

# **Marigold Mews**

**A farce by  
Peter Rolls**

**Spotlight Publications**

## **Marigold Mews**

CAST (in order of appearance)

**Avril Hook**, Council worker, a maid-of-all-jobs  
**Boadicea Briggs (Bo)**, "Lady of the road", long-term traveller  
**Clovis Dalrymple**, fellow traveller, ex-dancer  
**Esme Flyte (Ez)**, poet, passing through  
**Mrs Froggatt**, Councillor, Chair of Arts & Entertainments  
**Gwendolyn Gish**, Community Arts Consultant

Setting - a fence and bare billboard

Time - modern

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*Time: early morning*

*Setting: a run-down back-street*

*Action takes place on the pavement in front of a derelict corner-site. The set is a fence and bare billboard. Fixed to the fence is the name: Marigold Mews. On the pavement are a couple of shopping trolleys, piles of boxes and clutter. Some boxes conceal the sleeping Bo*

*Enter Avril, street-sweeper, pushing her broom briskly along near side of the road. Exit Avril. Then she re-enters, pushing broom briskly along middle of road. Exit. Then she re-enters, pushing broom briskly along the gutter. She stoops, picks up a tin and throws it on to a heap of boxes.*

**Bo** *(from her heap)* Oy! Watch it!

**Avril** Who's that!

**Bo** *(sits up)* What time is it?

**Avril** Five to eight.

**Bo** Five to eight! Where have you been?

**Avril** I'm sorry. Did you miss your early call? I'll have a word with the concierge.

**Bo** Don't you come the sarky with me, madam. Look at the state of this place. Disgusting. Those tins ...

**Avril** Tins are Refuse. I'm on Clutter.

**Bo** For God's sake! Refuse, clutter ... it's all rubbish! What's the difference?

**Avril** Do you really want to know? *(Takes book from trolley)* Here we are ... just out ... CRUD.

**Bo** CRUD!

**Avril** Council Regulations for Urban Disposals. Euro-compatible. *(Reads from book)* Here we are: "Dusts, dregs, detrituses ...

**Bo** Yes, yes ...

**Avril** ... swills, scums and slags..."

**Bo** Yes, yes.

**Avril** I don't do any of them. *(Turns pages)* Where I come in is Clutter, miscellaneous. Which includes the Bio-degradable.

**Bo** Apple cores?

**Avril** Yes.

**Bo** You'll want this then. *(Tosses core on the pavement)* Nice bit of Clutter.

**Avril** *(pushes the core back)* Not if I see you dropping it. Then it's Litter. Which is illegal. Summary fine. *(Reads from the book)* "Litter. Unwanted matter left on path, road or other public space." People are supposed to take it home.

**Bo** This *is* my home - at the minute.

**Avril** Where's your bin, then? Homes have bins, bins have homes.

**Bo** Exactly. Where is my bin?

**Avril** Have you applied for a bin?

**Bo** No.

**Avril** There you are, then. You need Form B-1. Up the Office, odd Mondays.

**Bo** And that will take care of my Litter, will it?

**Avril** Unless it's big stuff - the Lumber. Then it's Lou and his lads. Thursdays.

**Bo** But you do the Small Degradable?

**Avril** *(gives card)* That's me. Avril Hook, Clutter Consultant. Specialist in Degradables - animal or vegetable ...

**Bo** *(reads card)* Oh, I wish I'd known. I had a rat died in here the other day. I could have kept him for you.

**Avril** Rat!

**Bo** Yes. We was sharing a curry and he just went ... *(snaps fingers)*. Eyes popped - one blood-curdling squeak and he was gone ... you heard it, didn't you, Clo?

**Clo** Curdling, Bo. *(Does dying rat-squeak)*

**Bo** Poor little devil. Still, he came in handy. I passed him on to the DSS.

**Avril** That was you was it? The rat in their letter box?

**Bo** They're always on about declaring your assets. I thought they'd like to see what shape mine was in.

**Avril** Well, next time, don't waste it on the DSS. Street clearing is down to the Council. We've all got our targets: 10 points for a rat, 500 for a dog and so on

**Bo** Insects? *(Stamps her foot on the pavement)*

**Avril** *(looks down at squashed insect and scrapes it with her foot)* Not really worth it, love. Unless it's a nest. Or a Colorado beetle. They're favourite.

**Bo** What about humans?

**Avril** Dead - or alive?

**Bo** Whichever.

**Avril** Alive is tricky. But dead is okay. (*Looks at broom-head*) Probably get a new broom out of a decent body. If it had boots.

**Bo** I'll bear you in mind.

**Avril** Anyhow, I'll be getting on ... (*makes to leave*)

**Bo** Oy! (*Points to paving*) You've missed my crevice.

**Avril** Crevice!

**Bo** This gap by the bed-head. Look at it. All that fluff and muck. Get that down your tubes and it's good-night Geronimo ... is that what you're after? The dead-body bonus ...?

**Avril** Okay, okay. (*Brushes vigorously in corner*)

**Bo** No, it needs a real dig out. (*Grabs at spade*)

**Avril** Leave that alone! This is technical. City & Guilds, NVQ - the lot. (*Scrapes dirt meticulously*)

**Bo** (*gets on knees*) You've still missed this bit.

**Avril** (*scrapes finally*) Is that it, then? Or do you want the complete swilling? Will and his Washer?

**Bo** No, no. Catch your death on wet slabs.

*Avril bustles about, knocking boxes etc.*

Hey, mind her ladyship.

**Avril** Another one of you?

**Bo** Yes, my mate Clo. She was up half the night for the astral. Checking her conjunctions.

**Avril** Into that, are you? Mystic moonbeams ... Virgo rampant ...

**Bo** She does the airy-fairy - stars and auras. I'm more of the down-to-earth. D'you fancy a palm-reading? Rattle a rune or two?

**Avril** No, I can't stop now. (*Brushes round boxes, knocks some down. Shouts into heap.*) Sorry. (*Peers*) She is okay, is she?

**Bo** Yes, of course. (*Bangs on nearest box*) All right, aren't you, dear? (*Bangs harder*) Wakey, wakey! This is the Angel of the Dawn!

*Avril and Bo pull aside boxes, searching*

Her trolley's still here. Where's she gone?

**Avril** Aliens got her?

**Bo** Not round here, love. Nor the white slave, neither. They sent her back.

*Clo enters and stands unseen at edge of stage*

You can see their point. She's not much ...

**Clo** (*cuts in*) Not much what?

**Avril** Oh, hello! You're up then.

**Clo** I've been for the papers. Look at this mess ... (*stacks her boxes*). Where's your civic pride?

**Avril** My civic pride is getting this street clear.

**Bo** (*to Clo*) This is Avril. She does the small degradable.

**Clo** (*sniffs*) Yes, you can tell.

**Avril** I'll be getting on, then.

**Clo** (*scrapes paving with foot*) There's chewing gum stuck here.

**Avril** I only do the gum if it's loose. (*Refers to regulations*) Otherwise, it's Sid and his scrapers. Wednesday mornings. Okay?

*She takes empty milk bottles from her cart. Referring to the diagram, she places them on the kerb*

**Clo** What are they for?

**Avril** Council's idea for brightening things up. Art on the street. Phase One. (*Nudges bottles in line*)

**Bo** (*looks at bottles*) That's exciting. What happens in Phase Two?

**Avril** You wait and see ... (*tidies up, then exits*)

**Bo** (*to Clo*) Waiting! We spend all our time waiting for something or other - getting our minds into gear. But I'm not sure I was ready for arty milk bottles.

**Clo** It's probably poly-conceptual, Bo. Never mind, have a slab of the soft and dry. (*Gives Bo a pile of newspapers*)

**Bo** Thanks. (*Sorts pages*) City pages is best. All them fat cats - gives it a bit of plush ... (*settles into paper. She takes out book and reads*)

**Clo** (*spreads her paper*) Court and Society News ... Lady Clapp is at home for her 64th birthday.

**Bo** Is she doing a tea?

**Clo** It doesn't say.

**Bo** Stingy cow. (*Goes back to book*)

*Clo reads paper*

Anything in Wills?

**Clo** Are you expecting?

**Bo** No, but if I ever see a Biggs, it's worth dropping round. Try the long-lost relation.

**Clo** Neat idea. The loony gibbering ...

**Bo** Exactly. Skeleton in the cupboard. *(Reads book)*

**Clo** What are you reading?

**Bo** A bit of Beckett. He had skeletons all over. Do you know him?

**Clo** No, I can't say I do. Isn't he rather - obscure?

**Bo** Yes, that's what people think. But he's got something, has old Samuel. *(Reads from book jacket)*  
"Addresses the eternal human condition - tragic, yet comic." And I go along with that. Mind you, I'm only on page 6.

**Clo** "Waiting for Godot" ... isn't that the one about ...?

**Bo** People waiting.

**Clo** What for?

**Bo** Exactly.

**Clo** What do you mean?

**Bo** What for? That's what he wants us to ask. Mind you ... *(flips on a few pages)* ... he's taking his time about telling. Still, that's life, isn't it?

**Clo** What?

**Bo** Takes its time.

**Clo** Loses its place, Bo.

**Bo** And that, Clo ...

*They lean back, taking their time*

*Enter Avril, pushing bicycle with sack of leaflets*

**Avril** Morning, ladies.

**Bo** It's you again.

**Avril** Juggling the jobs. I'm on tea break for the sweeping and moonlighting for the leaflets.

**Bo** Leaflets?

**Avril** Your offers ... double glazing, Spanish holidays ... *(tosses sheaf of leaflets on to Bo's lap)*  
**Bo** *(stuffs leaflets inside clothing)* Thanks, love. You can't beat the double glazing.

**Avril** *(looks along Mews)* And will you take it for the other lot?

**Bo** May as well. All empty, of course, but still ...

**Avril** *(tosses piles of leaflets to Bo and Clo)* Keeps the figures up. Used to be a good post-code round here. They like that.

**Bo** When we've finished with them, shall we ...?

**Avril** Against the fence, love. Back on Friday ... Hump it out, hump it in again. Help the targets, eh?  
*(Hefts sack on to bicycle)* Oh, I nearly forgot ... *(takes cans from bag and fills the bottles with red water)*

*Bo and Clo watch as she fills the bottles*

**Bo** The tension mounts, eh, Clo?

**Clo** Tenterhooks, Bo. Agog.

**Bo** Just as well we're trained in the waiting, eh?

*Avril is filling the bottles*

Look at that red, Clo. I reckon that's symbolic.

**Clo** Must be, Bo.

**Bo** What do you think? Revolution - blood on the streets?

**Clo** Raspberries, Bo.

**Bo** Eh? *(Looks)* Yes, you could be right. *(Sniffs)* Or maybe rhubarb. *(To Avril)* What is it, love?

**Avril** Red ink. *(She exits)*

**Bo** There you are, Clo - in the red. Typical. Only been on for ten minutes and the whole thing's gone bust.

**Clo** It's the pin-stripes, Bo. The professionals.

**Bo** Pirates the lot of them, Clo. Pick you clean.

*Bo and Clo resume reading*

## **Marigold Mews**

Peter Rolls' award-winning play was highly commended in the NDFA one-act playwriting competition 2000.

### **Plot Summary**

Three "ladies of the road" are bedded down in a back-street Mews. Bo reads Beckett, Clo's an ex-dancer, and Ez writes poetry. No longer New Age, not yet old Age, the women clash with authority (street-cleaner, traffic-warden, Councillors *et al*). However, the Community Arts organiser recruits them for the street Festival. The resulting performance has got it all: art, drama, poetry. Like you've never seen before!

Playing time approx. 46 minutes