

Who Pushed Humpty Dumpty?

a play for
tape recorder
by John Parker

CHARACTERS



VINCENT VOICE



SOBBING WOMAN



SAMANTHA SNOOP



INSPECTOR CLUEDO



ALL THE KING'S MEN

PLUS: ANOTHER 5 OR 6 PEOPLE TO DO
SOUND EFFECTS, CHORUSES, & SO ON...

SCENE: *There is a distant mumble of voices, becoming louder and clearer and turning into the Humpty Dumpty rhyme.*

CHORUS. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Burst of news theme music.

VINCENT VOICE. Good evening. This is 123FM, the station for the nation. Here is the 5 o'clock news, read by Vincent Voice. The Minister of Education has announced that all schools are to close tomorrow ...

Phone rings.

Excuse me while I answer our news-flash phone.

(Excitedly) We interrupt this news with a special item. It seems that well-known citizen Humpty Dumpty has fallen from a wall in the city. We cross now to our



roving reporter, Samantha Snoop.

Crowd noises in the background.

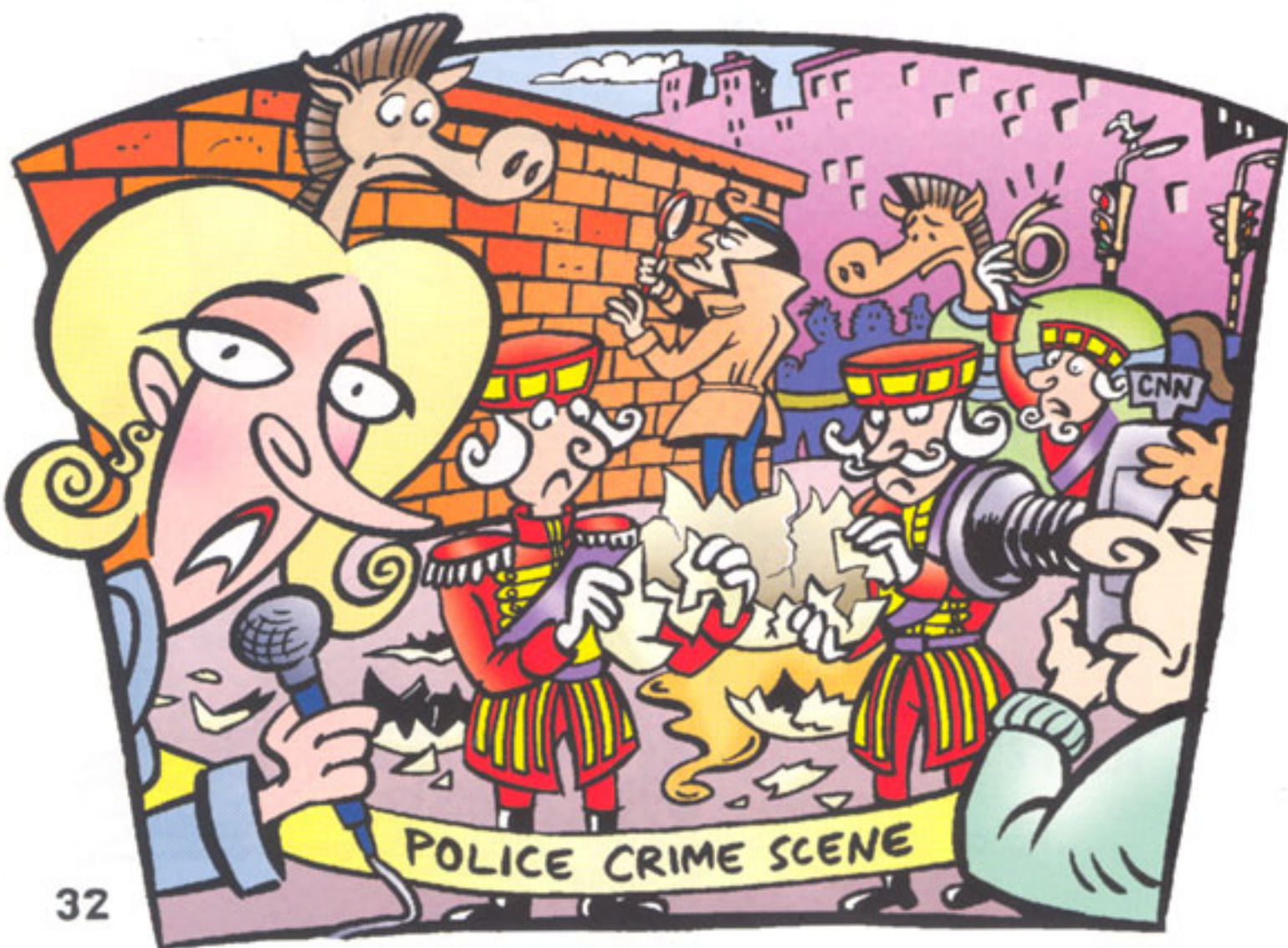
Describe the scene for us, Samantha.

Crowd noises fade.

SAMANTHA. People are rushing everywhere, Vincent. We've got all the king's horses and all the king's men down here, and the police are still searching for clues.

VINCENT VOICE. Searching for clues, Samantha? Surely this was an accident?

SAMANTHA. Well, Vincent, I have an unhappy young woman with me right now who claims that Humpty Dumpty didn't fall – he was pushed!



Lots of sobbing, with ambulance noise in the background.

SOBBING WOMAN. We were going to get married. We were so much in love. Why would Humpty fall when he had so much to look forward to? Somebody wanted him out of the way! And ...

Whistling noise.



VINCENT VOICE. Hello, Samantha? Hello? We appear to have lost our roving reporter, folks. In the meantime, on with the news. At noon today, the Prime Minister said ...

Whistling noise.

SAMANTHA. Samantha Snoop again, listeners. Sorry about that. Unfortunately, the young woman slipped away before we could get her name. But I've got all the king's men here with me now.

ALL THE KING'S MEN. We tried to put Humpty together again. We tried Sellotape, we tried chewing gum, we tried superglue – but it was no good.

SAMANTHA. Thank you, all the king's men. But did Humpty fall or was he pushed? What *really* happened?

ALL THE KING'S MEN. We don't know. We didn't see it happen.

SAMANTHA. Well, listeners, that's about all we can tell you. But wait – here's a word from the famous Inspector Cluedo, Chief of Police.



INSPECTOR CLUEDO.

We might have made a breakthrough here, Samantha! We've found a yellow bow tie at the scene of Humpty Dumpty's fall.

SAMANTHA. A yellow bow tie! I know someone who wears a yellow bow tie. He works for 123FM, the station for the ...

Whistling noise.

VINCENT VOICE. Hello again. Vincent Voice here from 123FM, the station for the nation. Well, we've lost Samantha Snoop again. Sorry about that, folks. Let's move on to the rest of the news. *(Coughs.)* Yesterday, the Prime Minister said ...

INSPECTOR CLUEDO. Stay where you are, Vincent Voice! I'm the famous Inspector Cluedo. I have a helicopter outside, and I'm arresting you on suspicion of pushing Humpty Dumpty!

VINCENT VOICE. I've got no idea what you're talking about!



INSPECTOR CLUEDO. Oh, yes, you have, Vincent Voice! Remember all those technical problems just when Samantha Snoop was getting close to something? That was you, pulling the plug in case you were found out! And that yellow bow tie. How come you're not wearing yours right now? And then there's that sobbing woman. She used to be your girlfriend!

VINCENT VOICE (*flustered*). Nonsense! I've never seen Gloria Bombshell before in my life!

INSPECTOR CLUEDO (*triumphantly*). Then how come you know her name?



VINCENT VOICE (*snarling*). Curses – you’ve found me out! Yes, it’s true. Gloria *was* mine – till that Humpty Dumpty poached her off me. I wanted him scrambled, so I pushed him off the wall. But you’ll never catch me!

SAMANTHA. He’s getting away!

INSPECTOR CLUEDO. Catch him, Samantha Snoop!

Sounds of a fight.

SAMANTHA. Got him, Inspector!

INSPECTOR CLUEDO. Well done, Samantha! So, Vincent Voice, it’s on with the handcuffs – and off to prison you go!



SAMANTHA. And remember, listeners – you heard it first on 123FM, the station for the nation!

Burst of news theme music.

CHORUS. Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again. 2



illustrations by Lorenzo Van Der Lingen