

45

INT. STUDIOS, PRODUCTION OFFICES. DAY 6 1007

45

The meeting where features for the week's shows are planned. LEONARD, DON, CLAUDE, URSULA, MARGARET all present, all a little fragile. HERO is engrossed in sketching a wedding dress on her note-pad. BENEDICK, very hungover, is reading a local newspaper as BEATRICE glowers. The following very fast...

CLAUDE

Junior Hockey team face
relegation...

LEONARD

Nope.

URSULA

Local steel-band triumphs...

LEONARD

Nope.

MARGARET

Another fishing-boat has vanished
in the so-called "Weymouth
Triangle."

LEONARD

Completely vanished?

MARGARET

(reads on)
Nope...nope, they found it again.

DON

What about the...?

URSULA

Swanage has appointed its new town-
crier.

EVERYONE

NO!

CLAUDE

There's a two-headed frog been
found in Langton Matravers.

MARGARET

That's gross.

PETER

Forget it. The Other Side bought-up
exclusive rights.

LEONARD

Bastards.

BENEDICK

(aside to CLAUDE)

I love these Big News Days, don't you.

(BEATRICE hears, bridles)

It's like 'All The President's Men'...

DON

We could always...

HERO

There was terrible fog this morning.

LEONARD

Not quite the killer story we're looking for though, is it? Fog.

BEATRICE

I'm sorry, but I still don't understand what was wrong with my story.

BENEDICK

(looks up from paper)

What was it again?

BEATRICE

Maybe if you stopped picking the sausage-roll out of your beard...

(a deep breath - calm)

They're closing down the Ladymeade nursing home. The residents are all in their eighties or nineties, two of them over a hundred, and the council are just going to dump them in hospital wards. They're not ill, they're elderly. The whole thing stinks...

BENEDICK

The nursing home *stinks*?

BEATRICE glares.

PETER

Well, maybe that's the lead story.

BENEDICK

But isn't it a bit...?

BEATRICE

What?

BENEDICK

...worthy?

BEATRICE

As in news-worthy? It's exactly the kind of story that's relevant to our viewers...

BENEDICK

Look at this -

(he holds up a local

paper. BEATRICE simmers.)

Winner of this year's Miss East Dorset Beauty Contest.

CLAUDE

Let's see.

LEONARD

'Proud Local farmer Clive Dobbs and last year's winner, his lovely daughter Rosie'

BENEDICK

Rosie's the one with the pipe and the lary eye...

The men laugh...

BEATRICE

Sorry, I must have missed something; when was it decided that we had a nightly misogynist's slot?

BENEDICK

Misogynist?

BEATRICE

Look it up Ben. It means someone
who hates or fears women...

BENEDICK

Hey, I don't hate women, I love
women!

BEATRICE

(getting-up to leave)
God save me from men who say they
love women. They're the worst.

HERO

Hear hear!

URSULA

Yes, hear hear.

CLAUDE

It's just a bit of fun, Bea.

BEATRICE

Fine, have fun, put it on the show,
just don't expect me to present it,
that's all.

And she storms out. Everyone glowers at BENEDICK, who takes a *
deep breath, and follows her.