

# Teeth'n'Smiles



David Hare

*Teeth 'n' Smiles*

*by the same author*

**SLAG**

**KNUCKLE**

**FANSHEN**

**LICKING HITLER**

**PLENTY**

**BRASSNECK**

**with Howard Brenton**  
**(*Methuen*)**

# ***Teeth 'n' Smiles***

A play by  
**DAVID HARE**

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*for Joe*

Of Mr Blake's company I have very little.  
He is always in Paradise.

*Mrs William Blake*

### *Characters*

|           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| ARTHUR    | songwriter  |
| INCH      | roadie      |
| LAURA     | p.r.        |
| NASH      | drummer     |
| WILSON    | keyboard    |
| SNEAD     | porter      |
| PEYOTE    | bass guitar |
| SMEGS     | lead guitar |
| ANSON     | student     |
| MAGGIE    | vocals      |
| SARAFFIAN | manager     |
| RANDOLPH  | star        |



*Teeth 'n' Smiles*, with music by Nick Bicât and lyrics by Tony Bicât, was first performed on 2 September 1975 at the Royal Court Theatre, London. The cast was as follows:

|           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| ARTHUR    | Jack Shepherd  |
| INCH      | Karl Howman    |
| LAURA     | Cherie Lunghi  |
| NASH      | Rene Augustus  |
| WILSON    | Mick Ford      |
| SNEAD     | Roger Hume     |
| PEYOTE    | Hugh Fraser    |
| SMEGS     | Andrew Dickson |
| ANSON     | Antony Sher    |
| MAGGIE    | Helen Mirren   |
| SARAFFIAN | Dave King      |
| RANDOLPH  | Heinz          |

Directed by the author

Designed by Jocelyn Herbert

The play is set during the night of 9 June 1969.

The playing area is mostly bare. Design is minimal. The band's equipment is on a stage which, for the musical numbers, trucks down to the front. In the first act the band are housed in a college room; in the second they are on a lawn behind their stage.

## NOTE

When *Teeth 'n' Smiles* was first played it ran just under three hours. It was then cut during previews to what the English think is a more palatable length. This text accommodates most of those cuts, but not all of them. The text was further re-written for a West End production. I don't think plays are ever finished, and the version you read is one of several.

The chorus from the song 'How Do You Do It?' by Mitch Murray is reprinted by kind permission of Dick James Music Ltd. © 1962. The lines from Cole Porter's 'You're the Top' from the musical production *Anything Goes* are used by permission of Harms Inc. Chappell & Co. © 1934. For the quotation from W. B. Yeats on page 57 acknowledgements are due to Mrs W. B. Yeats and MacMillan & Co. Ltd. Details of the bombing of the Café de Paris can be found in *The Blitz* by Constantine Fitzgibbon (Corgi).

## SCENE ONE

*As the audience come in INCH is building the amplifiers into a bank of equipment on the band's platform. He is twenty, in leather and jewellery. Downstage there are a couple of benches, representing an undergraduate's room that has been specially emptied. ARTHUR is lying on one bench, staring. He is wearing a silver top hat and a silk suit but the effect is oddly discreet. He is tall, thin and twenty-six.*

*INCH disappears.*

*The play begins.*

*INCH comes in carrying two suitcases which he puts down in the middle of the room.*

INCH: Right. Let's smash the place up.

*(He turns and sees ARTHUR.)*

'Allo, Arfer, din know you was comin'.

ARTHUR: Motorbike. How is she?

INCH: All right. They're liftin' 'er out the van now.

*(INCH goes out.)*

ARTHUR: You're the top, you're the Coliseum

You're the top, you're the Louvre Museum

You're a melody from a symphony by Strauss . . .

*(INCH returns with a Samuelsons box from which he takes a plug.*

*Then LAURA appears, a small dark girl with lovely skin.)*

LAURA: Are you set up, Inch, it's very late?

INCH: Got Maggie out?

LAURA: They're getting her down the drive.

ARTHUR: And hello, Laura.

LAURA: And hello, Arthur. Some bastard put sugar in the petrol tank, that's why we're late.

ARTHUR: It's good to see you.

LAURA: How long can you stay?

ARTHUR: How long do you want?

LAURA: Well . . .

*(WILSON, a small, bearded cockney, and NASH, a spaced-out black drummer, appear, look round the room and sit down.*

*WILSON gets out a bottle of green lemonade. LAURA begins to unpack the bags she has brought in.)*

ARTHUR: Saraffian said he thought she might be on the way down.

LAURA: How Saraffian's meant to know, sitting in that office all day . . .

ARTHUR: He has a manager's nose. He's like a truffle pig, he can smell heroin at fifty paces.

LAURA: Don't be absurd, dumbos. It's not smack, it's booze.

Liquid boredom. Twice a day she flips out.

WILSON: Game.

NASH: Wot's it to be?

WILSON: Pope's balls. The game is the most borin' and useless piece of information you can think of. Thus the Pope 'as balls.

NASH: Right.

WILSON: Away you go.

*(LAURA arranges a series of dresses on the back of the bench. Then starts sewing one of her choice.)*

NASH: The town of Nottingham was once called Snottingham.

WILSON: Yeah, that's borin'.

NASH: Thank you, pal, your go.

*(INCH returns with eight bottles of scotch, which he sets out on a bench.)*

WILSON: Efrem Zimbalist's first wife's name was Alma Gluck.

NASH: Well done, Wilson, that's really dull.

INCH: Diana Dors' real name was Diana Fluck.

NASH: Hello, Arthur.

ARTHUR: Nashy. How are you?

INCH: Or Diana Clunt, I can't remember which.

WILSON: The capital of Burundi is Bujumbura.

INCH: Or possibly Diana Clocksucker, but I think I would've remembered that.

*(INCH goes.)*

LAURA: She starts drinking at breakfast, she passes out after lunch, then she's up for supper, ready for the show. Then after the

show she starts drinking. At two-thirty she's out again.  
Morning she gets up. And drinks. She's a great professional.  
Never misses a show.

ARTHUR: Pills?

LAURA: No.

ARTHUR: Reds?

LAURA: No. Blue heavens, no. Yellow jackets, no. Bennies, no. No  
goofballs, no dexies, no dollies.

ARTHUR: Still no acid?

LAURA: No.

ARTHUR: And the heroin?

LAURA: No. She just drinks.

ARTHUR: What is she, some kind of pervert?

*(PEYOTE enters with an electric kettle and sits down. A moment later INCH appears with an extension cable from the stage, and they plug the kettle in.)*

LAURA: No aeroplane glue, no household cement, no banana peel,  
no fingernail polish remover, no nutmeg, no paintstripper. No  
one in the world but her and Johnny Walker.

ARTHUR: And the singing?

LAURA: The singing's O.K.

*(LAURA goes out. INCH hails SNEAD who is carrying MAGGIE into the room over his shoulder. SNEAD is forty-five, in top hat and black tails, this side of his first coronary. We do not see her.)*

INCH: Waiter, can you take 'er up to a bathroom?

SNEAD: Sir.

ARTHUR: You're the Nile

You're the Tower of Pisa

You're the smile

On the Mona Lisa . . .

*(SNEAD has taken MAGGIE away. PEYOTE arranges a plastic funnel and two glass tubes, which he then sets out with care on the bench. NASH gets up.)*

NASH: And where the 'ell are we?

*(Pause. Then he starts changing his shirt. INCH begins mending a plug.)*

WILSON: At this moment in time on planet earth the dead out-

number the living by thirty to one.

(LAURA returns, distributing pork pies.)

LAURA: She doesn't speak very warmly of you.

ARTHUR: I'm not meant to drag round the country, am I?

LAURA (*smiles*): Or of me.

ARTHUR: Still sings my songs.

LAURA: She'd prefer not to.

ARTHUR: I'm sure.

LAURA: She'd prefer to get up there and scream.

ARTHUR: You're a Moscow view

You're oh so cool

You're Lester Young . . .

(SMEGS appears. He is dressed like a very baggy matelot. He never raises his voice.)

SMEGS: Couple of slags here say anyone fancy a blow-job?

(ARTHUR gets up as if to consider.)

ARTHUR: A blow-job. Do I want a blow-job?

LAURA: How did they get in here?

SMEGS: Inch? Blow-job?

ARTHUR: Bound to turn out like a Chinese meal. Half an hour later and you need another.

INCH: Butterfly flicks, do they do butterfly flicks?

SMEGS: Ask them.

INCH: Sure.

LAURA (*to PEYOTE*): Do you have to do that in here?

PEYOTE: Fuck off.

INCH (*laughs*): But will they do butterfly flicks with a roadie?

(*He goes to find out.*)

SMEGS: Not a chance.

ARTHUR: Isn't he meant to be . . .

SMEGS: What?

ARTHUR: Setting up. You're an hour late.

LAURA (*holding a dress up*): Does this look all right?

SMEGS: It's up to him.

ARTHUR: Why don't you go and help him?

SMEGS: Because we're artists.

ARTHUR: All right.

SMEGS: See?

LAURA: Artists don't set up.

SMEGS: You don't ask Oistrakh to go out and strangle the cat.

*(INCH reappears, picks up the plug.)*

INCH: They do blow-jobs wiv singers, but nothin' below bass guitar.

ARTHUR: That's right, love, keep your standards up.

PEYOTE: I play fuckin' bass guitar.

*(He hurries out.)*

SMEGS: Artists. I mean. Keith Moon's chauffeur got run over, he said chauffeurs are two a penny, it's blokes like me what are irreplaceable.

WILSON: There is no word in the English language as rhymes with 'orange'.

NASH: Hey, these valiums, do they go with my shirt?

*(He tosses one in. SNEAD reappears.)*

SNEAD: Is that to be everything, sir?

INCH: No, you gotta get 'er clothes off and get 'er into the bath.

SNEAD: Sir?

INCH: You think I'm jokin'?

*(He heads out, his arm round SNEAD.)*

INCH: I'm doin' you a favour. You should be a member of the stevedores' union.

SNEAD: Sir?

INCH: We're gonna 'ave to wash 'er. Do you wanna know wot that's like?

SNEAD: Sir?

INCH: Well, 'ave you ever seen 'em cleanin' St Paul's?

*(They go out.)*

ARTHUR: Is that what happens every day?

*(LAURA just looks at him.)*

ARTHUR: What does everyone do?

LAURA: Pretend not to notice, what would you do?

ARTHUR: What . . .

LAURA: There's no choice. Stoke tomorrow. Then Keele. Bradford. Southampton. Quick one in Amsterdam. Back to Glasgow. Then they claim California, but nobody believes it.

ARTHUR: Saraffian's mad.

LAURA: Not Saraffian's idea. It's her. She wants to hit San



Francisco on her knees.

ARTHUR: What's the money?

LAURA: A hundred and twenty, no more. It won't cover overheads, whatever it is. But she . . . likes to keep busy.

SMEGS: All this jumping on the spot makes you feel famous. But it's no real substitute for people knowing your name.

*(SMEGS goes out.)*

WILSON: Arfer.

ARTHUR: Yes.

WILSON: Your contribution.

*(Pause.)*

ARTHUR: H. G. Wells was attractive to women because his breath smelt of honey.

*(Pause.)*

WILSON: Very nice.

NASH: I enjoyed that.

WILSON: Very nice.

*(ANSON appears. He is nineteen, unusually short with long frizzy black hair. He carries a clipboard and wears evening dress with a velvet bow tie.)*

ANSON: Are we nearly . . .

ARTHUR: There's a plug.

ANSON: What?

ARTHUR: We're waiting to mend a plug. Look. Over there.

*(They look at the plug.)*

ARTHUR: And then we'll be ready.

ANSON: I'm the organizer. The booking. You are . . . ninety minutes late you know. Couldn't someone . . . one of you mend it yourselves?

ARTHUR: Arms like penguins I'm afraid.

ANSON: I see.

*(He goes out. PEYOTE reappears with a piece of gauze. INCH and SNEAD appear.)*

NASH: Three-quarters of all children are born before breakfast.

INCH: 'Ave you got 'er dress?

LAURA: Here. Tonight Miss Frisby is in peach.

SNEAD: Will that be everything, sir?

INCH: Why not lie down there and I'll walk all over yer?