

S7 E13 - Six Charlies in Search of an Author

Transcribed by Josh Hayes, adjustments by thegoonshow.net. Final corrections by Helen.

GREENSLADE:

This is the BBC Home Service.

MILLIGAN:

Well said.

SEAGOON:

Wal. Walter Greenslade. Where do you get your advance information from?

GREENSLADE:

I sit in the Stranger's Gallery at Rowton House.

SEAGOON:

You're no stranger to Rowton House. I see you there every night.

GREENSLADE:

Soooo! You see through my Sir William Roots tramp disguise!

SEAGOON:

Yes. And the penalty is announcing The Goon Show.

MILLIGAN:

Ooh, horrors!

GREENSLADE:

Right... The Goon Show.

SEAGOON:

Hmm. It's hardly worth your while comin' here, is it, Wal?

GREENSLADE:

Ahh, my dear Secombe.

(RASPBERRY)

GREENSLADE:

There's much more, you know.

SEAGOON:

Ooh, well done. Where? What? What? Tell us.

GREENSLADE:

Yes, because, you see...

MILLIGAN:

Yes?

GREENSLADE:

...this week it's Jim Spriggs' immortal book,

MILLIGAN:

Yes?

SELLERS:

Yes?

SEAGOON:

Yes?

GREENSLADE:

'Six Charlies in Search of an Author'.

GRAMS:

DRAMATIC MUSIC PLAYED AT VARYING SPEEDS

SPRIGGS:

Thank you. Chapter One. Neddie meets Grytpype-Thynne.

SEAGOON:

Good heavens! I'm supposed to meet Grytpype-Thynne in Chapter One! I... I... I'd better hurry!

FX:

FRANTIC BANGING ON DOOR, DOOR OPENS

GRYTPYPE:

Oh, you must be the Charlie I'm supposed to meet in Chapter One.

SEAGOON:

Correct.

GRYTPYPE:

What a thrilling start.

SEAGOON:

My name is Neddie Seagoon.

GRYTPYPE:

There's one in every family.

SEAGOON:

What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? What? bock bock cluck bugock (GOES ON DOING CHICKEN IMPRESSION, THEN STOPS)

(A FEW SECONDS OF SILENCE)

GRYTPYPE:

Do you mind facing... do you mind facing west when you do that, it gets all over me. Now, to whom do I owe the pleasure of this nauseating visit?

SEAGOON:

The author.

GRYTPYPE:

Of course, of course, you must excuse me, I'm only new in this book, really.

SEAGOON:

I see. What part do you play?

GRYTPYPE:

I'm a bone specialist.

SEAGOON:

What do you want?

GRYTPYPE:

Bones.

SEAGOON:

(GULPS) I haven't got any bones.

GRYTPYPE:

Nonsense, nonsense, you'd fall down without them. You'd fall *down* without them.

SEAGOON:

You'd fall down without *them*.

GRYTPYPE:

You'd fall down without them.

SELLERS:

(HERN) Take yer choice. (NORMAL – OFF) I know...

MILLIGAN:

(OFF) Handy.

GRYTPYPE:

I know for a fact that you have a large number of them tucked away somewhere.

SEAGOON:

Have you been prying into my family album of X-rays?

GRYTPYPE:

Moriarty, tell him what you found.

MORIARTY:

Ah, sapristi spon, I will! Mister Seagoon... (AT AUDIENCE LAUGHTER) Quiet, please! We're getting nowhere fast tonight! So a Merry Christmas to you all!

SELLERS:

(OFF) [UNCLEAR] ...in a good spirit, there.

MORIARTY:

Sapristi spon, let me tell you Mister Seagoon, we have a very compromising X-ray photograph of two sets of bones! Yours - and a lady's!

SEAGOON:

It's a lie! We're just good friends! Ahem. How much do you want for that X-ray?

GRYTPYPE:

Ten pounds, Neddie, to be paid in money before Chapter Ten!

MORIARTY:

Yes! And don't try and slip past us, Neddie, because we've got an armed man in the index!

SEAGOON:

Curses! So they're going to catch me by the index! Oh, dear readers, here am I, due to marry the beautiful millionairess, Gladys Minkwater, in Chapter Eight!

MINNIE:

Ooowwww!

SEAGOON:

Before then I must get that compromising X-ray photograph back! Ten pounds they want, eh?
(CHUCKLES) Taxi!

GRAMS:

TAXI ROARING UP

SEAGOON:

The nearest pawn shop. Put your foot down and keep your flag up.

WILLIUM:

Right, mate.

GRAMS:

TAXI UP AND EXPLOSION, RUBBLE FALLING

WILLIUM:

I got it, mate, that's three bob on the clock.

SEAGOON:

Right. Here's a pound for your trouble.

WILLIUM:

I ain't got no trouble, mate.

SEAGOON:

You have now, mate, that pound's a forgery.

WILLIUM:

Oooohhww, mate! Ohhww!

GRAMS:

DOOR OPENS, SHOP BELL TINKLES

HENRY:

Good morning, sir, welcome to Chapter Two.

SEAGOON:

Thank you. Now, I should like to pawn myself.

HENRY:

I'm sorry, we don't take antiques here.

SEAGOON:

Have a care, old prune-faced fossil.

HENRY:

Owwwwww!

SEAGOON:

I'm not an antique. Look! Here's the date of my birth stamped on the bottom!

HENRY:

OoooOOOOoooh. This is a Welsh birthmark. Go up to the fourth floor, room three.

SEAGOON:

Right!

FX:

CLIMBING MANY FLIGHTS OF STEPS, NED PUFFS AND GROANS

SEAGOON:

Fourth floor.

FX:

KNOCKING ON DOOR, DOOR OPENS

HENRY:

What is it, sir?

SEAGOON:

I'd like to pawn myself.

HENRY:

Who sent you up here?

SEAGOON:

You did!

HENRY:

Then you've come to the right man. Get into this lift.

GRAMS:

LIFT DOOR OPENS, WINCH STARTS UP.

MINNIE:

Going down. Page 18. 17. Page 16, yim bumble dee ooooh. 15. Chapter 1, Crun's pawnshop. Seagoon enters and pawns himself. Oh, it's a very small part for me this week.

HENRY:

[UNCLEAR], Min, you naughty...

SEAGOON:

We're back where we started. What did you send me up to the 4th floor for?

HENRY:

To get me.

SEAGOON:

To get you? Wait a minute - how did you get up there before me?

HENRY:

(CACKLING) I skipped a couple of pages! (CACKLES SOME MORE THEN HAS AN ATTACK)

SEAGOON:

I've got a good mind to tell the author.

HENRY:

No, no, don't do that, he might have me killed off in a later chapter, don't...

SEAGOON:

Now look, Mister Crun, how much money will you give me on me?

HENRY:

Well, first I must scrutinise you with an intense scrute. Just take your clothes off.

MINNIE:

I made the room, first, buddy.

SEAGOON:

Hi! There!

HENRY:

Now like under this magnifying glass.

SEAGOON:

Ooh! It's cold, isn't it? Ooh! There! How do I look?

HENRY:

Ohhhhh, even bigger! Just stand on these scales, please.

GRAMS:

CABLES STRETCH, SPRING BOINGS

HENRY:

18 stone.

SEAGOON:

Shall I put the other leg on now?

HENRY:

No, no, no, no. As deadweight alone I'll offer you ten pounds, you'll come in useful for filling in holes.

SEAGOON:

Done!

HENRY:

You certainly have been! (CACKLES OFF) Did you hear that joke, did you?

SEAGOON:

Ten years ago.

HENRY:

Ohhh!

SEAGOON:

Now, where's the money?

HENRY:

There, ten pounds in crisp green farthings.

SEAGOON:

Ta. Goodbye!

HENRY:

No, wait, wait, you can't go 'til someone comes to redeem you.

SEAGOON:

(GULPS) What?

HENRY:

Kindly step into this safe and Geldray, play me the key.

MAX GELDRAV:

Ploogee!

MAX GELDRAV:

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

FX:

TYPING UNDER...

SPRIGGS:

Six Charlies in search of an author, folks. Chapter Three, in which I see fit to have the character Neddie Seagoon still inside Crun's fiendish pawnshop safe.

SEAGOON:

(ECHOEY THROUGHOUT SCENE) Yes, dear readers. Inside the safe all was dark. I took out a book of matches and began to read it. Page one: to ignite match, detach one and strike it against bottom.

GRAMS:

SCRRRRRITCH

SEAGOON:

Whoop! By the light of my burning trousers I could see that...

ECCLES:

(ECHOEY THROUGHOUT SCENE) Put that light out! Put that light out, my good man! Put that... ooh! Who put that light out? Who put that light out? Shut up, Eccles! Shut up, Eccles! Shut up... Who put the light out? (GABBLES A BIT)

SEAGOON:

The idiot stranger was a complete idiot stranger to me. He was tall and carried a cement sack with an outlet at the base. His legs were neat and carefully pressed. And on his head he wore a rubber dinghy with a hand-made cardboard peak.

ECCLES:

Hallo, Neddie. Have you pawned yourself?

SEAGOON:

Yes. I'm pledge number 32. Have you got a pledge number?

ECCLES:

No, no. I only pawned my socks.

SEAGOON:

Oh. Then why don't you go home?

ECCLES:

I can't get my boots off.

GRAMS:

TYPEWRITER

SPRIGGS:

(OVER TYPING - ECHOEY) Chapter Four, in which Seagoon has a brilliant idea.

SEAGOON:

(OVER BANGING ON SAFE DOOR) Mister Crun! Let me out! I had a brilliant idea!

HENRY:

What is it?

SEAGOON:

I want to redeem myself.

HENRY:

Certainly.

FX:

DOOR OPENS

HENRY:

Ten pounds, please.

GRAMS:

TILL, COINS

HENRY:

Ahh..

SEAGOON:

Now to buy back that compromising X-ray photograph. Where did I put that... ten pounds! The ten p... The t... It's gone! I've been robbed! What happens now, Mister Greenslade? I *must* know!

ECCLES:

We must know.

GREENSLADE:

Well, you see, I hate peeking at the end of the book, but in Chapter Seven Grytpype-Thynne and Moriarty ship the compromising X-ray photograph in a plain wrapper to an art connoisseur in Paris.

ORCHESTRA:

BLOODNOK THEME, SLOWS AT THE END

BLOODNOK:

Thank you, boys. That just gave me time to smuggle her out of the room.

FX:

RATTLING OF DOOR

SEAGOON:

Major Bloodnok!

BLOODNOK:

It's a lie! Ohh! Ohhh, naughty postcards? I've never heard of them, I tell you! How dare you come in here and offer me money for these postcards over there which are not here!

SEAGOON:

Major, enough of this needle nardle noo!

BLOODNOK:

Ooohhh!

SEAGOON:

Major, please.

BLOODNOK:

What?

SEAGOON:

For the compromising X-ray photo of myself and a lady, how much do you want?

BLOODNOK:

Ten thousand francs.

SEAGOON:

(GULPS) AhhooooooooOOOOooo!

BLOODNOK:

He's fainted in the direction of down! Doris, darling?

THROAT:

Yes, darling?

BLOODNOK:

Help me lift him in the direction of up.

THROAT:

Right.

SEAGOON:

ooOOOulp. I... I haven't got ten thousand francs.

BLOODNOK:

What?!

THROAT:

Right.

BLOODNOK:

Throw him in the direction of out.

THROAT:

Right.

SEAGOON:

Wait! Wait! I *have* got ten pounds!

BLOODNOK:

Put him in the direction of down again. Wait, don't turn over the page yet, I... I recognise that wallet. It's young Private Needle Seagoon, retired. My ex-batman and spon runner, Oooowww!

GREENSLADE:

Dear listeners, for the benefit of those of you who don't know what a 'spon runner' is - neither do I. I just want you to know that you are not alone. Wallace is one of you.

ECCLES:

Ooh!

GREENSLADE:

And now, Chapter Seven, page seventy-two. Seagoon does not recognise Major Bloodnok.

SEAGOON:

Major Bloodnok! I didn't recognise you in that false room.

BLOODNOK:

Well I was only wearing it to keep the rain off. I wouldn't wear it out of doors, of course.

SEAGOON:

Of course. Let me help you off with it.

BLOODNOK AND SEAGOON:

(GROANING EFFORT NOISES)

FX:

A COUPLE OF THUDS

BLOODNOK:

Thank you. Good heavens, we're outside and it's raining in the direction of down.

SEAGOON:

You'd better put your room on in the direction of on.

BLOODNOK:

(GROANING EFFORT NOISES)

FX:

DOOR OPENS

BLOODNOK:

Ah! Oh, that's better. It's much warmer with this direction on. Now Neddie, pull up a chair and sit down.

SEAGOON:

I'd rather stand if you don't mind.

BLOODNOK:

Oh, well, pull up a floor, then.

SEAGOON:

Major, please, don't...

BLOODNOK:

Huh?

SEAGOON:

Don't joke. (BOTH START LAUGHING, RASPBERRY BLOWN)

BLOODNOK:

Pardon me, I'm... Sorry. I can't help it, you know.

SEAGOON:

Major, please don't. I must have that compromising X-ray photo.

BLOODNOK:

[UNCLEAR]. I can't help it, I'm afraid. It... it's in that safe and Grytpype has the key. And there's nothing on this page we can open it with.

SEAGOON:

Well, I... I'll write something in. Let me see, erm...

FX:

TYPING

SEAGOON:

'Looking around the room that Bloodnok was wearing, Neddie's eye lit upon the following: one 18-foot crowbar and one sledgehammer'.

BLOODNOK:

What a splendid piece of descriptive writing! Now, who's going to do all the work?

FX:

TYPING

SEAGOON:

'Without hesitation, brave Bloodnok picked up the crowbar and began to force open the safe'.

GRAMS:

METALLIC CLANGING

BLOODNOK:

Oh! Ooh, you cad Edward, making me do all that. Give me that typewriter, will you?

FX:

TYPING

BLOODNOK:

'Neddie, horrified at the sight of a retired Indian Army Major labouring, snatched the crowbar and set to work himself'.

SEAGOON:

(GROANS, WORKING NOISES, CLANGING GOES ON AGAIN) It's starting to give!

SPRIGGS:

(FROM OFF) Hello! Who are you, you two characters? Stop! Stop, I say!

BLOODNOK:

It's a copper.

SPRIGGS:

I'm not a policeman!

BLOODNOK:

I beg your pardon, madam.

SPRIGGS:

I'm not a policewoman, either!

BLOODNOK:

I say, you're cutting it rather fine, aren't you?

SEAGOON:

The newcomer was a small pair of pince-nez spectacles, tied in a writing desk with the drawers open.

SPRIGGS:

Put a curb on your tongue, below.

SEAGOON:

Tongue, tongue.

SPRIGGS:

I am Jim Spriggs, author of this book. I put you in it!

SEAGOON:

Right in it!

SPRIGGS:

Silence!

BLOODNOK:

Look here, if you're the author, couldn't you have made me a little younger?

SPRIGGS:

What?

BLOODNOK:

I mean, in... in Chapter Three I met a delightful young lady but alas, me fires had gone out.

SPRIGGS:

Do not worry.

BLOODNOK:

What?

SPRIGGS:

I've made sure you don't get any older.

BLOODNOK:

(RELIEVED) Oh!

SPRIGGS:

On the next page you're run over by a steamroller, lad!

BLOODNOK:

Ooowwww!

SEAGOON:

Mister author, I implore you, I've got to get that safe open!

SPRIGGS:

Fear not, Little Jim! (SINGS) Fear not, Little Jimmmmm! (NORMAL) I'll write you a new character who will assist you.

FX:

TYPING

SPRIGGS:

'The door opened'.

FX:

DOOR OPENS

SPRIGGS:

'And a virile figure leapt into the centre of the room'.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Hello, captin! Springes into centre of room. Springe!

SPRIGGS:

Stay a moment, steaming lad. Did I write *you* in?

BLUEBOTTLE:

Yes!

SPRIGGS:

It's no good. I shall have to go to the country for a long rest.

FX:

DOOR SLAMS SHUT

SEAGOON:

And who are you, little blotchy lad?

BLUEBOTTLE:

I will show you. Moves right, keeping hole in seat of trousers away from vulgar gaze of audience. Now, then. Whip! Whip! Whip! Takes off false boots revealing... false feet!

ORCHESTRA:

SHORT TA-DAAA WITH CYMBAL

MILLIGAN:

Hoy!

SEAGOON:

So that's who you are.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Yes!

SEAGOON:

Footo!

BLUEBOTTLE:

Footo! Secret agent Bluebottle, the mastermind behind the second Finchley wolf cubs!

SEAGOON:

Yes. But can you blow open the safe?

BLUEBOTTLE:

Just you watch me. (BLOWS INTO MIC) No, I cannot blow it open. Wait a moment. I know what I shall do! I shall insert my liquorice in the keyhole.

SEAGOON:

But we need an explosive.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Liquorice IS an explosive!

SEAGOON:

No. No, we daren't risk any loud explosions. The author might hear us.

BLUEBOTTLE:

I have got an idea. Electric light bulb lights up above head. Flash, flash, flash, it goes! I have got a packet of silent TNT which I readed about in Black Claw, Emperor of the Universe. In a boy's mag, price tuppence with free elastic and cardboard jet fighter.

SEAGOON:

Silent TNT! Quick, light it, little pimply lad, and put it under the safe.

ELLINGTON:

No, no, no, wait.

BLUEBOTTLE:

What?

ELLINGTON:

First let me sing my bit and then I can clear off, mate.

RAY ELLINGTON QUARTET:

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

SEAGOON:

Right! Now light the fuse of the silent TNT!

GRAMS:

FUSE LIGHTING SOUND

SEAGOON:

Quick! Everyone out! Go! Go! Quick! Quickly, get out! Quickly!

OMNES:

HUBBUB NOISES

GRAMS:

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS

OMNES:

ALL HUFF AND PUFF

SEAGOON:

Wait!

ECCLES:

Uh?

SEAGOON:

We're still in the room!

ECCLES:

Oh-hooo!

BLOODNOK:

Of course we are. I'm still wearing it.

SEAGOON:

Quick! Get this room off!

BLOODNOK:

What?

SEAGOON:

Gad!

BLOODNOK:

Oh! Who built this door [UNCLEAR]?

GRAMS:

DOORS OPENING AND CLOSING

BLOODNOK:

Ah! That's got it off. Now, [UNCLEAR].

OMNES:

MUMBLE, MUMBLE, RHUBARB, RHUBARB UNDER:

GREENSLADE:

Dear listeners... dear listeners, I don't know about you but I find this all rather far-fetched. As soon as it's all over I'm going to tell John Snagge.

FLOWERDEW:

Oh, you BBC devil, you!

SEAGOON:

Bluebottle, how do I know when the silent TNT has exploded?

BLUEBOTTLE:

Eh? Oh, I never thought of that. I suppose that when you hear nothing, that's it.

SEAGOON:

Can't anybody hear it explode?

BLUEBOTTLE:

Only idiots.

GRAMS:

HUGE EXPLOSION

BLUEBOTTLE:

Did you hear anything, Captain?

SEAGOON:

No.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Good. 'Cuz only idiots can hear explosions like that.

FX:

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING

ECCLES:

Here! What was that big explosion? It blew me backwards out of my underpants! I'm back to front now. For Christmas, of course.

SEAGOON:

So you heard it, too?

ECCLES:

Yeah.

BLOODNOK:

No comment. Help me on with this room and we'll see if it's safe's blown open.

FX:

DOOR OPENS

MORIARTY:

Hands up, you steaming fools!

SEAGOON:

(OFF) You said that before.

GRYTPYPE:

Yes, Neddie, that was only a *recording* of a silent explosion, specially written in without the author's knowledge.

SEAGOON:

Oh? Well, two can play at that game!

MORIARTY:

What do you mean?

FX:

TYPING

SEAGOON:

'Moriarty's finger squeezed the trigger, but there was only a hollow...'

FX:

CLANK

MORIARTY:

Sapristi! He's written in an empty gun for me!

GRYTPYPE:

Never mind.

FX:

TYPING

GRYTPYPE:

'Before Seagoon could alter the next line, Grytpype and Moriarty were already on the motorboat, speeding up the Amazon River with the compromising X-ray photo safely in the hold'.

SPRIGGS:

What's going on here, Jim? (SINGS) What going on heeeere? (NORMAL) What are these... what are those men doing sailing up the Amazon river in *my* book? (SINGS) Don't you dare change another woooord.

BLOODNOK:

Hands up, Mister author.

SPRIGGS:

What? Oh, you great big leaping crab, you, don't be a fool! Drop that typewriter!

FX:

TYPING

BLOODNOK:

'The author turned and left the room'.

SPRIGGS:

I don't agree with your...

FX:

DOOR OPENS AND SLAMS SHUT

BLOODNOK:

That's got rid of him.

SEAGOON:

Now what?

BLUEBOTTLE:

Can I have a go at that typewriter, Captain?

FX:

TYPES VERY SLOWLY

BLUEBOTTLE:

'In a matter of seconds, blunebottoms was at the helm of a powerful elastic-driven speedboat, chasing the naughty Grytpype-Thynnes up the Amazon. But suddenly, they was attacked by Black Claw and his Chinese pirates from the boy's mag'.

GRAMS:

BATTLE SOUNDS UP OVER SPEEDBOAT NOISES

SEAGOON:

You blithering idiot! Look what you've written us into! Quick, swim for the bank!

BLOODNOK:

Not here, I'm overdrawn.

GRAMS:

SPLASHES

ECCLES:

Okay! Here! Oh! Here! Here! Let me help you out.

SEAGOON:

Eccles! How did you get ashore?

ECCLES:

I walked across on that log.

SEAGOON:

That's not a log, that's a crocodile!

ECCLES:

Ooooooh. I... I wondered why my legs kept getting shorter.

GREENSLADE:

Listeners... listeners will note that that was a repeat of the joke first heard in the Goon Show, second series, 1952. Repeated by special request of the authors. I should like to remind listeners that there are now only 364 shopping days to Christmas.

SEAGOON:

Good heavens! We must hurry!

HENRY:

Water, water...

ECCLES:

It's Mr Crun in the Amazon!

SEAGOON:

Mister Crun! How did you get out here?

HENRY:

Somebody gave Min a typewriter and here I am!

SEAGOON:

Well, we're completely lost.

BLOODNOK:

I suspect the listeners are, too.

SEAGOON:

We must find our way to Chapter Ten.

ECCLES:

We must find our way to Chapter Ten.

BLUEBOTTLE:

Yeah.

ECCLES:

We must...

SEAGOON:

Thank you and good night, Gladys Young. (GIGGLING) We must find our way to Chapter Ten, that's where Grytpype's heading for. Come on, and keep your eyes open for a 211A bus.

ECCLES:

What for?

SEAGOON:

It goes right past Brixton jail.

HENRY:

Why do you want to go right past there?

SEAGOON:

Well, I don't want to go *in*.

SPRIGGS:

Seagoon! Oh, Seagoon!

SEAGOON:

It's the author!

BLOODNOK:

Thank heavens! I say, look here, could you write us in a good dinner? We're starving, you know.

SPRIGGS:

Don't... don't worry, steaming lads. I've written a happy ending for you all on the next page. So go on, (SINGS) turn it oveeeerrrr.

FX:

PAGES TURNING

GRAMS:

WEDDING BELLS, WEDDING MARCH ON ORGAN

MINISTER:

[SELLERS]

I now pronounce you, Neddie Seagoon, and you, Gladys Minkwater, man and wife. And leave you to discover which is which.

SEAGOON:

Oh! And we live happily ever after.

FX:

SLOW TYPEWRITING

BLUEBOTTLE:

'But even as Seagoon and his mallion-hairess bride stepped outside, she noticed in the crowd a certain handsome virile youth: Wolfcub Bluebottle. So she ran over to his car and...'

GRAMS:

CAR REVVING UP AND AWAY

SEAGOON:

Who gave him that typewriter? Come baaaack! You're too young for that sort of thing!

BLUEBOTTLE:

That's what you think! Yeeheehee!

SEAGOON:

Bluebottle!

ORCHESTRA:

THEME MUSIC

GREENSLADE:

That was the Goon Show, a BBC recorded program featuring Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Spike Milligan. With The Ray Ellington Quartet, Max Geldray and the orchestra conducted by Wally Stott. Script by Spike Milligan and Larry Stevens. Announcer Wallace Greenslade. The program produced by Pat Dixon.

ORCHESTRA:

THEME MUSIC OFF