

The Red King

by Mark Billen



Script sample

A satirical farce. The play is set some years in the future.

Characters

Members of the Accession Council

Home Secretary	<i>who is anxious about security</i>
Prime Minister	<i>who is good in a crisis</i>
Lord Mayor of London	<i>who is very distinguished</i>
Archbishop of Canterbury	<i>who is very aware of his position</i>
Foreign Secretary	<i>who is worried about the French</i>
Duke of Chatterly	<i>who is out of touch with reality</i>

Other Characters

Valerie Perdigree	<i>who is a genealogist</i>
Trevor	<i>who is a bus driver from Southend</i>
Mavis	<i>who is a school cook and Trevor's wife</i>
Clarence	<i>who is a footman and very traditional</i>
Anna	<i>who is more than she seems</i>
Herald	<i>who makes an official announcement</i>
Head Chef	<i>who presents menus in French</i>
Minister for Energy	<i>who is very energetic</i>
Prince George	<i>who is always on the ball</i>
Princess Sophia	<i>who is as alert as her brother</i>

All the characters in this play are fictitious and any resemblance to persons living or dead is co-incidental.

Scene throughout the play: St James's Palace – an antechamber with double doors on either side of the stage. At the back of the stage is an impressive window with luxuriant drapes. There is a large sofa and some armchairs. At one side is a quite small circular table with two dining chairs.

Some scenes from Act 1

Trevor learns that he has become king.

Scene 1: 11 a.m.

(There is a knock on the door and the Footman opens it. Trevor strides into the room. He is not in the least timid and is wearing a bus driver's uniform.)

Clarence: Trevor Effingham.

Trevor: (Speaking with a broad accent.) What's all this then? What's it all abart? Why have I been brought here? That's what I wanner know.

Prime Minister: Good morning Mr. Effingham. Thank you for coming to see us.

Trevor: (Speaking very fluently. The Prime Minister keeps trying to speak but Trevor carries on without waiting.) I wasn't given much choice! Suddenly there's this big car outside me house and some official looking bloke in a suit.

Prime Minister: That's because you ...

Trevor: (Carrying on regardless.) There's police escort as well with flashing lights and all that sort of thing right in our street. Bit of a shock for me and Mavis, I can tell yer. I wonders what it's all abart, that's what I wonders.

Prime Minister: That's because you are ...

Trevor: (Carrying on.) I bet all the neighbours is looking out too. Probably thinking I've been arrested or something. What else would they be thinking arter all? That's what I says to Mavis, that's what I says.

Prime Minister: That's really not the ...

Trevor: (Carrying on.) Then this bloke in the suit says we gotter go with him. He says I'm suddenly important and that's why he's come to see me.

Prime Minister: That's because you are now ...

Trevor: (Carrying on.) So Mavis and me we has to drop everything. I hadn't finished me fish and chips and she was half way through doing her hair too. Still had the rollers in and that was awkward.

Prime Minister: I must explain to you ...

Trevor: (Carrying on.) She couldn't put her head back proper in the car, all the way to London. Very uncomfortable was my Mavis. They drove really fast all the way. Lights flashing like we was royalty or summing.

Prime Minister: I need to tell you that ...

Trevor: (Carrying on.) I had to leave me fish and chips behind. Bit much I call it. They was still hot and tasty and all. The geezer in the suit says I can't take them with me cos of security. Health and Safety he says. They'll use that as an excuse to stop anything nowadays won't they.

Prime Minister: If I could just get a word in ...

Trevor: (Carrying on and looking about.) Who are all you geezers anyway? I seem to know yer all! Well, yer faces are familiar. Where have I seen yer all?

Archbishop: We are members of the Accession Council, which only meets when a king or queen dies.

Trevor: (Astonished.) So what! That's nutting to do with me.

Prime Minister: There has been a terrible accident. The entire Royal Family has been killed by a volcanic eruption.

Trevor: A volcano at Balmoral! Dun be stoopid!

Foreign Secretary: They weren't at Balmoral.

Prime Minister: They were all at Tuttacappei; a remote island that was *thought* to be an extinct volcano.

Trevor: Yer. So what happened?

Prime Minister: The stomach of Tuttacappei must have been bubbling away down below ...

Trevor: **(Poking the Prime Minister in the ribs.)** Like mine after a strong curry and too much beer. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Prime Minister: And pressure built up more and more ...

Trevor: **(Poking again.)** I know the feeling. Cor! Once me stomach gets going nutting can stop it!

Prime Minister: **(Controlling his reactions and speaking very clearly.)** Until, without any warning Tuttacappei had to explode and ... and ... and ...

Trevor: Don't tell me! It gave one of the biggest farts in the history of the world! **(He laughs very loudly.)**

Prime Minister: Well ... that's one way of putting it.

Archbishop: The smell must have been terrible.

Trevor: Just like after curry and beer. **(He pokes the Archbishop and gives another very loud laugh.)**

Archbishop: **(Disdainfully.)** I really wouldn't know.
(The others struggle to suppress laughter.)

Prime Minister: So that's why we're here.

Trevor: What's Tutta ... Tutta.. Tuttawhatd'ercallit to do with me? I hadn't even heard of the place until I walked in here.

Prime Minister: As a result of the demise of the entire Royal Family our researchers have discovered that you, Trevor Effingham, are next in line to the throne.

Trevor: Don't be stoopid. How can I be a bus driver from Southend one minute and King the next? **(Spoken quickly and fluently.)** What if I don't accept? I can't just take on the job like that yer know. It's not so simple. I gotter lotter things to sort out.

Prime Minister: **(Trying to explain.)** Well you see ...

Trevor: **(Carrying on fluently. He counts things off on his fingers.)** There's the goldfish at home and there's me new telly arriving and having the car serviced and Mavis needs a new washing machine and me hair needs a cut as well.

Prime Minister: There's no problem ...

Trevor: **(Carrying on.)** Then I'll have to let the bus depot know when I'll be stopping. They might let me take me holidays into account I suppose as I've not had any yet this year.

Prime Minister: Don't worry about any ...

Trevor: **(Carrying on.)** Yer must all know what it's like? I really can't take the job on for at least a fortnight, yer know what I mean? I can't just drop everything for you geezers. Anyway, when would I become King?

Valerie: You became King the moment William the Fifth and the rest of the Royal Family were killed in the eruption.

Others: **(Variously.)** That's right. That's right. **(They nod in agreement.)**

Trevor: **(Shaking his head and speaking firmly.)** Oh no I didn't. I becomes King when I agrees to become King.

Archbishop: There's no point in arguing about this. If you are not willing to be King then the search begins all over again.

Valerie: And it won't be easy. First of all King Trevor would have to abdicate on behalf of himself and his descendants.

Trevor: Well, I'm not sure abart this. It's quite a surprise. What happens now?
(Everyone begins talking at once and a hubbub builds up as each tries to make a point and each speech is repeated and repeated the noise becomes louder and louder.)

Prime Minister: There would be a very difficult situation.

Foreign Secretary: The French would never stop laughing.

Prime Minister: } **(Together)** You must accept. You have to accept. We must have a Monarch.

Archbishop: } You really are King already. There's no one else. No one else at all.

Foreign Secretary: } It has to be you. Think of the country. The French will be laughing at us soon.

Trevor: } **(Repeating himself.)** Well I'm not sure abart this. It's quite a surprise. What happens now?

Duke: } There's no choice. We really need you. History will be resting on your shoulders.

Home Secretary: } Don't refuse. The news will get out soon. Then there'll be trouble.

Lord Mayor: } We need you Trevor. What else can we do? Who else is there?

Valerie: } It will take weeks to find the next in line. Finding Trevor took long enough.

(Trevor holds up his hand and the noise subsides.)

Trevor: Jussa moment. Can anyone answer a simple question?

Others: **(Eagerly.)** Of course!

Trevor: How long will all this take? I've got a shift beginning at two o'clock. There'll be passengers waiting for my bus.

Valerie: That has been taken care of.

Prime Minister: **(Very determinedly.)** We must have a monarch!

Archbishop: Really you *are* king already.

Foreign Secretary: The French will be laughing at us.

Duke: History is resting on your shoulders.

Home Secretary: The news will soon get out. You know what security's like in Whitehall!

Lord Mayor: We *need* you Trevor.

Trevor: **(Thoughtfully.)** Let me think about it for a mo.

Prime Minister: Please ask about anything else you need to know. If you accept you must not be involved in politics.

Trevor: Well then ... that's a problem.

Others: Why? Why?

Trevor: **(Proudly.)** I ... am a Communist.

Others: **(Aghast.)** A Communist!

Home Secretary: We can't have a king who is a Communist! What about security? The Russians will be after all sorts of things.

Foreign Secretary: The Russians gave up Communism decades ago.

Duke: What is a Communist? Is it one of those chaps who writes in newspapers.

Foreign Secretary: That's a columnist.

Duke: Really? Is there a difference?

Lord Mayor: But Mr Effingham, if you are a Communist then surely you are against the Monarchy?

Trevor: That's right.

Home Secretary: A Communist king would be a contradiction. It's like referring to a sweet lemon.

Archbishop: Or vegetarian tiger.

Duke: Or a straight banana.

Foreign Secretary: So you won't accept?

(There is a moment of silent anticipation with no movement and all watch Trevor.)

Trevor: **(Alert and aware of what he is saying. He speaks giving clear emphasis to his thoughts.)** This could be my chance to earn a place in History. *I would be the first Communist to become a king!*

Prime Minister: Then ... then ... do you accept?

Trevor: As a matter of fact ... **(He pauses dramatically.)**

Others: Yes? What? **(They hold breath collectively and stare at Trevor with mouths open.)**

Trevor: I accept!

Others: **(All breathe out together.)** Oh! Thank goodness!

(There is brief applause.)

Archbishop: The full Accession Council will meet shortly and declare that you are King.

Prime Minister: There's just one thing we need to have from you.

Trevor: What's that?

Archbishop: What regnal name will you be known by?

Trevor: What yer mean?

Archbishop: Do you want to be known as King William the Sixth?

Duke: Or King Edward the Ninth?

Archbishop: Perhaps King James the Fourth?
Foreign Secretary: King Henry the Ninth?
Lord Mayor: King Richard the Fourth?
Home Secretary: King George the Seventh? That name has a nice feeling of tradition and security
Prime Minister: King Charles the Fourth?
Valerie: Or, if we're desperate, King John the Second.
Foreign Secretary: Or even King Stephen the Second?
Home Secretary: That has a feeling of insecurity.
Prime Minister: Think about it.
Archbishop: } **(At the same time.)** King William the Sixth or King James the Fourth would be best.
Duke: } **(At the same time.)** I think King Edward the Ninth would suit you so well.
Foreign Secretary: } **(At the same time.)** King Henry the Ninth would be really historic
Lord Mayor: } **(At the same time.)** King Richard the Fourth would be fine choice.
Home Secretary: } **(At the same time.)** King George the Seventh could be popular.
Prime Minister: } **(At the same time.)** I like the sound of King Charles the Fourth.
Valerie: } **(At the same time.)** I am really not sure about King John the Second.
Foreign Secretary: } **(At the same time.)** Make your mark with King Stephen the Second.
(All repeat their comments variously and loudly, gradually coming closer to Trevor as they speak until there is quite a hubbub.)
Trevor: **(Shouting.)** Stop! Stop! All these names! It's too much to think about. **(With firm dignity.)** I've made my decision.
Archbishop: And which historic name have you chosen?
Trevor: Trevor! After all, my name is Trevor!
Archbishop: **(Aghast.)** Are you *sure* you want to be Trevor? As King you should have a ... a ... a more *regal* name.
Trevor: **(Firmly.)** Trevor I am and Trevor I will be. **(As if making an announcement.)** I will be ... King Trevor the First!
Archbishop: Very well. **(He gives a big sigh.)** King Trevor the First you shall be.
All: King Trevor the First. **(They bow to him.)**
Trevor: **(Shocked.)** What yer all bowing to me for? I really don't understand you geezers. Cut it out. I won't have it.
(Big Ben is heard chiming eleven o'clock.)
Prime Minister: It's time for the meeting. We must attend the Accession Council.
(The Trumpet Voluntary resounds and the lights slowly dim. All, except Trevor, leave shaking their heads and nodding to each other. Trevor then follows.)

Trevor declares his intentions as a communist king.

Scene 4: 11 a.m. the next morning.

(The double doors open and the footmen, Clarence and Anna, stand on either side.)

Clarence: His Majesty the King.

(Trevor enters.)

Trevor: Good morning Comrades.

Others: **(Shocked.)** Comrades!

Trevor: **(Nonchalantly.)** Of course, Comrades all. What else did you expect from a Communist King?

Prime Minister: **(Nervous.)** That *is* a surprise Your Majesty.

Trevor: Good. And you can stop calling me Your Majesty. From now on call me 'Comrade King', if yer would be so kind.

Others: **(Mumbling and clearly reluctant.)** Certainly, Comrade King.

Archbishop: And how will you address us?

Trevor: You will be Comrade Archbishop.

Archbishop: No thank you.

Trevor: Comrade, remember that *I* am King and you will respect my wishes. Now, Comrade Prime Minister, why are we having this meeting?

Prime Minister: To discuss your role as a constitutional monarch.

Trevor: Now then Comrades. Let's be clear. I don't wanner change anything in the constitution.

Others: **(Variously.)** Good. That's good.

Foreign Secretary: That's exactly right.

Trevor: I just wanner use some of the power that the Monarch has.

Duke: What are you proposing?

Trevor: For example, Comrade Duke.

Duke: **(Spluttering.)** I ... I ... I am usually addressed as 'Your Grace'.

Trevor: Not no more, Comrade. Now for starters ...there's no trade union for palace employees, so I shall start a union.

Home Secretary: I am sure they don't need one.

Trevor: They certainly do. There's nobody to take care of them. It will be called the Association of Royal Staff Employees.

Lord Mayor: **(Quite quietly.)** ARSE.

Trevor: **(Sternly and very offended.)** Comrade Lord Mayor, are you calling me an arse?

Lord Mayor: Certainly not, Your Majesty I was ...

Trevor: **(Glaring at the Lord Mayor.)** Comrade, remember to address me proper.

Lord Mayor: My apologies Comrade King. I was not calling you an arse. I was pointing out that the Association of Royal Staff Employees would soon be referred to as ARSE.

Trevor: Thank you Comrade Lord Mayor. I hadn't thought of that. Then we'll have the Association of Palace Employees.

Lord Mayor: **(Very softly but clearly.)** That's APE!

Duke: What else are you proposing, Comrade King?

Trevor: Thank you for asking, Comrade Duke.

Prime Minister: We are all very interested.

Trevor: I am sure you are Comrades. I wanner be a King for the people working on behalf of the ordinary people of *my* kingdom...

Foreign Secretary: That's what we do. We work on behalf of the people. We think on behalf of the people and we govern on behalf of the people. It's as simple as that.

Trevor: Do you do all those things, Comrade Foreign Secretary? Then as I've been thinking on behalf of the people I am sure you won't object to any of my proposals. First of all let's deal with the Royal Opera House.

Archbishop: What about it? A lot of people like opera.

Trevor: And a lotter people don't like it and I can't stand it. So ... I have decided it's to become the Royal Bingo Hall.

Others: The Royal Bingo Hall! That's ridiculous.

Trevor: **(Ignoring them.)** And there's that monstrosity called the Royal Albert Hall ...

Lord Mayor: What about it?

Trevor: Who was that geezer anyway?

Lord Mayor: Which geezer ... **(Correcting himself quickly.)** I mean ... which person, are you referring to?

Trevor: Albert of course. Who was that geezer?

Lord Mayor: **(Curtly.)** He was the husband of Queen Victoria.

Trevor: Was he now? I don't think he can be really famous, as I've never heard of him.

Duke: **(Aside.)** What a surprise.

Trevor: I bet half the population doesn't know who that geezer was. So let's name the place after someone who'll always be famous.

Lord Mayor: And whom do you have in mind?

Trevor: Karl Marx.

Others: **(Astonished.)** Karl Marx!

Duke: **(Perplexed.)** Who is Karl Marx? Is he one of your friends?

Trevor: He's not a friend but I'm rather fond of him!

Home Secretary: What did Karl Marx ever do for *our* country?

Trevor: He did a lotter writing in Britain and he also died here.

Home Secretary: That's the best thing he could have done.

Trevor: (**Cross.**) Don't insult Karl Marx, Comrade Home Secretary. The Royal Albert Hall will become the Royal Karl Marx Arena.

Archbishop: That's going too far!

Trevor: Is it, Comrade Archbishop?

Archbishop: It certainly is. Your proposal is an insult to our history.

Trevor: That's what you think, Comrade. We'll see if the people agree with you. It may be going too far for you but it's not going far enough for me.

Prime Minister: What else do you propose, Comrade King?

Trevor: The Royal Mail will become The People's Mail.

Prime Minister: (**Giving a big sigh.**) Very well, Comrade King.

Trevor: And it will be free for people to use.

Others: (**Amazed.**) Free!

Foreign Secretary: Even when sending letters abroad?

Trevor: Naturally, Comrade Foreign Secretary.

Home Secretary: Have you thought about security? Anybody could post an explosive device without paying for delivery!

Foreign Secretary: But a free postal service will cost far too much.

Trevor: No it won't.

Prime Minister: If the Royal Mail ...

Trevor: (**Slightly threatening in tone.**) Be careful what you say Comrade Prime Minister ... that's not the right name no more.

Prime Minister: (**Correcting himself.**) I mean if The People's Mail is to be free to use it will cost the country a fortune.

Trevor: I've thought about that. The *People's* Mail will only be free for *people* to use.

Prime Minister: I don't understand you, Comrade King.

Trevor: (**Relishing each word.**) It will be free for *people* ... but all those bloated rich companies with their lousy fat cat executives will have to pay three times as much!

Others: (**Loudly and variously.**) That's ridiculous. Totally ridiculous. It will never work.

Trevor: You all call it ridiculous. To my mind your reaction shows it's a good idea. Remember, I am to be known as Comrade King, and I intend to be a King for the people.

Prime Minister: We are all servants of the people.

Trevor: So you claim, Comrade Prime Minister. But I intends to be a *true* servant of the people. Everything I do and everything I says will be for the benefit of ordinary people. Just remember that comrades all!

Prime Minister: And is there anything else you wish to discuss?

Trevor: Lots and lots of things. I'm full of ideas!

Foreign Secretary: (**Aside.**) I dread to think what they are!

Trevor: But there's only one more I wanner discuss today.

Foreign Secretary: You say discuss, Your Majesty ...

Trevor: Address me properly, Comrade Foreign Secretary.

Foreign Secretary: Very well. You say discuss, Comrade King but so far there has been very little discussion regarding your proposals.

Trevor: There don't need to be no discussion, Comrade.

Prime Minister: That other decision have you reached, Comrade King?

Trevor: Nuclear power. I don't like the idea of my kingdom being reliant on nuclear power.

Prime Minister: Really, Comrade King? And can we ask why?

Trevor: It's not safe! Look at what happened in Russia and Japan! I wants the people of my kingdom to feel safe. (**Firmly.**) So there's to be no more nuclear power.

Prime Minister: But an important new nuclear power station is under construction.

Trevor: So what! I've got a solution and it's blooming good one too. Stuff all that nuclear power rubbish up the Khyber.

Duke: I don't think that will be a popular move in India.

Trevor: The building can still be used. Convert it into homes for the people. Blocks of flats and nuclear power stations look much the same from outside. It shouldn't be difficult.

Foreign Secretary: And what is to happen to the existing nuclear power stations?

Trevor: Switch them all off! The people must be safe!

Prime Minister: Before we do that, Comrade King, the Minister for Energy must come and see you. He will explain the benefits of nuclear power and perhaps you will change your mind.

Trevor: The Minister for Energy can come and see me. I'll even let him talk to me, *but* I can tell yer now that he won't change *my* mind!

Prime Minister: Thank you, Comrade King.

Trevor: Thank you, Comrades! Now yer all know the sort of things I wanna happen.

Prime Minister: Certainly, Comrade King.

Trevor: And don't worry about me. I don't want *any* of you to worry about yer jobs either. I've got lots and lots of plans that'll keep yer all busy for years and years and years. See yer later! **(He gives a thumbs up sign to all then exits, full of confidence.)**
(Everybody is dumbstruck and heads are shaken in disbelief. For a few moments nobody speaks.)

But being a communist king has its drawbacks!

Minister: **(Making his points with energetic enthusiasm.)** But that was decades ago. Safety improvements galore have been developed in the meantime. Let me show you the plans for our latest nuclear power station being built at Dungeness. **(The Minister opens the TOP SECRET folder, brings out sheets of plans and opens one out. The folder is propped up so that its cover is clearly displayed.)**

Trevor: **(Studying the plans.)** What's all this then? I can't make any sense of it.

Minister: Let me explain Comrade King. **(Pointing to features on the plans.)** At the centre of the nuclear power station is the reactor.

Trevor: I've heard about them things. Them's what causes all the trouble.

Minister: This one will never cause trouble. If there is the tiniest problem it shuts down automatically and then ...

Trevor: It shuts down atomically what does that mean?

Minister: **(Trying to be patient.)** No, Comrade King, I said it shuts down auto-mat-ic-ally. **(There is a knock on the door. Anna enters carrying a tray with tea items.)**

Trevor: Thanks Comrade Annie. Just put it at the end of the table.
(Anna places the tray on the table sees the TOP SECRET folder and is momentarily startled and gasps. She recovers her composure, bows and leaves.)

Minister: She doesn't say much, does she?

Trevor: Doesn't say much! We've been here a week and she hasn't uttered a word.

Minister: Does she speak English?

Trevor: How should I know when I haven't heard her speak?

Minister: Yes, that is a problem. Interesting one too. **(He muses for a moment.)** Now, back to nuclear power. **(His enthusiasm is undiminished.)** At the core is the reactor.

Trevor: Like in an apple. **(He laughs and pokes the Minister in the ribs.)** The core is in the centre.

Minister: You could say that. You could say that! There is heat produced by fission in the nuclear reactor.

Trevor: Fishing you say? That's nice it's good that the staff have recreational facilities.

Minister: The heat produced by the fission creates steam that drives a turbine and electricity is generated. It's as simple as that.

Trevor: Simple it may be but it's still dangerous. I don't want the risk.

Minister: But Comrade King, there's *no* possibility of that happening. If there is an occurrence then the reactor will be sealed off automatically with radiation proof doors. And furthermore the whole building is radiation proof. Radiation proof!

Trevor: That's what you say.

Minister: That's what I believe.

Trevor: But I wanner be sure. I don't want to see radiatored sheep at Dungeness hopping about with frizzy permed wool and bleating like singers who can hit high notes. It wouldn't be natural.

Minister: Of course it wouldn't be natural. But it couldn't possibly happen. Every safeguard will be in place.

Trevor: Now then Comrade. You've not convinced me but I wanner give you a fair chance.

Minister: Thank you Comrade King.

Trevor: You leave those plans with me so that I can study them.

Minister: But they are marked top secret. I'm supposed not to let them out of my sight.

Trevor: **(Indignantly.)** Are you saying that the King can't be trusted with the country's security? I don't like that Comrade Minister. I really don't.

Minister: My apologies, Comrade King. I meant no such thing.

Trevor: Then I'll study them and you can come and see me again.

Minister: When would you like to meet?

Trevor: I'm not allowed to work that sort of thing out. The staff tells me what I'm doing. Have a chat with one of me secretaries. They know more about what I'm doing than I do meself.

Minister: Very well Comrade King. Please make sure nobody else sees those plans. They are very sensitive.

Trevor: Nuclear power always seems sensitive. One mistake or accident and half the country could be radiatored.

Minister: Good morning, then Comrade King.

Trevor: See yer later, Comrade.

Minister: **(To himself, but clearly, as he exits.)** Most irregular, most irregular.

Trevor: **(Calling after him)** If yer irregular yer'd better take some medicine.

(As the Minister leaves Anna enters to remove the tray. She gathers up the cups and saucers but then remains standing. Trevor studies the plans.)

Anna: **(Giving a gentle cough then speaks deeply, slowly and with a heavy Russian accent.)** Sir.

Trevor: **(Looking up.)** Yes, Comrade Annie. What do yer want?

Anna: My real name is Anastasia.

Trevor: Is it now? Why do you tell me that?

Anna: I have a message for you.

Trevor: Do you now? Is it from Comrade Queen Mavis? Has she gone shopping?

Anna: No, Comrade. **(She goes to the door, looks about then closes it.)** I have to be careful.

Trevor: Why's that Comrade?

Anna: The message is from ... **(Pausing for effect.)** ... Vladimir. *(Or substitute a suitable Russian president's name.)*

Trevor: Vladimir? Who's Vladimir?

Anna: The President of Russia.

Trevor: Oh, *that* Vladimir! What does he want?

Anna: He sends greetings from one Communist head of state to another.

Trevor: **(Puzzled.)** I thought Communism finished in Russia decades ago.

Anna: That's what you think. That's what ve Russians want the vorld to think. Really nothing in Russia has changed.

Trevor: Hasn't it? Well, send Comrade Vladimir my Comradely Royal greeting.

Anna: I will, Comrade.

Trevor: That's very good. Right, off you go.

Anna: My message is this ...

Trevor: I thought the greeting was Vladimir's message.

Anna: No, that was just a greeting. This is the message.

Trevor: Give it to me then. **(He holds out a hand.)**

Anna: Not that sort of message. This message is *far* too sensitive to be written down. Vladimir says he wants copies of ...

Trevor: Copies of what? I'm only the King.

Anna: Copies of anything TOP SECRET! Anything at all. You give them to me and I will use my channels to send them on to the Kremlin.

Trevor: I understand.

Anna: Do you understand what Vladimir wants?

Trevor: I understand what he wants.

Anna: Good. We understand you have important plans in your possession.

Trevor: How do you know that?

Anna: We know more than you think.

Trevor: But I've only just received them.

Anna: We know, you know.

Trevor: But how do you know, I know?

Anna: Because we know what we know and what we want to know, we know. And we know we want copies of them!

Trevor: But why? What use are they to you?

Anna: Russia must be up to date in everything.

Trevor: I can't just *give* them to you.

Anna: Of course not, Comrade. We are very reasonable. We try not to inconvenience our friends. You have a week. Indeed, we will *give* you a week.

Trevor: Thanks very much ... er ... what do you mean?

Anna: A week to produce copies of those plans.

Trevor: I don't even know how to use a photocopier.

Anna: Then give them to me and I will copy them. We wouldn't want our new source of information to have any problems.

Trevor: What do you mean? **(Suddenly alarmed.)** Your new source of information ... Who ... who ... who's ... who's ... your new source of information?

Anna: You are! You are perfectly placed to help us with everything and anything!

Trevor: And if I can't? **(Anna shakes her head slowly as Trevor speaks each word.)** Shan't ... Won't? ... Mustn't? ... Shouldn't? ... Couldn't? ... Wouldn't?

Anna: We must have your full co-operation. If you don't co-operate we will ...

Trevor: Are you threatening me?

Anna: No, Comrade. I am just delivering a message that comes direct from what you call the horse's mouth.

Trevor: Will the horse listen to my replies?

Anna: The horse will listen to what you say. I could say that you have the ear of the horse's mouth. Just do as the horse says.

Trevor: So ... I am being threatened!

Anna: Certainly not Comrade. We do not threaten. **(She moves very close to Trevor and speaks with heavy emphasis.)** We persuade.

Trevor: Good. I don't like being threatened.

Anna: Excellent. I would not threaten you. But just remember, Comrade King, that I serve you food ... every day.

Trevor: But I can't just hand these plans over. I have to study them and ...

Anna: **(Shaking her head.)** I do not need to hear about your problems. Your problems are not my problems they're your problems. Make sure I have those important plans within a week. I mean what I say, Comrade. **(She gently strokes Trevor's arm as she speaks.)** Remember! ... Remember! I serve you food every day!

Trevor: Oh my goodness!

Anna: **(Speaking in seductive tones.)** I will serve you food every day. Every, every day! ... **(She strokes Trevor's cheek and kisses him.)**

Trevor: (Gasp.) Ah! Ah!

Anna: (She kisses him again.) Remember, Comrade! (Another kiss.) Remember!
(Moving away.)

Trevor: How can I possibly forget?

Anna: Remember! (She opens the door, picks up the tray and glides out of the room.) Remember!
(Trevor shuts the door.)

Trevor: (Picking up the plans and quivering.) And the Prime Minister told me that being King would be an easy job!

(The Trumpet Voluntary is played then the 'Red Flag' takes over as the lights fade.)

CURTAIN