead to the BBC weather map. Look at the weather map, I say. Just above Scotland you will generally see a cloud. Our islands are under that cloud. In other words, this is a hard place to live.

FLETT: *(Contd.)*
We have long dark winters and are frequently beset by gale and tempest. During the last five thousand years we have been invaded at regular intervals, sometimes benignly, more often violently. And yet we have survived. How have we done this? By gathering together, in warmth and fellowship, by telling the stories and singing the songs that celebrate our survival. *(Charles Darwin could have had a field day had his bonny boat dropped anchor in Scapa Flow.)* All my client has done is provide a safe haven where people may gather together and share their common humanity. Professionally I am well aware that ignorance of the law is no defence. However, I am also aware that never is the law more cumbersome than when it tries to regulate joy. How can we legislate for the singing of songs, the telling of tales and the celebration of the human spirit? Should we even try? *(May I suggest to the court that the prosecution case is flimsy, misguided*

and puritanical and should be treated as such.) The common people believe that Mr Farquhar is innocent. I respectfully ask the court to align itself with the common people.

FLETT sits down.

AL: She's very good.

MORAG: Oh yes.

AL: Who could play her in the movie? Meryl Streep? Lily Tomlin? Whoopi Goldberg?

MORAG: This is not an American story.

AL: Forgive me, lady. (A sudden attack of cultural imperialism.)

MORAG: Before we know where we are, you'll be wanting to buy the Ring of Brodgar and ship it back to Texas.

AL: Now it's funny you should say that...

MORAG gives him a look.

AL: It's a joke. And I am not from Texas.

MORAG: That was a joke too. Now do you want to know the end of the story or not?

AL: I'm sorry.

Their attention reverts to the courtroom.

KEITH rises to give his verdict.

KEITH: Mr Farquhar...

WILLIE stands up.

KEITH: I have listened to the evidence with great care and attention and while giving proper credence to the affection with which you are undoubtedly held by the community, I nevertheless find you guilty as charged. On the first count of selling whisky without a licence you are fined ten pounds with the alternative of thirty days in prison. On the second count of trafficking you are fined five pounds with the alternative of twenty days in prison.

WILLIE: Thank you very much.

KEITH: Are you able to pay the fine?

WILLIE: Well the fact of the matter is this. I came to Kirkwall today on the bus and I took the precaution of only buying a single ticket in case you should send me to prison. It would have been a pity to waste the return ticket. (Now, you might find this difficult to believe but on the bus I fell into conversation with Angus Linklater. You may remember him, his father used to fish for lobsters...)

KEITH: (*Breaks in:*) Mr Farquhar! Can you pay the fine?

WILLIE: Yes. I am a man of means. Limited means to be sure but I can run to fifteen pounds.

A pause then:

WILLIE: Will you take a cheque?

We focus on the reactions from AL and MORAG.

AL: But that's no good, lady.

MORAG: What's wrong with it?

AL: I wanted a better ending. O.K. so you can't give me a surprise witness. Why not a royal pardon from the Queen and a knighthood? A seat in your House of Lords?

MORAG: This is not Hollywood. This is Orkney.

AL: Yeah, sure, I can spot the difference.

MORAG: This is the story as it was told to me. Willie paid his fine and that was the end of The Golden Slipper. Perhaps if you tell it to somebody else you can give it your ending.

AL: I might just do that. But at least let me take a photograph of all those good folk.

MORAG: A photograph?

AL: Sure, why not?

MORAG: Because they're not really there. It's only a story. Figments of the imagination.

AL: Lady, I can see them.

MORAG: As you wish. They're your figments.

AL: O.K. Let's have everybody onstage for a photo opportunity.

AL assembles the entire cast for the photograph, with WILLIE in the centre.

AL: Big smiles.

WILLIE: Would you like a song?

AL: Better still. Let's have a song.

The entire company sings the closing chorus. Perhaps in this version it has an anthem-like quality...

SONG: Wee Willie Farquhar
Nobody's fool
Emperor of laughter
Lord of misrule

Wee Willy Farquhar
The legend will survive
May his clock forever
Stand at ten past five

WILLIE Wee Willie Farquhar
That's who I am
Think of me the next time
You take a peedie dram

SONG: Wee Willie Farquhar
 His wonders never cease
 May his spirit prosper
 May he rest in peace

There's a flash as AL takes his photograph. And that's...

THE END

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