

THE HOUSE DOCTOR

By Rod

This sketch is based on John 3 vv 16-18 and particularly the words, "whoever does not believe (in the son) is condemned already.

CAST

Jack Botchit *A DIY enthusiast*
Jill Botchit *His wife*
Grace *A friend*
Will *Husband of Grace*
Reader

The scene is a room in the house of Mr and Mrs Botchit. There is a table centre stage with two chairs. There is a letter on it. Off stage can be heard the sound of sawing, hammering, etc. This should be maintained until Jack appears on stage. Jill is frantically cleaning. She pauses, picks up the letter and reads it. The contents clearly distress her. There is a knock at the door. Jill goes to answer. Enter Grace and Will.

Jill Oh, hello Grace. Hello Will. Come on in. How are you? I haven't seen you in ages.

Grace We're fine thanks, Jill. Yes. It has been a long time. That's why we thought we'd pop round. Just to see how you both are.

Jill *[Emptyly. False bravado]* Oh, we're fine. Everything in the garden is rosy.

Will Except for the weeds and the long grass.

Grace *[Nudging Will]* Shhh Will. I thought I told you not to mention that.

Jill *[Distractedly]* What? Oh, yes. The garden is a bit untidy.

Will *[Muttering]* More like totally out of control, I'd say. I've seen less dense undergrowth in the Borneo jungle.

Grace *[Glaring at Will and then moving sympathetically towards Jill]* Are you sure you're all right. Only you look a little pecky.

Jill *[Slumping into one chair]* Well, if you must know; no, I'm not all right.

Grace *[Sitting alongside, arm around her]* What is it, Jill? Is there anything we can do to help?

Jill We've had a letter.

Grace What letter?

Jill *[Pointing at letter]* That letter.

Will What does it say?

Jill Why don't you read it?

Will *[Picking up letter and reading]*

Dear Mr and Mrs Botchit

It has come to my attention that your house is in a dangerously derelict condition. If repairs are not carried out immediately, I will have to condemn the property and evict you.

I will send round the House Doctor to advise and assist you, so that such drastic measures can be avoided.

Yours sincerely

The Owner

[Loud hammer blow from off stage followed by scream of agony from Jack. He enters clutching his finger and dancing about in obvious pain.]

Jack Ow, my finger. That perishing hammer. I knew it was out to get me.

Jill *[Rising from seat – as does Grace]* Have you hurt yourself dear?

Jack Of course I've hurt myself, you daft woman. What do you think I'm doing – auditioning for RADA? Now please can you get me a bandage or something? *[Sits down]* Ouch, ow. *[Jill goes to get First Aid kit]*

Grace *[Moving to look at Jack's finger]* Let me have a look. Oh, yes, nasty but the pain shouldn't last long.

Will I'm sorry to hear about your letter.

Jack Oh, so blabbermouth has told you, has she? Jill, I thought I told you to keep that letter secret. It's private.

Grace Oh, don't blame Jill. We wheedled it out of her – because she looked so depressed.

Will Has the House Doctor been round?

Jack Too right he has.

Will What did he say?

Jack Nothing.

Will Nothing?

Jack Nothing, because I sent him packing. I said to him that I've always done the repairs on my house and I have no intention of changing my policy.

Grace Do you think that was wise?

Jack Why wouldn't it be?

Grace He was only trying to help.

Jack I don't need that sort of do-gooding, interfering help. Do It Yourself has always been my motto.

Jill Here we go.

Jack I replaced the roof.

Jill With the wrong tiles so it now leaks worse than before.

Jack I redid all the plumbing.

Jill Which explains why we now have hot water coming out of the cold taps and cold water coming out of the hot taps.

Jack I rewired the house throughout.

Jill So now sparks jump across the room every time you flick a light switch.

Jack And now I am repairing the outside walls.

Jill Shoring them up more like, after you replaced the old brickwork using the wrong cement.

Grace We had a letter too.

Jill What, the same one?

Grace Yes, more or less.

Jill Did you get a visit from the house doctor?

Grace Yes, we did.

Jack I hope you told him where to go.

Will Yes we did. We told him where to go to see all the things that were wrong with the house.

Jack You did what? I wouldn't let him cross the threshold of my house. An Englishman's home is his castle.

Will You're right there, Jack, - if you mean it's an ancient crumbling ruin in urgent need of repair.

Jack *[Stands up angry. Points finger but then realises it hurts.]* Now listen here ... ooh, ow. *[Sits in pain]*

Jill Did the doctor help you?

Grace Yes he did. He was very helpful. And now he has put right all the problems with our house. He's not really a doctor – more of a carpenter. And a very good one at that.

Jack What, like Handy Andy on the telly? The King of MDF!

Will Oh, no, he's much better than that. Our home is as good as new thanks to Jesus – that's his name.

Grace Yes, and he drops in regularly to deal with minor problems as they arise.

Jack I bet it cost you an arm and a leg. Carpenters don't come cheap these days. How much were the services of this Jesus fellow?

Will Oh, it cost us nothing. He put our home right, free of charge.

Jack Free of charge! That's charity that is! You won't catch me stooping that low. Like I said, Do It Yourself is my motto, D.I.Y.. Or in my case, Do It Myself, D.I.M..

Will That spells dim doesn't it?

Jack *[Rising again angrily]* I warned you, Will,

Jill *[Intervening hastily]* It might be worth a try, dear. It seems to have worked for Will and Grace.

Grace You don't want to have your house condemned, Jack. The house doctor can save you from that.

Jack *[Loudly]* I do not need any help. I am not a beggar.

[Knock at the door]

Will *[Keen to avoid Jack's wrath]* I'll go. *[Exits]*

Jill Thanks, Will. I'd better just finish off seeing to Jack's finger. Now sit down, Jack, and let me get this bandage on properly.

[Will returns looking puzzled]

Grace Who was it, will?

Will *[Slowly]* Noone. There was just this letter on the doormat. It's addressed to you. *[Hands letter to Jack, who opens it and starts to read]*

Jack Dear Mr and Mrs Botchit
My previous letter warned you that urgent repairs were needed on your house. Since you refused the help of the house doctor in carrying out these necessary repairs, I have sent my representatives, Will and Grace, to ask you to reconsider. Please listen to them.
Yours lovingly
The Owner

[All are silent, looking shocked. After a few seconds pause there is a loud knock at the door. All turn in the direction of the door and freeze.]

Reader For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

THE END