

S7 Special - The Reason Why

Transcription by unknown. Final corrections by Helen.

MUSIC:

SOLEMN BUGLE CALL IN A SPED UP TO B FLAT. SAME BUGLE CALL IN B FLAT SLOWED DOWN TO A

GREENSLADE:

This is the BBC Light Programme.

MUSIC:

TYPICAL 1950S INTRO MUSIC, THEN UNDER:

GREENSLADE:

“The Reason Why”, the story of an unexplained phenomena.

MUSIC:

UP AND OUT

TOWN CRIER:

[VALENTINE DYALL]

1876 and all's well!

GREENSLADE:

1876 and my master, the hon. Harold Bowels MP, was at that time a member of parliament in parliament.

FX:

THIS SCENE IS VERY ECHOEY

LORD BROWNING:

[SELLERS]

It has come to my notice that in the region of the tram stop near the plaque of the historical Omnibus track of 1873, there are certain irregularities.

MP1:

[SECOMBE]

What about the irregularities in Hyde Park then?

LORD BROWNING:

I tell you, I was home all yesterday evening

MP1:

Aah, well, they say that.

MP2:

[MILLIGAN]

Please, your honourable members.

MP1:

Well...

MP2:

Lord Browning, continue..

LORD BROWNING:

Yes.

MP2:

...if you...

LORD BROWNING:

Well, it appears that there is a large hole or gap in the Thames embankment wall.

MP2:

Owwwoooooh!

LORD BROWNING:

It only appeared recently. And, to date, nothing has been done about it.

MINNIE:

Aaaeeoooooh!

FX:

BODY FALLING TO FLOOR

BLOODNOK:

Send a gunboat! Mm? Oh! Er, so sorry, I was dreaming, I...

SIR PULES:

[DYALL]

This hole or gap...

MINNIE:

What!?

SIR PULES:

...in the embankment, is it really necessary?

LORD BROWNING:

No, no, it's not really necessary.

SIR PULES:

Then I suggest it be abolished as an unnecessary expense.

LORD BROWNING:

Well, this hole isn't costing us anything.

SIR PULES:

Ah, that sounds reasonable.

FX:

CLUB HITS OBJECT

MINNIE:

Aaaeeoooooh!

LORD BROWNING:

Mr Bowels explained, he has the figures. Mr Bowels?

BOWELS:

[SECOMBE]

Thank you, yes. It is as Lord Browning points out.

MINNIE:

Speak up, young man.

BOWELS:

I don't wish to know that. (CLEARs THROAT). It is as Lord Browning points out. The danger this hole presents. I.e. Last winter on certain foggy and dark-type nights, citizens of London town fell through this gap into the Thames and wet their clothes. The crux of the matter is this; these people, as the result of their wetting, catch colds.

MINNIE:

Aaaeeoooooh!

BOWELS:

These citizens in turn are suing the government for the moneys laid out in medical fees. The question is; would it be cheaper to pay up claims or fill in the hole?

MILLIGAN:

(OFF) Fill in the hole!

BOWELS:

Are you in parliament?

MILLIGAN:

(OFF) Only just, sir!

SIR PULES:

Have many people fallen through this hole?

BOWELS:

Ahh... oh. Well, ah... Sir Mortally Bringe, this is your department.

SPRIGGS:

Yes. How many people fell? (SINGS) People feeeeeeell. (NORMAL) Fell into the Thames last year, yes. I have the separate figures for men... and women. (SINGS) And womeeeeee! (NORMAL) The figure for men for the months of January, February and March. (SINGS) Maaaaaaarch. (NORMAL) Thirty-two, fifty-six and forty-one.

SIR PULES:

And the figure for women?

SPRIGGS:

(SINGS) Thirty-two, twenty-one and thirty-niiine!

SIR PULES:

Ha! An ideal figure for a woman.

GRAMS:

MURMURS FROM CROWD

FX:

THUD

BOWELS:

LORD BROWNING!

LORD BROWNING:

[SELLERS]

May I ask...

BOWELS:

LORD BROWNING!

LORD BROWNING:

May I ask how this hole or gap in the embankment came about in the first place?

BOWELS:

It was left there by the builder.

LORD BROWNING:

What?!

BOWELS:

I suppose he forgot to take it away. Ha ha ha! Get it, you see? Hole, he forgot to take it away. Ha, ha, ha! (PAUSE) I demand a vote of confidence!

GRAMS:

MURMURS FROM CROWD

SIR PULES:

(OVER GRAMS) Let's fill the hole in and be done with it.

BOWELS:

Fill it in? How?

BLOODNOK:

How? With fill.

SIR PULES:

What nonsense! With bricks of course.

BOWELS:

Bricks? Haha. There's always a radical somewhere. Oh, no, Sir Pules. No, indeed. England can afford something better than bricks.

MINNIE:

Bravo!

BOWELS:

I'll think of something. There is always a way out.

MINNIE:

(FADES OUT) Always a way out...

FX:

NO MORE ECHO

GREENSLADE:

That night, my master, hon. Bowles MP, was having dinner with a friend at number ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen Downing Street.

FX:

RATTLING CUPS AND TEASPOONS

GRAMS:

MURMURS THROUGHOUT THIS SCENE:

BOWELS:

(LAUGHS) I say, I hope the ladies didn't hear that one.

CHURCHILL:

[SELLERS]

Yes, it was a bit loud, wasn't it?

GRYTPYPE:

Mr Prime Minister, you haven't introduced me to your guest.

CHURCHILL:

Oh, yes, certainly. This is the Honourable Harold Bowles MP. And Bowles, this is Lord Thynne, the famous builder and sculptor.

BOWELS:

Builder *and* sculptor? What do you sculpt?

GRYTPYPE:

Houses.

BOWELS:

Do you use a model?

GRYTPYPE:

My dear old grandmother. You see, it's a family business.

BOWELS:

I see. A sculptor, you say? By jove, you might be the very man.

GRYTPYPE:

Oh?

BOWELS:

Let's... let's go out on the balcony.

GRYTPYPE:

Certainly. Excuse me.

GRAMS:

MURMURS STOP

FX:

SCRAPING OF WOODEN CHAIRS BEING PUSHED BACK. RATTLING METAL OBJECTS, KNIVES AND FORKS DROPPING FROM MORIARTY

MORIARTY:

(PANICKING NOISES)

BOWELS:

I, er... I think your friend has a hole in his pocket.

GRYTPYPE:

Jove, so he has. Allow me to introduce him to you: Count Moriarty, the Honourable Bowels.

MORIARTY:

Ah. Please to meet you, hon. Bowels. Mon plegger, mon plegger.

GRYTPYPE:

The count is a model much in demand by artists on the continent, you know.

BOWELS:

Really?

GRYTPYPE:

Yes, he posed for the original Eiffel Tower.

BOWELS:

Gad, how he's changed!

MILLIGAN:

Ah, pardon me. Would you gentlemen like your coffee on the balcony?

GRYTPYPE:

Haven't you any cups?

BOWELS:

Now then, Lord Thynne. You may have read in the press, the Thames embankment...

GRYTPYPE:

Has a hole in it? A-ha,ha,ha. And the whole world is laughing at England. It's not very pretty, is it?

BOWELS:

Have *you* a solution?

GRYTPYPE:

Of course, fill the gap with an edifice.

BOWELS:

An edifice? A-ha, ha. Much too big and expensive.

GRYTPYPE:

A statue then? My card.

BOWELS:

'Sculptor. Special summer rates to politicians, England and spon'. What is spon?

GRYTPYPE:

A soft porous metal mined in agony by the inhabitants of the Urals.

BOWELS:

So it is that all the time.

GRYTPYPE:

I could make you a spon statue to fill that hole.

BOWELS:

The price?

GRYTPYPE:

With season tickets, thirty-nine pounds, three dollars.

BOWELS:

Why the three dollars?

GRYTPYPE:

I intend finishing the work in America.

BOWELS:

How do you mean to travel there?

GRYTPYPE:

Yes.

BOWELS:

I see. Thirty-nine pounds. Mmmmm, a bit expensive.

GRYTPYPE:

Yes.

BOWELS:

Could you quote a smaller figure?

GRYTPYPE:

I could. Bust 12, waist 3, hips 48.

MINNIE:

Ohhhh...!

BOWELS:

That would never fill the gap.

GRYTPYPE:

It must fill somebody's. After all, it's spring, you know and, er...

BOWELS:

Seasons have no effect on this gap.

LORD HARRONS:

[DYALL]

Oh, hello, gentlemen. Do you mind if I join you?

GRYTPYPE:

Why, hello, Lord Harrons. Just talking about the gap in the embankment.

LORD HARRONS:

A-ha, that's just what I wanted to see you about. The British ambassador in Alexandria tells me that just outside the town there is a wealth of ancient statuary going begging.

GRYTPYPE:

Begging? They should be stopped.

LORD HARRONS:

The PM believes that one of these monuments could be used to fill the gap.

BOWELS:

What a splendid idea! That would save us spending thirty-nine pounds, three dollars on the one Lord Thynne has... (FADE)

MUSIC:

VIOLIN MELODY PLAYED AT VARIOUS SPEEDS, CONTINUES UNDER:

GREENSLADE:

On the Hon. Mem's suggestion, that night my master, Hon. Bowels, as was his custom, walked naked in the garden playing the violin, at one at the same time dictating a certain letter to his secretary.

BOWELS:

"Dear Ambassador, I will be coming to Alexandria next month on state business. Signed Hon. Harold Bowels." (GRAMS STOP) Read that back, will you, my man?

ECCLES:

Eh?

BOWELS:

Read it back.

ECCLES:

Oh, yeah. Um. What's that first... what's that first word?

BOWELS:

A-ha ha. It says "Dear Ambassador".

ECCLES:

Oh, yeah, "Dear Ambassador". Um... can't make out this next one.

BOWELS:

Um... "I will be".

ECCLES:

Oh, yeah. "I will be". That's right. Well, go on then.

BOWELS:

"I will be arriving in Alexandria next month."

ECCLES:

Fine, fine.

BOWELS:

"Signed, Hon. Harold Bowels".

ECCLES:

Yeah. Yeah that's OK. You'd better run out and post it, my good man.

BOWELS:

At once!

FX:

DOOR CLOSES

ECCLES:

(SINGS TO HIMSELF)

FX:

DOOR OPENS

BOWELS:

Take that!

FX:

THUD!

ECCLES:

Aaaaaaeoooougggh!

BOWELS:

You nit. Take this letter out to the post at once!

ECCLES:

OK, OK, OK, OK!

FX:

DOOR CLOSES

BOWELS:

Foof! Ten to one he won't find a post box.

ECCLES:

Ten to one I do.

BOWELS:

Get out!

ECCLES:

Ow!

FX:

DOOR CLOSES

BOWELS:

Now to prepare for the journey. Willium! Where's that old wrinkled retainer? Willium!

FX:

SLOW FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING

WILLIUM:

Eoooh. Coming, sir. And the wrinkled retainer.

BOWELS:

Willium, I'm going to Egypt.

WILLIUM:

Goodbye, mate.

BOWELS:

Come back here.

WILLIUM:

Right.

BOWELS:

I'm not going now, I've only just sent the letter informing them of my arrival.

ECCLES:

Oh, yeah, I'd better post it. No, no!

BOWELS:

(SHOUTS) GET OUT AND POST IT!

ECCLES:

Alright, I'm...

FX:

DOOR CLOSES

BOWELS:

Gaaah! Now, Willium, I'll need my Gladstone bag and my Disraeli suitcase.

WILLIUM:

Right, sir. I'll get the pawn tickets and collect your pawns.

BOWELS:

Splendid. Pack my deer stalker because I'll be doing some deer stalking. I might do some rabbit stalking, too.

WILLIUM:

I'll pack yer rabbit stalker, as well.

BOWELS:

Good man.

FX:

DOOR OPENS

GREENSLADE:

Er, Mr Bowels, sir. Here are your boat and train tickets. First class sleeper standing up. Reduced summer rates for the politicians facing east.

BOWELS:

I've got to stand all the way to Egypt?

GREENSLADE:

Oh, no, sir. You're allowed to sit down at Port Suez for three minutes.

BOWELS:

Ah, the wonders of travel, Greenslade. Well, let's drink to a successful trip. Let's celebrate, chaps. Put on a cylinder of wax.

MUSIC:

OLD RECORD WITH A CORNY WOODWIND ENSEMBLE (20 SEC)

GRAMS:

SHIP'S FOG HORN

MUSIC:

NAUTICAL MUSIC, WITH MUTTERED NAUTICAL CALLS FROM THE CAST. FOLLOWED BY EXOTIC AFRICAN MUSIC

GREENSLADE:

On the third of May, on a torrid afternoon, me master, Hon. Bowels, arrived at the British embassy, Alexandria.

FX:

FLY BUZZING. CLAP OF HANDS. FLY SWATTED

AMBASSADOR:

[SELLERS]

Curse these flies.

FX:

DOOR OPENS. VIOLIN PLAYING UNDER:

ABDUL:

[MILLIGAN]

Ah, pardon me, sir. There is a naked man playing the fiddle outside.

AMBASSADOR:

Sounds like a professional. Send him forward.

ABDUL:

(OFF) This way forward, sir.

BOWELS:

Ah, thank you. Good morning, sir.

AMBASSADOR:

Come in. Let me take your violin for you.

FX:

VIOLIN PLAYING STOPS. WOOD CRACKLING

AMBASSADOR:

Abdul, burn this on the fire. Now then, who are you?

BOWELS:

I am the Honourable Harold Bowels MP.

FX:

PENNY IN TIN MUG

BOWELS:

Thank you. Shall we dance?

AMBASSADOR:

Love to.

MUSIC:

BALLROOM DANCE WALTZ, CONTINUES UNDER BOWELS AND GREENSLADE.

BOWELS:

You dance divinely.

GREENSLADE:

As the two beautiful creatures waltzed through the embassy, my master, hon. Bowels, told of his hoping to find an Egyptian monument to fit the gap and was passed to the notorious gap filler, Major Bloodnok.

BLOODNOK:

The message says he's coming here sideways today about eleven. Let's see, that's in an hour and a half, isn't it? Oh, so I have time for a little more work. Now, where's that catalogue? Ah, here. Bust 42, waist 20, hips 44. Mmm, yes.

FX:

PEN SCRATCHING ON PAPER UNDER BLOODNOK'S NEXT LINE:

BLOODNOK:

Er, "Dear sir, I am... oooooho... I am a keen art student of twenty-one. Oooooho. Please forward to me, in the plain wrappers, your continental selection of student's art studies. Signed, Augustus Johns." Oooooho!

ABDUL:

Ah, pardon... pardon me, sir.

BLOODNOK:

What? What?

ABDUL:

There's two men called Honourable Bowels outside, sir.

BLOODNOK:

Honourable Bowels?

ABDUL:

This way, sir.

BOWELS:

Ah! How do you do, sir?

BLOODNOK:

Ah, how are you? Welcome to freedom.

BOWELS:

Thank you.

BLOODNOK:

We must have a drink, lad, eh?

BOWELS:

No, no, I'm sorry, Major, I'm dreadfully tired. I... I think as we're rising early tomorrow I'd like to get to bed.

BLOODNOK:

You're right, Bowels, you're perfectly right. Abdul!

ABDUL:

Sahib?

BLOODNOK:

Make up the ironing board in the spare room, will you?

BOWELS:

Never mind, please, I... I'll sleep on the floor.

BLOODNOK:

Will you? Good. Right. Goodnight, lad.

BOWELS:

Goodnight. (SNORES)

FX:

METAL TING

BOWELS:

(WHISPERING) What's that?

BLOODNOK:

(WHISPERING) Ooh! There's someone at the foot of my bed.

BOWELS:

(WHISPERING) Light the candle.

BLOODNOK:

(WHISPERING) I can't, the wick's fused.

BOWELS:

(WHISPERING) Right. (NORMAL) Hands up, you, there in the dark. Don't move - I'm holding a loaded sock in my hand and a lace club on my foot. Bloodnok, tie him to a chair with ties.

BLOODNOK:

Yes. Keep still, whoever you are. You hear me? I'm an Englishman, sir. One false move and I'll shout 'Bang'! Oooh.

BOWELS:

Get these chains on the swine.

FX:

RATTLING CHAINS

BOWELS:

Around his legs.

BLOODNOK:

Stuff this gag in his mouth.

BOWELS:

Yes, strap him to the chair, there.

BLOODNOK:

Now, then, tell us who you are!

BLUEBOTTLE:

I'm Bluebottle!

BOWELS:

Gad, yes, Bluebottle. He came over on the clipper with me.

BLOODNOK:

Really?

BOWELS:

Yes, he's my ADC.

BLOODNOK:

He looks nothing like one, I'll have him destroyed!

BOWELS:

Oh, no, no, he very useful at spotting pteradactyls.

BLOODNOK:

Fine, we haven't had one of those for years.

BLUEBOTTLE:

I have brought this message from the London.

BOWELS:

Let me see. Letter from Mr Gladstone, the Prime Minister! I'll put my court uniform on and read it.

GLADSTONE:

[MILLIGAN]

"Dear Honourable Bowels, I have just heard that – ah – you are bringing back an Egyptian-type statue to – ah – fill our beloved gap in the Thames wall. Ah – That the – ah – ministers have been instructed to give all the aid in their power. We should like to have the hole filled in to commemorate the Silver – Jubilee".

BOWELS:

The Silver Jubilee? Gad, we must hasten! Bloodnok, order the camels!

BLOODNOK:

Two camels, please!

MUSIC:

ELEPHANT-TYPE MUSIC WITH TUBA AND FLUTES, CONTINUES UNDER GREENSLADE.

GREENSLADE:

So my master, the hon. Bowels, journeyed to the great desert of Guyra, outside Karnak. Karnak, ancient city of the third dynasty. Abounding in remains of a once great civilisation. (MUSIC STOPS) A sort of Oriental Cleethorpes.

GRAMS:

CAMEL MOOING AND GIBBERISH SHOUTING. CONTINUES UNDER:

GREENSLADE:

On this scene arrived my master, the honourable Bowels and escort.

CRUN:

Aaaahh, honourable Bowels and escort. We are the curators of the archaeological findings in this area.

BOWELS:

What are your findings?

CRUN:

Not guilty.

BOWELS:

Splendid. How do you do?

MINNIE:

How do *you* do, sir?

BOWELS:

Not guilty.

LORD THUNN:

[DYALL]

I'm Lord Thunn, also not guilty. I joined hon. Bowels yesterday.

MINNIE:

How nice for you! Nice.

LORD THUNN:

We've been informed there is a giant obelisk around here.

CRUN:

Ah, yes, that's the Cleopatra's Needle. Sixty-seven feet high and ten-foot square... at the base.

LORD THUNN:

Jove, hon. Bowels! Those are the exact measurements of the gap in the Thames embankment!

BOWELS:

We might've hit it first time! Just think, what was that sculptor trying to charge us? Thirty-nine pounds, three dollars and we can get it all for free! Ha ha ha!

LORD THUNN:

Knighthoods will be in order, Bowels.

BOWELS:

Indeed, Thunn. Come, let's examine this obelisk and... (FADES OUT)

MINNIE:

How nice for them.

MUSIC:

EGYPTIAN MUSIC, UNDER:

GREENSLADE:

My master, hon. Bowels, along with lord Thunn, made camp at the side of the great obelisk. And a series of examinations of it were made by the engineer royal, Mr Thong.

THONG:

[SELLERS]

Mmmmm...

FX:

HARD OBJECT HITTING BRICK

THONG:

Well, yes, it appears to be in one piece. Made of red sandstone. Weighs about... let me see, now... (STRAINS) Oh, yes, about 150 tons, I should say.

LORD THUNN:

It'd be a bit of a devil to get back to the old country, wouldn't it?

BOWELS:

Don't worry, gentlemen. I've arranged for it to be given a buoyant wooden jacket and towed home behind the S.S. Carthania. (FADES OUT)

MUSIC:

EGYPTIAN MUSIC AND SINGING; UNDER:

GRAMS:

A ROTARY SOUND EFFECT TO SIMULATE OBELISK BEING LIFTED; UNDER:

GREENSLADE:

It was a great sight, as my master, hon. Bowels, observed two thousand labourers sweating and straining as the great colossus was lifted and dusted (EFFECTS STOP). Finally, after three months, it was put in its wooden container and launched.

GRAMS:

SLIDING DOWN RAMP. SPLASH! WATER BUBBLES

LORD THUNN:

I say. It sunk.

MUSIC:

SAME EGYPTIAN MUSIC AND SINGING; UNDER:

GRAMS:

SAME ROTARY SOUND EFFECT; UNDER:

BOWELS:

How long will it take to raise it?

BLOODNOK:

Oh, only about a week, lad.

BOWELS:

A week? Mhmhm mhmhm. This is starting to cost money. To date with wages and this salvage it's one thousand five hundred pounds!

BLOODNOK:

Yes, yes, yes, but you don't realise that this obelisk is *free*.

LORD THUNN:

You couldn't get an obelisk for that price anywhere in England!

BOWELS:

Yes. I... I keep forgetting.

NATIVE:

[MILLIGAN]
(GIBBERISH)

LORD THUNN:

I say, Bowels, the overseer says he doesn't think we can raise the obelisk by hand. Says we'll need deep water salvage vessels.

BOWELS:

Oh. Well, we'll contact naval base Alexandria and request immediate aid. We've got to hurry. Remember, the silver jubilee is only a month away! (FADES OUT)

MUSIC:

DRAMATIC ALLEGRO ORCHESTRAL MUSIC; UNDER:

GRAMS:

CHUGGING ENGINE AND SEAGULL CALLS

CRIGHTON:

[SELLERS]

(SCOTTISH) Haul away!

GRAMS:

CHUGGING ENGINE

BOWELS:

Admiral Crighton, how much longer to lift this thing?

CRIGHTON:

The divers say it's difficult to see to attach the cables, sir. The water's getting very muddy.

BOWELS:

Well, can't we go where the water's clearer?

CRIGHTON:

Aye, we did that. But we discovered that the obelisk wasn't there, sir.

BOWELS:

What terribly bad luck.

CRIGHTON:

Don't you worry, sir. We'll soon have her up.

HIGH VOICE:

[MILLIGAN]

(ALSO SCOTTISH) Sir! Report a hurricane bearing down on this position.

CRIGHTON:

Och! Up anchors! Head for safe harbour!

BOWELS:

Nonsense, Scottish captain. I have the perfect plan for saving the obelisk with no danger to life, limb or Herbert Lom.

MUSIC:

DRAMATIC ALLEGRO ORCHESTRAL MUSIC FOR 15 SEC. THEN FADES OUT.

FX:

PEN SCRATCHING PAPER; UNDER GLADSTONE'S LINE:

GLADSTONE:

"Dear Honourable Bowels, I hear that the obelisk is at the bottom of the sea. I'm afraid this just (ANGRY) WON'T DO! (NORMAL) Signed, Gladstone".

BOWELS:

Tut, tut, tut, tut. They're getting impatient. Now there's a fresh bill for 12,000 pounds from the admiralty for the two ships wrecked in the hurricane.

LORD THUNN:

Oh, don't worry. Skipper says the needle should be lifted by nightfall.

BOWELS:

Nightfall? We'll have to wait 'till it gets dark for that.

LORD THUNN:

Well, can't we do it at nightfall while it's still light?

CRIGHTON:

Huuurgh!

GRAMS:

SPLASH

CRIGHTON:

I'm sorry, sir, but that's the best place for him.

LORD THUNN:

(OFF) I say! Was it something I said?

BOWELS:

Don't worry about him, he's off the current persona non-grata list. Now, couldn't we move the obelisk to clearer water, then we could see it?

CRIGHTON:

Huuurgh!

GRAMS:

SPLASH

CRIGHTON:

That's two of you off the persona non-grata list.

BOWELS:

(OFF) You'll pay for this!

CRIGHTON:

Sound the bell and haul away!

GRAMS:

ROTARY EFFECT

MUSIC:

FANFARE; CONTINUES UNDER GREENSLADE'S LINE:

GREENSLADE:

On May the 8th, the master sent the following message to the PM.

FX:

PEN SCRATCHING PAPER UNDER BOWELS' LINE:

BOWELS:

"At last the cylinder containing Cleopatra's Needle has been raised. It set off this morning towed by the ship S.S. Harbour. We will conclude unfinished business and follow in a week's time. We have to break camp and smash crockery and hurl elephants. Lord Thunn has been cured of sulphur drugs. Please send eight thousand pounds to pay all the outstanding bills. This may sound a lot, but remember the obelisk hasn't cost us a penny." There. Now, read that back.

ECCLES:

What's this first word?

FX:

THUD!

ECCLES:

Oooooooooow! OK, I'll post it!

BOWELS:

Now for England, home and beauty!

MUSIC:

NAVAL MUSIC FOR 10 SEC. FOLLOWED BY RECORD OFF NEEDLE.

GREENSLADE:

Mr Prime Minister, the hon. Bowels has been captured by a savage Bedouin tribe. They demand a ransom of thirty thousand pounds.

GLADSTONE:

Well, pay it. Thirty thousand pounds is very cheap for an Englishman.

GREENSLADE:

Yes, sir.

GLADSTONE:

Um, ah... any, er, news from the admiralty about the obelisk, er...?

GREENSLADE:

Yes, sir. Er... it is at this moment passing the straits of Gibraltar.

GLADSTONE:

Straits of Gibraltar? They sound like nice people.

GREENSLADE:

They are, sir.

MUSIC:

EXTEND PIANO C CHORD

GREENSLADE:

Meantime, in the Bedouin camp.

MUSIC:

EXOTIC MUSIC; CONTINUES UNDER:

BEDOUIIN:

[MILLIGAN]

Master Sheik O'Leaks. There is a British coolie outside from London.

SHEIKH:

[SELLERS]

Send him in.

BEDOUIIN:

I do...

SHEIKH:

This will be the ransom. Yewel, go behind this screen.

BEDOUIIN:

(GARBLED GIBBERISH)

FX:

KNOCK ON DOOR

SHEIKH:

Come in.

FX:

DOOR OPENS

MUSIC:

STOPS

BLUEBOTTLE:

Greetings, Sheikh. I have brought the ransom money for the release of honourable Bowels.

SHEIKH:

Show me the money.

BLUEBOTTLE:

No! No, I will not! I have been warned of the mysteries of the east. I will show you half of the money.

SHEIKH:

Alright. Bring me my sword and I show you half of Mr Bowels.

BLUEBOTTLE:

No, no! Do not chop-ped him into two! Here's the money, for you, twenty thousand pounds!

SHEIKH:

Alright, Bowels, you can come out.

BOWELS:

Hah. Haaaaaaaaah! We're free!

ECCLES:

Yeah, let's go to the pictures.

BOWELS:

No, no, it's London for us and the erection of Cleopatra's Needle.

LORD THUNN:

Well, there's bad news about that. It's got cut off from the tow ship during the storm and it's lost, I fear.

BOWELS:

Oh, dash.

MUSIC:

LOW AND SAD DOUBLE BASS, BASSOON AND OBOE ENSEMBLE; CONTINUES UNDER GREENSLADE'S LINE.

GREENSLADE:

So my master, the hon. Bowels, charted a squadron of Arab dhows to scour the seven seas. Total cost of the venture to date: thirty-nine thousand pounds.

DYALL:

Yes, but as the Honourable Bowels had said so often:

BOWELS:

Really. It's worth it. After all we're getting it for nothing, aren't we? (LAUGHS, FADE, CLEARS THROAT)

GRAMS:

WAVES LAPPING AND WATER SPLASHING

CAPTAIN STENCH:

[SELLERS]

Object in sea ahead! Three points to starboard!

LORD THUNN:

Did you hear that?

CAPTAIN STENCH:

Yes, sir, I said it!

LORD THUNN:

You, Bowels?

BOWELS:

I've just got the spy glass on it. It is. It... it is, it's the obelisk. Captain Stench, heave to. No, you'd better heave three to be on the safe side.

CAPTAIN STENCH:

There's starboard side and port side, but there's no safe side, sir.

LORD THUNN:

Oh, don't argue, it's drifting aft. Hurry!

MUSIC:

VERY FAINTLY; NAUTICAL MUSIC; UNDER:

CAPTAIN STENCH:

(OVER, CALLS) Scran scir the scurndel nay!

SEAMAN:

[MILLIGAN]

(VERY FAINTLY) Aye, aye, sir!

CAPTAIN STENCH:

Spon gurl the mezzen, arn crungell the wak dorp!

SEAMAN:

(VERY FAINTLY) Aye, aye, sir!

CAPTAIN STENCH:

Crage the lagurd and wurtell the cacbid nurl!

SEAMAN:

(VERY FAINTLY) Aye, aye, sir!

CAPTAIN STENCH:

Wurgle the tanker yardel Miles the Moby batten the hatch an' tel the k-neel!

SEAMAN:

(VERY FAINTLY REPLIES GIBBERISH)

CAPTAIN STENCH:

(TO AUDIENCE) I don't know how he does it, but he's always so willing, you know.

SEAMAN:

[MILLIGAN]

(VERY FAINTLY) Aye, aye, sir!

LORD THUNN:

Good news, Bowels. We've got the obelisk in tow again, but we have to beach it soon as it's waterlogged.

BOWELS:

Make for the nearest coast.

CAPTAIN STENCH:

That's Portugal, sir and we all know what comes from there. (TO SEAMAN) Hard ablone on the gurd ptneel and vargle the goals!

SEAMAN:

[MILLIGAN]

(VERY FAINTLY REPLIES GIBBERISH) (STOPS WHEN FX OCCURS)

FX:

SOMETHING COLLAPSING

CAPTAIN STENCH:

I don't know how he does it, sir. I don't...

MUSIC:

ALLEGRO ORCHESTRAL END-OF-EPIC LINK

GLADSTONE:

"Dear Honourable Bowels, We hear that the obelisk is now... resting on a Portuguese beach. This will never do. The Silver Jubilee is but a stone's throw away".

BOWELS:

Send a reply.

FX:

SAWING THROUGHOUT BOWEL'S LINE:

BOWELS:

"Dear Mr Gladstone, Fear not. The obelisk will be in the pool of London in a stone throw's time".
(FADE)

GRAMS:

ROTARY EFFECT FROM SHIP; UNDER:

GREENSLADE:

And so my master, the hon. Bowels, brought the great obelisk safely home and supervised its erection.

SELLERS:

Sorry. Pardon me, Mr Hon. Bowels. I believe you have a certain amount of things which are to be lodged in the base of the old obelisk, there.

BOWELS:

Yes, indeed, there are quite a few things to go in the time capsule. Lord Bentine, check them off on this list, will you?

MUSIC:

ORCHESTRA PLAYING RELAXING VERSION OF "LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY"; UNDER BENTINE'S LINE:

BENTINE:

[SELLERS]

Articles in two large earthenware jars at the base of Cleopatra's Needle:

Standard foot and pound.

Bronze model of the obelisk. Scale: half inch to the foot.

Copies of the magazine "Engineering" printed on vellum.

Piece of the obelisk, stone.

Empress of India rupee.

Parchment copy of Dr Burch's translation of the obelisk's Hieroglyphics.

Portrait of Queen Victoria.

Bradshaw's Railway Guide.

Mappin's skulling razor.

Box of hairpins and ladies ornaments.

Tangeis(?) hydraulic jack as used in raising the obelisk.

Wire ropes and specimens of submarine cables.

Map of London.

Photographs of one dozen pretty English women.

Two-foot rule.

London directory.

Whitaker's Almanac.

And a copy of The Times the day the obelisk was set up. (FADES OUT)

GREENSLADE:

And on the Tond of Mule Eighteen-Onty-Two, the obelisk, Cleopatra's Needle, was unveiled by Anna Neagle and Anton Walbrook.

GRAMS:

CHEERING!

LORD THUNN:

This must be a proud day for you, hon. Bowels.

MUSIC:

SORROW VIOLIN PLAYING; UNDER:

BOWELS:

Thursday. Yes. Yes, at last the gap is filled. Filled with an obelisk that we got for nothing.

LORD THUNN:

Oh, here's the bill for erecting it.

BOWELS:

Twenty-thousand pounds. Hmmm.

LORD THUNN:

That makes a grand total of a hundred and eighty thousand pounds, eight shillings.

BOWELS:

Heh. I... I... um... I... I suppose it was worth it.

LORD THUNN:

Every penny of it.

MUSIC:

BAND WARMING AND TUNING UP.

CONDUCTOR:

(FAINTLY) Are you... are you ready now? Oh, well, um...

MUSIC:

MORE WARMING UP

CONDUCTOR:

[UNCLEAR] ...the obelisk. One... Are you ready? One, Two.

MUSIC:

BAND STARTS CORNY MARCH SONG; UNDER REST OF SHOW:

SECOMBE:

I'll see you outside then, Pete. Got the car out there?

SELLERS:

Yeah.

GREENSLADE:

Perhaps you have been listening to the authentic story of Cleopatra's Needle. Historical consultant Professor Toinby. That is, Professor Jim Toinby of Hyde Park Railings.

MILLIGAN:

(OFF) Thank you.

GREENSLADE:

Write now for full details.

SECOMBE:

'Ere, Is that your shoe on the floor there, Peter?

FX:

FORK DROPS TO FLOOR

MORIARTY:

Hohohohoho!

GREENSLADE:

Taking part in "The Reason Why" were Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Valentine Dyall. The script by Spike Milligan. Announcer: Wallace Greenslade and this recorded production was by Jacques Brown.

FX:

OCCASIONAL RASPBERRIES BY SECOMBE AND BLOODNOK AEOUGHS UNTIL MUSIC ENDS