

Audition Extract **8**. COSMO LANG, CHURCHILL & BALDWIN

COSMO LANG (*under his breath*) Oh bloody Hell!

CHURCHILL A bad omen, Your Grace?

COSMO LANG Don't be disingenuous, Winston. For the cross atop our late King's crown to fall from his coffin is not a fortuitous portent.

BALDWIN Whatever's going to happen next?

COSMO LANG That might well be the motto of the new Reign.

BALDWIN But will there actually be 'a new reign'?

CHURCHILL Prime Minister . . . Your Grace . . . I'm shocked by the implication.

BALDWIN

You don't look it. Surely you must have noticed, Winston, even from the backbenches to which you have been exiled, and where you now so splendidly languish, our populace has no objection to Royal fornication, but will never tolerate adultery.

COSMO LANG And since we cannot acquire a new populace . . .

BALDWIN Perhaps we need a new King?

CHURCHILL Now I am doubly shocked.

BALDWIN His Grace isn't.

COSMO LANG My function requires me to appear serene at all times.

BALDWIN That may be difficult to maintain.

CHURCHILL The King is our King! You cannot remove him.

BALDWIN But should he refuse to listen to the advice of His Government he may have to remove himself.

CHURCHILL Abdication? Never has that happened in the history of this great land.

COSMO LANG Always a first time.

BALDWIN A shocking concept, Winston, but one we might need to accept.

COSMO LANG You, more than others, realise we'll be under siege from the forces of darkness. Who would you suggest to rally the troops, the nation, the Empire, the world?

CHURCHILL

Our rightful King! Would you prefer a man who cannot speak? Hitler mesmerizes millions, whilst the Duke of York cannot successfully order fish and chips. David is our born heir, who speaks beautifully, even if he talks nonsense. Come, gentlemen, let us bury one king, before you attempt to bring another to his knees.