

# EXTRACT

# Rumpole of the Sydenham Line

a short play

by

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**Cast**

**CLAUDIA**            a lawyer, 30-40

**GRAEME**           a Greenkeeper, 50-60

**LYNNE**            Claudia's secretary

**Setting**

Claudia's office in the city

**Time**

Week day, 9.30am.

**Rumpole of the Sydenham Line**

City. Office, 9.30am.

**CLAUDIA** sits at her desk, sipping coffee from a styrofoam cup. She is staring at a piece of paper in front of her. Pause.

**LYNNE** enters.

**LYNNE:** Mr Davids.

**CLAUDIA DOES NOT RESPOND.**

**LYNNE:** Mr Davids.

**CLAUDIA:** (STARTLED) Sorry.

**CLAUDIA LOOKS AT LYNNE.**

**LYNNE:** He's here.

**CLAUDIA:** Oh . Okay.

**PAUSE.**

**LYNNE:** Should I show him in?

**CLAUDIA:** Yes. Yes.

**LYNNE EXITS. CLAUDIA STANDS. HE WALKS TO THE WINDOW. HE LOOKS OUT. HE TURNS TO FACE THE DOOR. PAUSE.**

**GRAEME ENTERS.**

**GRAEME:** Claudia.

**CLAUDIA:** Graeme.

**GRAEME:** Why do you call me that?

**CLAUDIA LAUGHS.**

**CLAUDIA:** Because that's your name. Sit down. Yes.

**CLAUDIA GETS A CHAIR FOR GRAEME. GRAEME SITS.**

**CLAUDIA:** You made it in okay?

**GRAEME:** I'm late. Missed the train.

**CLAUDIA:** Well you're here now.

- GRAEME: It was on the station as I was walking up. I saw it but I just couldn't get there in time.
- CLAUDIA: Nonsense.
- GRAEME: My legs - they're too old.
- CLAUDIA: But you're here now.
- GRAEME: Old.
- CLAUDIA: Nonsense. (**CLAUDIA SITS.**) And that's why you've come to see me. The reason for your visit. I mean – you don't mind, do you?
- GRAEME: Mind?
- CLAUDIA: If we get straight to it. I have a ten o'clock.
- GRAEME: I understand.
- CLAUDIA: I mean it would be great to chat, to ... catch up – but ten o'clock.
- GRAEME: It's alright.
- CLAUDIA: Good. Well then, it's as you said. Your problem is –

**GRAEME LOOKS AT HER.**

- CLAUDIA: Trains.
- GRAEME: I don't have a problem with trains.

**OVERLAPPING:**

- CLAUDIA: (**HOLDING UP PAPER**) Then they have a problem with you.
- GRAEME: The only problem I have –
- CLAUDIA: This was faxed to me this morning.
- GRAEME: is that I missed that one this morning.
- CLAUDIA: It's from their solicitors.
- GRAEME: When I was young I would've caught it -
- CLAUDIA: These are serious questions.
- GRAEME: A hop, a skip and a jump and I would've been –
- CLAUDIA: Please!

SILENCE.

CLAUDIA: Ten o'clock. Now, if I am to understand correctly - you boarded the train at 9.45pm last Tuesday.

**GRAEME NODS.**

GRAEME: I was coming home from work.

CLAUDIA: You're still at the Golf Club?

GRAEME: (NODDING) Tuesdays I stay till they finish the watering.

CLAUDIA: You entered the carriage in which Mr Grant was seated.

GRAEME: No. That's not right.

CLAUDIA: It's not?

GRAEME: I got on at Erskineville. He didn't get on till the next stop. St Peters.

CLAUDIA: (HOLDING UP PAPER) That's not what it says here.

GRAEME: I got on at Erskineville. He got on at St Peters.

PAUSE.

CLAUDIA: Are you absolutely sure?

GRAEME: Yes.

CLAUDIA: Absolutely. I mean – it does change things.

PAUSE. **GRAEME NODS. CLAUDIA WRITES SOMETHING DOWN.**

CLAUDIA: So you didn't sit next to Mr Grant?

GRAEME: He sat next to me.

CLAUDIA: Then why do they say you sat next to him?

GRAEME: You need to ask them that. He sat next to me.

CLAUDIA: But why? Why in a completely empty carriage, with every other seat vacant – why would he choose to sit next to you?

**GRAEME SHRUGS.**

GRAEME: Maybe he wanted some company.

**GRAEME SMILES. CLAUDIA LOOKS AT GRAEME. PAUSE.**