No Pyjamas by Amanda Penlington

List of characters
Frank, wears an overcoat and carries a small, black, notebook in its pocket. He has a small pencil lodged behind his ear and he carries a large black bag.
Georgina, married to Richard.
Richard, married to Georgina.

Georgina is in the home that she shares with Richard, her husband.

The SR area is the living room, which has a small kitchen area within it (further US, R). The front door is situated DSR. USR is a door leading out of the downstairs living area to an (offstage) hall staircase. USL is a door that opens onto the bedroom area, shown SL by a double bed, a bedside cabinet and a dressing table. A ladies’ dressing gown lies on the bed.

(Georgina is drinking tea and reading a magazine. She takes a bite out of a biscuit. The doorbell rings. She answers the door.)

Frank Hello. Coleman household? My name’s Frank. I’ve come to do an authorised inspection of the Coleman household. You are Mrs Coleman?

Georgina Yes.

Frank Sorry for the formality but do you have any proof of identification? I’m afraid that so many people illegally sub-let these days that we do have to check that you are who you say you are before we can continue.

Georgina I have my marriage certificate if you would hang on a second.

Frank That would be perfect.

(Georgina moves into the living room and looks for the certificate. Frank enters and closes the front door behind him. He watches her look for the certificate.)

Frank Been married long?

Georgina Two months.

(Frank writes in his notebook.)

Frank Newlyweds. Nice to be married I should imagine?

Georgina Yes. We’re very happy.

(Frank writes in his notebook.)
Frank  Happily married. That’s lovely.

(Georgina finds the document and shows it to Frank.)

Frank  That’s lovely, Mrs Coleman. Let me just write down the details in my little book.

(He writes.)

Frank  Thank you Mrs Coleman. Now, you have that back and we can get started.

Georgina  What is it that you’ve come about?

Frank  Are your taps working? Any problems with the water supply thus far?

Georgina  No. It seems to be working fine. I’ve just made a cup of tea.

Frank  Well, it shouldn’t be. Water should be off. Would you mind if I took a look?

Georgina  No, not at all. Be my guest.

(Frank moves over to the sink area. He draws a spanner out of his bag and uses it to turn a washer under the sink.)

Frank  There we go. No water, see. At least you’ve had time to make yourself a cup of tea.

Georgina  Yes. Are you sure? It was fine a moment ago. I’d offer you one but obviously…

Frank  Do you take sugar?

Georgina  No.

Frank  Neither do I.

(He takes a sip of her tea.)

Frank  Ooh, you make a lovely cuppa, Mrs Coleman. Are they ginger nuts?

Georgina  Yes.

Frank  I bet you were just sitting down with a little light reading, a cup of tea and a couple of ginger nuts before getting your husband’s tea ready.

(He takes a biscuit, dunks it in the tea and eats it.)

Frank  You can’t beat ginger nuts for dunking can you? (Pause). You keep a lovely clean
house, Mrs Coleman.

Georgina  Thank you.

Frank  I bet you’re a whizz with a feather duster.

(Georgina smiles.)

Frank  I can just imagine you tiptoeing around, trying to knock the cobwebs out of those high corners, swishing your feather duster about on the dado rail, bending over to deal with those skirting boards. Yes, the dust really gathers there, doesn’t it? And that kitchen floor - how do you cope with spillages? Do you use a mop? No, I can’t see you as a Mrs Mop, let me see... you get down on your hands and knees and give it a good scrub don’t you? Down there for hours sometimes - a woman’s work is never done. And I bet your husband doesn’t lift a finger to help does he? He just stands there and watches you, slaving away for him. Still, however hard you try there are always areas that are a magnet for dust aren’t there?

(He runs his finger over a surface and looks at it.)

Frank  Dirty. Tut tut.

(He sees their wedding photo, runs his finger over it and looks at his finger again.)

Frank  Filthy. Oh dear. What will your husband say when he gets home?

(She does not respond, he points to the magazine she was reading).

Frank  What are you reading?

Georgina  A magazine.

Frank  Good is it?

Georgina  Yes.

Frank  I like a nice magazine. (Beat). I like looking at the pictures. I fancied a career as a photographer myself but, alas, my calling was elsewhere. I try to keep it up but my photographic efforts are strictly amateur in comparison to what you’ll find in the glossies.

(Georgina smiles politely and then tries to read).

Frank  I bet you were in the middle of a really juicy story. One of those real life romances is it? They met on a cruise ship, he was the purser, the handsome man in uniform, she was a penniless but beautiful stowaway but despite their different social status they could not deny the attraction between them: it was primitive, animal even. Yet she held off for as long as she could before surrendering herself wholly to his masculine desire. They met nightly on the quarterdeck
and she would fall into his manly arms; locked in this embrace their lips would tease each other, she took such pleasure in his kisses that on the third night she could hold back no longer and gave free reign to her sensual appetite...

Georgina  (Interrupts) It’s recipes actually.

Frank   Recipes?

Georgina  Yes.

Frank   Ooh, I could do with a few tips. (Beat). Not that I’m inexperienced in the kitchen department. I strap on my little pinny and I’m a proper little housewife. (Pause). I make a mean Shepherd’s pie. (Beat). Made with real shepherds. (Beat). Only joking. No, no I have to say I do know my way around a stove. So, what’s the article?

Georgina  ‘Liven up your vegetables’.

Frank   Oh yes? Let’s have a peak.

(Georgina shows him the magazine article, Frank reads).

(The front door opens. Georgina rushes over to greet her husband. They kiss and Richard enters but doesn’t see Frank for a moment.)

Richard    All the way home I’ve been thinking about what I’m going to do to you tonight.

(Frank writes. Richard sees Frank.)

Richard    Hello, who’s this?

Georgina   Hello darling, this is Frank. Frank, this is my husband Richard.

(They shake hands.)

Frank    I’d recognise you anywhere, Mr Coleman.

Richard   Have we met?

Frank    No. Not to my knowledge. But you look exactly as you did in your wedding photo. Happy day?

Richard   Yes. Very happy.

Frank    Lived up to your expectations?

Richard   Absolutely.
Frank Was the wedding night everything you expected it to be?

(Frank writes.)

Richard I’m sorry, I didn’t catch your second name.

Frank Don’t be sorry, Mr Coleman, I didn’t give it. I’m Frank. Just Frank.

Richard And you..?

Georgina We have no water. Frank came round to investigate.

Richard So no cup of tea to welcome home your favourite husband?

Georgina I’m afraid not.

Richard I’ll have to divorce you.

(Frank writes.)

Frank No lover’s tiff on my account, please.

Richard No, it’s just a joke we have. If one of us does something that disappoints the other we go “I’ll have to divorce you”. It’s just our little joke.

Frank I see.

(He points out an article in the magazine.)

Frank Ooh, Mr Coleman, (Frank hands the magazine to Richard, look at that photo. Ooh, tasty, that is very evocative isn’t it?

Richard Yes.

(Richard hands the magazine back to Georgina).

Frank (To Richard) I do love a bit of asparagus. Don’t you?

Richard I’m not keen actually.

(Richard wanders off, removes coat etc. and ends up in the kitchen).

Frank Oh you don’t know what you’re missing. I love a bit of asparagus, dipping it into some hollandaise sauce and then sucking it off. Lovely.
(Georgina carries on reading, looking at a different page. Frank looks at what she’s looking at.)

Frank   Like carrots do you?
Georgina Yes.
Frank   And Mr Coleman? He likes carrots does he?
Richard Yes.
Frank   Do you butter your husband’s carrots?
Georgina I’m sorry?
Frank   Anything that you put down the sink could cause a blockage to the system.
Richard   (From the kitchen) Oh, I see, well…
Frank   So, you do butter your husband’s carrots?
Georgina  Well, I know you’re not supposed to but, occasionally, yes, yes I do.
Frank   For a special treat, eh?
Georgina Yes. These things don’t hurt in moderation.
Frank   Quite so, Mrs Coleman, quite so.

(Frank makes a note in his book, Georgina reads the magazine, she turns the page, Frank finishes his note and sits next to her.)

Frank   Ooh, ‘10 ways with potatoes’. Look at that mash, it looks really rich, doesn’t it?
Georgina Yes.
Frank   Is your husband keen on cooking?
Richard   (Re-enters) Well, I wouldn’t say I’m keen on it…
Georgina He likes to come in whilst I’m cooking and…
Frank   He likes to watch you cook for him, eh? (Stands) Say what you will about equality, Mrs Coleman, but I say there’s not a nicer sight for a man to come home to than his wife making him dinner, eh, Mr Coleman?
Richard  (Answers at the same time as Georgina) I, er, don’t really…

Georgina  (Answers at the same time as Richard) Well, I don’t know, he comes in and has a stir, adds a bit of seasoning sometimes.

Frank  Does he put cream in your mash?

Georgina  Well...

Frank  Come now, Mrs Coleman, don’t hold back. I bet you like really creamy mash don’t you?

Georgina  Yes, yes I do.

Frank  And I bet you just love giving it to her, don’t you Mr Coleman?

(Richard smiles politely).

Frank  Naughty but nice aren’t you?

Georgina  Pardon?

Frank  I said, ‘naughty but nice isn’t it?’

Georgina  Mmm.

Frank  A little of what you fancy does you no harm, eh Mr Coleman? We all indulge on occasion. Do you like a nice glass of wine with your dinner?

Richard  Yes.

Georgina  Richard’s more of a wine buff than I am.

Frank  It’s the finishing touch to any meal isn’t it? Mr Coleman’s quite knowledgeable about wine, then?

Georgina  He has a very delicate palate.

Frank  An ideal husband. (Pause - he looks at Richard. Richard looks back.) Err, I better go and check the pipes for that blockage. (Frank exits to the kitchen).

(Richard breathes out deeply to relieve the tension).

Georgina  Why doesn’t my ideal husband tell me what he’s been thinking about on the way home?
Richard: Would my wife like that?

Georgina: Very much.

Richard: Has she been a good wife?

Georgina: Very good.

Richard: Then I’ll tell her. Newlyweds; the wedding night; cat and mouse; doctors and nurses; pupils and teachers; the lord and the maid; cowboys and indians; strangers in the night; cops and robbers; Bonnie and Clyde; Butch and Sundance; priests and whores; nuns and workmen; the lady and the gardener; the hunter and the quarry; the headmistress and the milkman; cats and dogs; the girl guide and the boy scout; the first time; the fox in the henhouse; no, please, don’t; fireworks; stop; don’t stop; the balloon and the dummy; the clown and the wrestler; toad-in-the-hole.

Frank: (Who has been listening to part of this conversation in the doorway.) Sounds tasty.

Richard: It’s what we’re having for dinner.

Frank: Lovely. (Beat). Didn’t you say something about a clown?

Richard: Yes.

Frank: Only I take it that you wouldn’t be having a clown for dinner? That would taste funny.

(Polite/pained smiles at the terrible joke).

Richard: Er, I was, er, talking about a game...

Georgina: Just our game...

Richard: that we played as children.

Frank: I see. (Beat). So you knew each other as children?

Georgina and Richard (Together): Yes.

Georgina: We’ve always got on.

Richard: We were always quite close, like...

Frank: Like brother and sister?

Richard: Er, yes.
And now you’re married.

Georgina and Richard (Together)  Yes.

And how do you play this game?

Well,...

What was your favourite game Frank? Bulldog? Hide and seek?

I-spy. (Pause). I spy with my little eye, something beginning with ‘r’.

(Georgina and Richard look around the room and each other.)

‘Recipes’?

No. (Frank looks at Richard.)

‘Richard’?

Good try but no. (Pause - they are baffled.) Give up?

Yes.


We’re very happy.

Of course you are. Goes without saying. Handsome chap like that. Beautiful girl like you. You make a very handsome couple.

Thank you.

Bet you have a lot of fun together. (Pause). Take a lot of baths do you?

I’m sorry?

(Frank takes out his notebook again.)

For the inspection. Would you say that you take more baths than the average couple?

Not especially. We do try and save water where we can.
Frank: Take a lot of baths together? (Pause). Don’t be shy Mrs Coleman, if I was a young bride I think I’d forever be having baths with my husband. We’d never be out of the bath. Got a nice big tub have you?

Georgina: Nothing particularly big. Just a normal bath.

(He writes.)

Frank: I bet that’s a bit of a squeeze with the both of you in there. That’s the thing with rented accommodation isn’t it? You can’t make the changes that you want.

Richard: We’re saving up to buy our own place.

Frank: Once you have a place of your own you can get a really big tub. Something luxurious. Enjoy wallowing. Together.

(He writes.)

Frank: Have you ever had any problems with the water supply?

Georgina: Well, there was a time last winter when the pipes juddered a bit but it wore off.

Frank: Right. And this was last winter?

Georgina: Yes.

(He writes.)

Frank: Only you said that you’ve been married (he checks his notes) two months, was it?

Richard: Two months, that’s right.

Frank: Well, that only takes us back to July. How long have you lived here?

Georgina: About eighteen months.

Frank: So how did you feel about moving into your wife’s house, Mr Coleman? I know I’m a little old fashioned but I have to say that I would find that a bit awkward.

Georgina: He didn’t move into my house. We moved in together.

(He writes this down.)

Frank: So the white wedding dress was a bit of a façade was it?

Georgina: I’m sorry?
Frank (to himself as he writes) Not a virgin when married.

Richard  Sorry, Frank, I don’t mean to seem rude but how long do you think this will take?

Frank  Oh, not much longer, Mr Coleman. Just until I’ve collected enough information to get a full picture.

Richard  And how long until we get our water supply back?

Frank  Ooh, not too long after I’ve finished making my diagnosis I shouldn’t think.

Richard  Good. Only we have things to be getting on with.

Frank  Of course, Mr Coleman. I understand thoroughly. Just a few more things I need to look into and log and then I’ll leave you two lovebirds to it.

Richard  Thanks.

Frank  Do you have a washing machine, Mrs Coleman?

Georgina  Yes.

Frank  If I might have a look at it?

Georgina  (Gets up) Certainly. It’s over here.

Frank  You weren’t in the middle of washing anything were you? I only ask because I don’t want to embarrass you by pulling out your underwear. I should hate to rifle around in your bra and knickers, especially with your husband watching.

Georgina  I wasn’t washing anything.

Frank  When did you last do some washing, Mrs Coleman?

Georgina  I think my husband put a load in yesterday. That’s right, isn’t it?

Richard  Yes. It was working fine.

Frank  You put the washing in sir?

Richard  Yes, that’s right.

Frank  And you took it out and ironed it and put it away, Mrs Coleman?

Georgina  No, Richard did that.
Frank: I see. And do you make a habit of doing the household wash, Mr Coleman?

Richard: Well, yesterday I needed clean shirts for work. We sort of take it in turns.

Frank: How modern. You trust your husband with ironing your intimate garments do you, Mrs Coleman?

Georgina: I think Richard knows what to iron and what to leave to drip dry.

Frank: Right. (He writes.) You weren’t washing pyjamas yesterday, Mr Coleman?

Richard: No.

Frank: Are you sure?

Richard: Quite sure.

Frank: Only the cords can get caught in the mechanism and cause a malfunction.

Richard: I don’t wear pyjamas with cords.

Frank: Right. (He writes.) I think it would be useful to check upstairs, Mr and Mrs Coleman. If you could point me in the right direction?

Richard: Yes, out through here, up the stairs and the bathroom is straight ahead.

Frank: Thank you.

(From offstage USR.)

Frank: What’s this door on the right?

Richard: (Sticks his head out of the door USR and calls upstairs) No, that’s the bedroom.

(Richard comes back into the living room. He takes his wife’s hands and kisses them.)

Richard: Which is where I’d rather be.

(From offstage USR.)

Frank: Thanks Mr Coleman, leave me to get to the bottom of it. Shouldn’t be too long now.

(Whilst Georgina and Richard talk SR in the living room, Frank moves around the bedroom. He touches the bedclothes.)
Richard: God, I can’t wait 'til he’s gone.

Georgina: Well, you heard him, it won’t be long now.
(They kiss.) So, what exactly have you planned for tonight?

Richard: Would you like me to tell you now?

Georgina: Yes.

Richard: We’re in the bedroom and, first, I kiss you, like this.

(They kiss.)

(SL, Frank takes a scent bottle from the dressing table, removes the lid and sniffs.)

Georgina: And then?

Richard: Then I kiss your neck.

(He kisses her neck.)

Georgina: And?

Richard: And...

(He continues to kiss her neck.)

(SL, Frank picks up the dressing gown and sniffs it. He puts it on.)

Georgina: Richard, Richard, I think you better stop.

(He stops.)

Richard: Spoilsport. I’ll have to divorce you.

Georgina: Don’t stop telling me. Just whisper. (Pause as she leads him to the sofa.) Tell me what we’re doing next.

(SL, Frank takes Georgina’s lipstick and applies some to his lips. Then he sits on the bed.)

Richard: I sit you down on the bed.

Georgina: (Sits) And where are you?

Richard: (Sits beside her.) I’m on the floor. Kneeling at your feet. Worshipping you. I am your slave.
Georgina: I expect no less. What next, ‘slave’?

(Frank lies back on the bed.)

Richard: You lie back on the bed.

Frank: Richard.

Richard: I kiss your feet.

Frank: Oh Richard.

Richard: You raise your legs, offer me your ankles.

Georgina: Kiss.

Richard: I do.

Georgina: Higher.

Richard: Higher.

Frank: Richard.

Georgina: Higher, slave.

Richard: Higher.

Georgina: Kiss.

Frank: Oh Richard.

(Frank is satisfied, he stands. Removes the gown. He takes a handkerchief from his pocket and wipes off the lipstick. He exits USL.)

Georgina: Kiss, slave.


Georgina: More.


Georgina: Cunt-slave.
Richard  Kiss. Kiss.

Georgina  My cunt-slave. Kiss.

(The USR door opens slightly. Frank is listening.)

Richard  Kiss. (Beat.) My cunt.

(Frank enters USR.)

Frank  I don’t think that you should talk to your wife like that, Mr Coleman.

Richard  I’m sorry?

Frank  It is demeaning and inappropriate. You have to consider your wife’s human rights.

Georgina  Pardon?

Frank  Your wife has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Richard  How long have you been …?

Georgina  You were eavesdropping on a private conversation.

Frank  I was collecting vital evidence. I have recorded exactly what you have said. You called your wife, excuse me Mrs Coleman, a ‘cunt’. I heard you quite clearly. My evidence is permissible in a court of law should you wish to make a complaint against your husband, Mrs Coleman, or, indeed, file for divorce on grounds of emotional and psychological abuse.

Georgina  I’ll be ringing the water company to complain about your behaviour.

Frank  There would be little point in that, Mrs Coleman.

Georgina  I’m sure that your employers would be most interested to hear how you have invaded our home, intimidated us, asked us personal questions and eavesdropped on a private conversation.

Frank  Please don’t distress yourself, I am an authorised inspector, Mrs Coleman. Where are your pyjamas, Mr Coleman?

Richard  Pardon?

Frank  Just answer the question, Mr Coleman, what have you done with your pyjamas?

Richard  I don’t wear pyjamas.
Frank    You don’t wear pyjamas. What about you, Mrs Coleman?

(Frank writes. Georgina moves over to the telephone and looks in the phone directory for a number.)

Georgina   I’m ringing the water company. Who is your superior? Show me your staff identity card, please. Let’s put a stop to this.

Frank     Let me save you the trouble, Mrs Coleman. You won’t need the water company.

(Frank takes his spanner to the washer under the sink.)

Frank    There you go. Water back in working order. Now, if I could just leave these cards with you?

(He hands them a card each.)

Frank    They are a record of my investigation.

Richard   What is this?

Frank    They are individual to you, bearing your name, address, marital status and date of birth: please carry them on your person at all times, as is now required by law. The information they contain may, under Section B Paragraph 12 Sub-clause 47 of the national citizens’ identity charter, be requested at any time by any government employee, civil servant or any of our permitted affiliates.

Richard    ‘Permitted affiliates’, what does that mean?

Frank    Anyone we choose to sell the information on to. (Pause). In addition we now have on record (Frank waves his notebook) any concerns we have about you.

Georgina   Concerns?

Frank    Yes, intelligence gained through legitimate surveillance. Don’t forget Mrs Coleman, it’s permissible in court should you ever wish to bring any action against your husband.

Richard   Since when did the water company do surveillance?

Frank    Oh come along, Mr Coleman, don’t be so naïve, I’m not from the water company.

Richard   But my wife called you to fix the fault with the water supply.

Georgina    No I didn’t. I answered the door, he said he’d come to investigate a fault with the water.
Frank No I didn’t. I was clear from the start, Mrs Coleman. I said that I was ‘investigating the Coleman household’. You must remember?

Georgina I don’t ..?

Frank I logged it in my book. I was quite clear. Clarity is important to us, to protect you as much as ourselves.

Richard What about our privacy? We’ve got a right to...

Frank This is to protect your rights. Your safety is our priority. It’s a big, bad world out there. Look, Mr Coleman, I know, every Englishman’s home is his castle. We don’t want just anyone breaching our castle walls do we? So we’re ensuring, with these little cards, that everyone is who they say they are. We’re working to keep the man in the street safe. And his wife, too, eh, Mrs Coleman?

Georgina Why have we been…?

Richard We haven’t done anything wrong.

Frank Well, if you haven’t done anything wrong then you’ve got nothing to worry about have you, Mr Coleman? And if you have we’ll be in touch. It’s been a real pleasure to meet you and your lovely wife.

(Frank shakes Richard’s hand and exits through the front door, DSR.)

Blackout.
Data to enrich your online business. Anim aute id magna aliqua ad non deserunt sunt. Qui irure qui lorem cupidatat commodo. Elit sunt amet fugiat veniam occaecat fugiat aliqua. Transfer funds world-wide. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipisicing elit. Pariatur minima sequi recusandae, porro maiores officia assumenda aliquam laborum ab aliquid veritatis impedit odio adipisci optio iste blanditiis facere. Totam, velit. Harold remembered that his parents had taken him there when he was very young. (having). I don't like being phoned late at night. I don't like people phoning me late at night. (being). The form should be completed in black ink. You should complete the form in black ink. (be). This product has not been tested on animals. We have not tested this product on animals. (has).

Having paid for the tickets, we had no choice but to continue. (been). Ibrahim regrets not having been sent to a better school. Ibrahim regrets the fact that his parent didn't sent him to a better school. (having). Those sheets need washing. You need to wash those sheets. (washing). It was the first palace to be built on the east bank of the Nile. It was the first palace that the Egyptians built on the east bank of the Nile. (to).

He was a nice-looking boy, with his mother's regular features and dark hair, but he had inherited his father's blue eyes, and though he was rather pale his skin was smooth and clear. Samuel Sunbury had got him into the office of the accountants who came twice a year to do the accounts of his own firm and by the time he was twenty-one he was able to bring back to his mother every week quite a nice little sum. She gave him back three half-crowns for his lunches and ten shillings for pocket money, and the rest she put in the Savings Bank for him against a rainy day. No one's ever had a better son than our Herbert. Hardly a day's illness in his life and he's never given me a moment's worry. It just shows if you bring up somebody right they'll be a credit to you.