

**ACT ONE**

**Scene One**

**DOROTHY, MARY and NIGEL** at a trestle table on the stage of the Barn Theatre. **DOROTHY NETTLE** is an attractive, middle-class English woman in her late thirties who takes little care over her appearance. She is friendly, good natured but nobody's fool. **DOROTHY** is on her feet appearing to address a crucial public meeting.

**DOROTHY** Thank you all so much for coming. You are the most important people in any theatre. Without you there is no play. Without you there is no drama. Without you there is only silence. You may think you are sitting in an old barn with uncomfortable seats and inadequate heating. But you are not. You are sitting in the court at Elsinore, you are in the forest of Arden. You are on the steps of the senate in Rome. This humble theatre is a portal, a door to a world of imagination that can transport us from our humdrum existence and allow us to take part in the greatest stories ever told. And this door is about to be closed. The council has withdrawn its grant and unless we can raise fifty thousand pounds it is going to sell the building to be turned into executive homes. I know executives need homes but they also need dreams. Which is why I implore you, I beg you to take this last chance to save our theatre. If not, the community will not just lose its theatre. It will lose its soul.

**MARY and NIGEL** applaud.

**NIGEL** Very eloquent Dorothy. I couldn't have put it better myself - well I could probably, the emotion was perhaps a touch overwrought at the end ...

**MARY** Oh do shut up Nigel. I thought it was bloody marvellous - honest Dot I'm welling up here.

**DOROTHY** But will it work?

**MARY** Only one way to find out.

**NIGEL** Let's let the public in. That is the point of a public meeting after all. Denis if you would be so kind as to open the doors.

*We hear a VOICE from the back.*

**DENIS** I have opened the doors.

**DENIS** walks down to the front. I'm afraid no one's come.

**DOROTHY** What? No one?

**DENIS** Well it's a cold night and you're up against Strictly...

*Pause as the bad news sinks in.*

**DOROTHY** So that's it then. There is to be no last appeal.

**MARY** Maybe people felt the last "Last appeal" was one last appeal too many?