

## The Bagman

By Jonny White

**Scene:** *The Bag Man (or woman) is labouring under a heavy load, a huge bag or sack about six feet round so that it dwarfs the person carrying it. The bag should be dark in colour and bulging as though it is stuffed full. Apart from the bag, there is nothing particularly noticeable about him.*

**Characters:** *Bag Man  
Linda - onlooker  
Jane - onlooker  
Graham - the person called to help.*

**Props:** *Large bag as described above – maybe a frame rucksack; Several smaller bags for the other characters, made from the same material as the large bag. The small bags should be of varying sizes; Chairs; Coin*

*Enter Linda and Jane from stage right, deep in the midst of telling a joke.*

**Linda** ... and so Desert Orchid turns to Red Rum and says "Would you look at that. A talking dog."

*Both Linda and Jane stop, roaring with laughter having found the joke extremely funny. Sit down on bench*

**Jane** Talking dog ... ha ha ha, oh dear, that's funny.

**Linda** It's a good one, isn't it?

**Jane** Certainly is. Where did you hear it?

**Linda** Someone at work told me.

**Jane** That's good. *[Grabs Linda by the arm]* Hey, have you heard the one about the two pieces of tarmac in the pub?

**Linda** No.

**Jane** Well, there were these two pieces of tarmac, sitting in a pub, having a drink. The black piece of tarmac turns to the red piece of tarmac and says ...

*[During this sentence, the Bag Man enters from the rear of the auditorium and makes his way towards the front. Linda notices him. On Jane's last word above, Linda interrupts.]*

**Linda** ... Look at that.

**Jane** No he doesn't. He says ...

**Linda** No. I'm interrupting you. Look. *[Points at the Bag Man]*

**Jane** Oh! I wonder who that is.

**Linda** Looks a bit uncomfortable, carrying that great big weight.

**Jane** Why do you think he's carrying it?

**Linda** I don't know.

*[During this conversation, the Bag reaches the front and then crosses downstage towards stage left]*

**Bag Man** Hello there. *[passing by, just being friendly]*

*[Both Linda and Jane are a bit embarrassed at the Bag Man speaking to them]*

**Linda** Hello.

**Jane** Hi. How are you doing. *[Just an expression, very throw away. She doesn't actually want to know how he is doing, she's more interested in telling Linda the joke.]*

**Bag Man** *[Latches on to the "how are you doing" expression straight away]* Oh, not too good. I feel as though I'm carrying around a huge weight on my shoulders.

*[Jane pulls Linda off to one side to have a "private conversation" during which the bag man sees that they're not interested and moves to stage left to sit down on a park bench and read a newspaper.]*

**Jane** He doesn't know, does he?

**Linda** It looks that way. Poor chap. What should we do?

**Jane** I don't know. I suppose we ought to try and help him.

**Linda** But I don't know how. What about you?

**Jane** No, Nor me. When I say we, that's sort of a general we, as in society, or the church or somebody, not we as in me and you.

**Linda** That's a bit of a relief really. You had me worried for a minute.

**Jane** But we can't just leave him here, can we. He looks in such distress.

**Linda** Is that we as in we in general. Society, church etc. Or do you actually mean we, as in you and I?

**Jane** Good point. What do you suggest?

**Linda** He does seem a bit strange ...

**Jane** Not like us at all.

**Linda** Different.

**Jane** Why don't we find someone else to help him?

**Linda** Brilliant idea. You stay here, and I'll go and look for help.

**Jane** No *you* stay here, and *I'll* go and look for help.

**Linda** Toss you for it?

**Jane** Okay. *[Gets coin out of pocket]* Heads you stay, tails I go.

**Linda** Right.

**Jane** *[Flips coin]* Tails! Okay, I go. *[Starts to leave]*

**Linda** Hang on. That's not fair.

**Jane** Alright. Heads I go, tails you stay?

**Linda** Yes, that's better.

**Jane** *[Flips coin]* Tails again. That was ... um ... you stay.

**Linda** Go on then. Off you go.

*While this has been going on, the Bag Man has been gazing listlessly into the distance. Linda rejoins him as Jane exits down stage right towards the rear of the auditorium.*

**Linda** So, er, nice weather, isn't it. *[Obviously not wanting to make conversation]*

**Bag Man** I suppose. I find it difficult to be enthusiastic.

**Linda** That's nice.

**Bag Man** Not really.

*There is an uncomfortable silence.*

**Linda** Are you local?

**Bag Man** Fairly.

**Linda** Right.

*There is another uncomfortable silence, during which Jane and Graham enter from the rear of the auditorium and stop just before they enter the stage area. They then try to attract Linda's attention.*

**Jane** Psst. *[There is no reaction from Linda]* Psst *[Louder. Linda notices them.]*

**Linda** *[To Bag Man]* Excuse me a moment. *[Joins Jane and Graham]* Where have you been. That was really awkward.

**Jane** Sorry. Look. This is Graham. He said that he's willing to help.

**Linda** That's brilliant. We can leave him to it. Come on Jane. *[Start to exit fast towards the rear of the auditorium]*

- Graham** No, no. What I said to Jane was I would show you how it's done, and then you'll know how to do it again in the future.
- Linda** Oh! That's not what I thought. I thought Jane would find someone to do it for us. *[Jane is hanging around trying not to get involved]*
- Graham** Not a lot of point in that, is there. I may not be around next time.
- Linda** *[Grudgingly]* I suppose.
- Graham** Come on then. *[Jane starts to exit]* And you as well.
- Jane** Do I have to?
- Linda** Yes. Now come on. *[Grabs Linda and pulls her onto the stage behind Graham]*  
*[The three approach the Bag Man]*
- Graham** Hi there. *[Enthusiastically]*
- Bag Man** Hello.
- Graham** You look troubled.
- Bag Man** As it happens, I am.
- Graham** Do you want to talk about it?
- Bag Man** Do you know, you're the first person for years that's asked me that.
- Graham** Am I really?
- Bag Man** You are. I feel like I'm carrying the weight of the world around on my shoulders.
- Graham** I can see that. Do you know what started it?
- Bag Man** No I don't. But this is the worst it's ever been. I try to ignore it most of the time, but it's got so much lately that I just can't.
- Linda** So you do know that you're carrying that huge great load?
- Bag Man** Of course I do. Do you think I wouldn't notice this? *[Jerks thumb at the sack]* Believe me friend, you know when you've got a burden like this. It was a lot easier to ignore in the early days, though.
- Linda** How do you ignore something like that?
- Bag Man** Oh, it wasn't always this size.
- Linda** So how come it's got that big?
- Jane** What's in it anyway?
- Bag Man** It's that big because of everything I've picked up on my journey through life. All the bad things, the rubbish, the lies. Every time I've hurt someone. It's all in there. You can have a look if you like. *[Moves to kneel in front of them and Linda and Jane peer into the bag]*
- Jane** Yeuch. That's horrible. Why do you carry it around with you?
- Bag Man** Because I have to. *[Stand up with the help of Linda.]* That's the result of doing all those things. *[Sits on bench up stage]* Everyone's got one of these bags. *[Jane pulls her bag out of her pocket, in a world of her own and examines it. The Bag Man notices]*
- Linda** What a load of rubbish. *[Move downstage left]*
- Graham** *[Focus only on Linda]* No, it's true. I've got one. *[Pulls a small black bag out of his pocket. It is neatly folded.]* Look. What's in your pocket?
- Linda** *[Reluctantly pulls a small but bulging bag from her pocket.]* Well, okay, I have got this bag. *[Making excuses]* But it's only little.
- Bag Man** *[To Jane]* Mine started off that small.
- Jane** *[Caught out, turns to face Bag Man, realises she has her bag in her hand and quickly stuffs it back in her pocket, somewhat embarrassed.]* Haven't you ever tried to get rid of it?
- Bag Man** It's not as easy as that.
- Linda** I can get rid of mine any time I want. *[Smug]*
- Bag Man** Try throwing it away then.

- Linda** *[Tries to throw it away, but is unable to succeed]* I can't seem to let go of it. It just won't go. *[Moves to stage right during this process, gradually getting more panicky]*
- Bag Man** That was my problem. You put it down and you think, great. I've got rid of it, and then you start to move away but are compelled to pick it back up again. There is nothing I can do on my own to get rid of it.
- Graham** We can help you get rid of it.
- Jane** Can we?
- Linda** Is that we as in society, church or anybody, or do you mean us specifically. As in the three of us here.
- Graham** I mean the three of us here.
- Linda** Oh!
- Bag Man** *[Showing a bit of interest]* Can you really.
- Graham** *[Sits down beside the Bag Man]* Well, we can't get rid of it for you. You've got to actually get rid of it yourself. But we can show you how to do it.
- Bag Man** That's brilliant. *[Something occurs to him]* But you've got a bag yourself.
- Graham** That's true. I have. But have a look at it. *[Hands it over]*
- Bag Man** *[Incredulous]* It's empty! How did you get rid of the stuff that was in it?
- Jane** Yes, how did you?
- Graham** I didn't. *[Takes bag back from Bag Man]* I gave it to someone else, and He cleaned it out and gave it back to me completely empty. It was even ironed. *[Points at the Bag Man's bag]* My bag was as big as this once.
- Linda** Who's this other person you're on about? *[To Jane]* Why didn't you bring him instead?
- Graham** It was Jesus. He's the only one who can get rid of all the rubbish we carry around with us.
- Jane** I knew that.
- Bag Man** So why have you still got stuff in your bag?
- Jane** Um ... er ... that is ...
- Graham** When you gave your bag to Jesus, did you give it all to Him. Maybe you hung on to something.
- Jane** It's true. I did ask Jesus to get rid of everything, but I didn't really mean *everything*. I've known for a long time I should do something about it.
- Graham** *[Stand up]* If you don't, it'll just get worse and worse. *[To Bag Man]* Come on, we need to help you get rid of this lot. *[Helps the Bag Man up. They both exit]*
- Linda** *[Wistfully]* I didn't want to get involved.
- Jane** I know.
- Linda** I wanted someone else to do everything for me, but he's shown me that everyone has a part to play. We can all help others.
- Graham** That's right. I think we ought to go and give Graham a hand. It's a lot easier if we all help. *[Both exit]*

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