

**Imogene.** *An eccentrically dressed woman in her thirties enters with a suitcase. She puts her suitcase down beside her, opens her handbag. She takes out a small hand mirror and starts to check her make-up.* **Esther.** *A modestly dressed woman in her mid forties wearing a floppy felt hat enters with a suitcase on wheels. At first she sits down but then notices Imogene. She stands and walks slowly and discreetly over to Imogene.*

ESTHER

It's been very hot lately. *(Imogene doesn't react)*  
A warm front is coming down from Scandinavia.

IMOGENE

*(Turns her head slowly towards Esther. looks at her very slowly from head to foot)* I haven't noticed. *(She goes back to her make-up)*

ESTHER

I can't stand the heat. *(Pause)* All this talk about the greenhouse effect, makes you think, doesn't it?

IMOGENE

*(Gives a sideways glance. Puts her make-up into her handbag)* No it doesn't. *(Stares at Esther)*

ESTHER

*(Uneasy)* Are you waiting for someone?

IMOGENE

Does it look like it? *(Looking down at her suitcase)*

ESTHER

Well\_

IMOGENE

No it doesn't! Are you waiting for someone?

ESTHER

Well\_

IMOGENE

No you're not, are you?

ESTHER

*(Pause)* I could be waiting for someone.

IMOGENE

*(She takes out a bag of sweets from her handbag. She puts one into her mouth)* But you're not.

ESTHER

*(Pause)* No... I'm going to see my sister Margaret in Oxford. *(Looking at the sweets. Smiles)* Oh, they look nice. *(Imogene stares at her while she puts the bag of sweets into*

*her handbag. She moves away from Esther*) Have you ever been to Oxford? *(No reply, she again approaches Imogene. Standing side by side)* Lovely town Oxford. *(Pause)* All those beautiful Universities... All those beautiful stained glass windows. *(Pause)* Boating on the river Thames... *(Imogene stares at her)* Have you ever been boating on a river? It's the best exercise you can get, boating on a river... *(Mimes rowing a boat)* Not so good when it's raining though... Have you been to Oxford? I like Oxford... They call it the city of bicycles, because of all those students. *(Mimes riding a bicycle)* ting-a-ling... ting- a-ling... I'm going to see my sister in Oxford... She's not very well at the moment... No... That's why I'm going to see her... mm... *(Pause)* She's got haemorrhoids. *(Imogene stares at her)* Have you ever had haemorrhoids? *(Pause)* Where are you going?

IMOGENE

*(Stares at her for a few seconds)* Titterington!

ESTHER

Oh, where's that? I've never heard of it.

IMOGENE

It's in Titteringtonshire.

ESTHER

Titterington? It doesn't exist. You are joking...

IMOGENE

*(Smiles)* Doesn't it?

ESTHER

*(She points at the timetable)* If it exists, why are you waiting for a train that isn't on the timetable?

IMOGENE

That's because I have to change trains. First stop Dunklesbury, arrives 14.52 platform 2.

ESTHER

Dunklesbury? Never heard of it. You are making it up. It doesn't exist.

IMOGENE

*(Stares at her. She walks slowly behind her)* You've heard of... *(Mysterious)* Doomsbury. Everybody knows... Doomsbury. *(She stands beside her again)*

ESTHER

*(Uneasy. Pretends)* Yes of course.

IMOGENE

*(Slight smile. Deliberate)* Dunklesbury is twenty miles North East of Doomsbury. But I'm not going to Doomsbury. *(Looks down)* Dunklesbury is in a deep mysterious valley.

ESTHER

I knew it. You are crazy! How can a train go down into a steep valley? I've got you there! (*Triumphant smile*)

IMOGENE

The station is at the top of the valley. There's a bus-link down to the bottom. I prefer the Flying fox. (*Grins*) It's much more exciting!

ESTHER

What's a flying fox?

IMOGENE

It's like a Tyrolean, but vertical. If I want to visit Dunklesbury, I put my luggage on the bus, put on a harness, in the lying position, and down I go... Wheeee! (*She runs around the room. Laughing*) It's like flying! (*She giggles*) I love speed! (*Suddenly she stops.*) (*Composed*) I arrive 10 minutes before the bus.

ESTHER

(*Looks at her strangely*) You are absolutely mad!  
(*She looks up at the timetable*) Ah but Dunklesbury isn't on the timetable.

IMOGENE

That's because I'm an hour and a half early. That's why it hasn't come up on the board yet. I shall go and have a cup of tea and a cheese and cucumber sandwich in a few minutes.

ESTHER

(*Shakes her head*) I don't believe you. I don't believe that Dunklesbury exists. If it existed I would have heard of it... (*Mocking*) And Titterington in Titteringtonshire? It's just a figment of your imagination. You are just trying to make fun of me! If Dunklesbury comes up on that timetable, and it won't! I'll eat my hat!

IMOGENE

(*Pause*) Arrive Dunklesbury Station at 14.52 platform 2. Change to platform 3 for the 15.35 train to Blitherington.

ESTHER

Blitherington?

IMOGENE

(*Threatening*) Yes. Blitherington! (*Calm*) I have enough time to have a nice cup of tea and a ... (*Sensual*) delicious... hot... buttered... Dunklepet.

ESTHER

Dunklepet? What's that? I've heard of hot buttered Crumpet but not a... Ah... you are doing it again! There is no such thing as a Dunklepet! (*Looks at her strangely*) Why are you saying these things?

IMOGENE

Dunklepets are the speciality in Dunklesbury. People come for miles around just to

marvel at them in the bakery windows let alone eat them. They are truly a work of art.

ESTHER

A work of art? What's so special about them?

IMOGENE

*(Stares at her)* What's so special? I'll tell you what's so special. Dunklesbury has a population of 350 people. There are 70 bakeries. Seven oh. That's 5 people per bakery.

ESTHER

But that's insane! ... You're insane! *(Stares at Imogene)* You are winding me up!

IMOGENE

Am I? *(She grins. Her eyes wide open)* They're thinking of opening another bakery because Mrs. Smith is expecting triplets!

ESTHER

Triplets? How do you know that?

IMOGENE

Don't you read the newspapers? Dunklesbury receives orders for their Dunklepets from all over the world. *(Her eyes become wild with excitement)* They get regular orders from The White House, The Kremlin! Even 10 Downing street get their teeth into them!

ESTHER

*(Surprised)* Ooh. They must be very good then.

IMOGENE

Good?! Good?! They're better than good! They are absolutely phenomenal! Did you know that Buckingham Palace can't get enough of them!?

ESTHER

Oh, no I didn't... Was that in the newspaper?

IMOGENE

No, but I have very reliable sources. *(Grins)* It's been said that Prince Philip sneaks down to the royal kitchen for a Dunklepet in the dead of night! *(Excited)* And the French President during his visit to London said that they were ... "Magnificent" That's what he said!

ESTHER

Magnificent. *(Hurriedly)* Tell me what's so special about them? Do they look like Crumpets? What do they taste like? Are they expensive?

IMOGENE

Well, *(Hidden smile. She mimes)* they are a little bit larger than a crumpet and about half the thickness again. Most people toast them over an open fire... and when you spread salted butter over them, something strange ... exotic and magical happens.

ESTHER

Ooh... what happens ... Tell me?

IMOGENE

When the butter slowly melts into the Dunklepet this unearthly but wonderful sound comes out of it... (*Eyes wide open*)

ESTHER

(*Excited*) A sound? What sort of sound? Come on! Tell me... Tell me!

IMOGENE

A bubbling sound! Yes. (*Eyes closed*) That's it. A wonderful bubbling sound. (*Mimes*) And when you finally sink your teeth into the white fleshy bits, it's like singing voices that you've never heard before.

ESTHER

Oh. How wonderful. Go on! Don't stop! I have to know more!

IMOGENE

And the taste is like nothing else that you know... It's out of this world. (*She becomes more excited*) Down in the valley they even have a Dunklepet Choir... Well the people don't sing of course... (*She giggles*) It's the Dunklepets.

ESTHER

Ooh! A Dunklepet choir... (*Wide eyed*) It sounds wonderful!

IMOGENE

Wonderful is not the word! It's... It's (*raises her voice*) Awsensationally Orgasmonumental! Vive La France! (*uncontrolled laughter*) Yes... (*Calm*) That's it... mm.

ESTHER

(*Puzzled*) I've never heard of those words before, what do they mean?

IMOGENE

I don't know, (*Giggles*) but it sounds good, doesn't it? (*She tries to calm down*) When You take the night train to Dunklesbury, and you have time to stop. And with luck, (*Mysterious*) the wind is in the right direction... You can look down into the deep valley and you hear it. Rising up towards you... A mystical magical sound that seems to pull you towards it.

ESTHER

Can I get the recipe?

IMOGENE

(*Shocked*) What? ... You must be mad! (*Menacing*) Don't you ever ask anyone for the recipe! Do you hear me? ... Nobody! (*Eyes aflame*)

ESTHER

(*Uneasy*) I don't see what harm I'm doing asking for a recipe.

IMOGENE

I've heard that people have mysteriously disappeared after asking for the recipe. *(Pause)* Disappeared without a trace... Phhtt! *(Esther jumps)*

ESTHER

*(Nervous)* Oh well. I won't ask for the recipe, but I must go and see for myself. I don't understand why I've never heard of Dunklepets before.

IMOGENE

*(Smiles)* There's a password.

ESTHER

A password?

IMOGENE

Yes. If you don't have the password, you don't get served Dunklepets. You get served with something that look like Dunklepets, but they're not. They're missing the ever so special ingredient.

ESTHER

*(Excited)* I must have the password! Please give me the password! Perhaps I can buy a ticket for Dunklesbury. Margaret won't mind if I arrive late.

IMOGENE

If you say the password, the man in the Station café will escort you into a small dimly lit side room.

ESTHER

Ooh... *(She giggles)* it sounds all very mysterious.

IMOGENE

In the room, you will see a little old lady behind the counter. She will serve you a Dunklepet. They do say that she's a direct descendant from the first Dunklewitch that lived in Dunklesbury centuries ago. The recipe has been passed down from generation to generation... A closely guarded secret.

ESTHER

A Dunklewitch? You mean a witch from Dunklesbury?

IMOGENE

Yes, a witch. *(Bright eyed)* Her name was Grelyn Wellpet

ESTHER

Grelyn Wellpet. What you are saying is that she's the one who made the first Dunklepet. *(Imogene nods and smiles)* Yes. That explains a lot. Come on! Give me that password! I must have it. Come on come on! Let's have it! Whisper it in my ear. We don't want anyone else to hear it, do we?

IMOGENE

*(Whispers in her ear)* There.

ESTHER

I didn't hear. I didn't hear!

IMOGENE

*(Whispers again)* Did you get it this time?

ESTHER

Yes... But you said... Titterington.

IMOGENE

*(Explodes with laughter. Runs around in circles. Suddenly she stops. Not a smile on her face.)* Pardon?

ESTHER

Titterington. You said Titterington... You know. In Titteringtonshire? Is that the password?

IMOGENE

*(Very serious. She looks at her watch and then at the timetable)* What on earth are you talking about?

ESTHER

But you said\_

IMOGENE

Did I? *(Picks up her suit case. Smiles and leaves)*

ESTHER

She said Titterington ... It's not true... Not true?... Dunklesbury! Doomsbury! The dunklepet choir! A bubbling sound? That's because Mrs Smith's expecting triplets. And the French president... "Magnificent" he said. And what about Prince Philip?? Eh? *(Shouts)* What about Prince Philip? Dunklepets... A work of art. *(Shouts)* Awsensationally Orgasmonumental ! *(Slowly picks up her suitcase and walks slowly towards the exit)*

### **Announcement**

Attention all passengers. The train for Dunklebury will be arriving at 13.05 platform 6. The train for Dunklesbury will be arriving at 13.05 platform 6. *(Esther turns around, takes off her hat and takes a bite out of it. She leaves)*