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41 GOODGE STREET  
LONDON W1T 2PY

Radio 4  
Rx5 Series 2

## JOHN FINNEMORE'S DOUBLE ACTS

### "The Penguin Diplomacy"

written by  
**JOHN FINNEMORE**

\* starring \*  
*(in alphabetical order)*

MARTIN CLUNES. .... BUNNING  
TOM GOODMAN-HILL ..... SØNDERGAARD

Produced by David Tyler

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REH/REC: ..... **Thursday 22nd June 2017 09:30 - 18:00**  
LOCATION: ..... Tregardock Farm Cottage  
..... Delabole  
..... PL33 9ED  
S.M.: ..... Jerry Peal  
BA: ..... Louise Kentleton

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**PENGUIN DIPLOMACY**

By John Finnemore

SØNDERGAARD is Danish

BUNNING is British.

The year is 1948

GRAMS: SIG. HOLD UNDER

JOHN: Double Acts, by John Finnemore. This week, Martin Clunes as Bunning and Tom Goodman-Hill as Søndergaard, in Penguin Diplomacy.

GRAMS: SIG FADE

ATMOS: SHORELINE OF A TINY SOUTH ATLANTIC ISLAND.  
SEABIRDS.

JOHN: This is the windswept shore of a tiny, rocky island somewhere in the far south Atlantic Ocean, in the spring of 1948.

FX: BRING UP MALLETT THUDS, BUNNING GRUNTS WITH EFFORT  
WITH EACH ONE

JOHN:                   And this is George Bunning, who has just arrived in a small motor launch, in order to hammer a metal pole into a crack between two rocks. Watching him do so are a couple of dozen lancelot penguins for whom this is as good as a play. And one Dane. Bunning hasn't noticed the Dane yet.

FX:                    A PARTICULARLY BIG GRUNT

SØNDERGAARD:       (CLOSE) God Eftermiddag.

BUNNING:            [YELLS WITH SHOCK]

JOHN:                Now he has.

SØNDERGAARD:       Sorry! Did I startle you?

BUNNING:            ... Yes! You did rather! I didn't- where did you- what are you *doing* here?

SØNDERGAARD:       I live here.

BUNNING:            You *live* here?

SØNDERGAARD:       Yes.

BUNNING:            You live... *here*?

SØNDERGAARD: Also yes.

BUNNING: ... Oh, heavens... you're not one of these chaps you hear about who don't know the war's over, are you?

SØNDERGAARD: (GASP) The war is... over?

BUNNING: Oh, Lord! Yes! For nearly three years now! How long-

SØNDERGAARD: ... No, I'm not one of those chaps. So, What brings you to Denmark?

BUNNING: Den-? I've... I've never been to Denmark.

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, this is your first visit? Welcome!

BUNNING: I'm sorry, I don't understand. This isn't-

FX: SØNDERGAARD PINGS THE FLAGPOLE

SØNDERGAARD: *This* is very nice. What is it?

BUNNING: Oh, well, it's er, it's a flagpole.

SØNDERGAARD: How charming.

BUNNING: Er... yes.

SØNDERGAARD: But really, you needn't have bothered. I don't have a flag.

BUNNING: Right. But it's not... I didn't know you lived here.

SØNDERGAARD: Who did you think lived here?

BUNNING: I didn't think anyone lived here!

SØNDERGAARD: Then why do they need a flagpole?

BUNNING: They don't! I just... look here, I've got off on the wrong foot. (TAKES A MOMENT) Now then. My name is George Bunning-

SØNDERGAARD: Hello.

BUNNING: ... Hello. And I /am-

SØNDERGAARD: [WITH DANISH PRONUNCIATION:] Søndergaard.

BUNNING: ... I'm sorry?

SØNDERGAARD: My name. Is Søndergaard.

BUNNING: Oh! Pleased to meet you. "Soo - na- gol"?

SØNDERGAARD: Søndergaard. But "Soon-Der-Guard" will do.

BUNNING: Well! As I say, I am the new Governor of South Georgia and associated British dependencies.

SØNDERGAARD: My word! Honoured.

BUNNING: ... Thank you. You... you don't need to bow. And I'm here, d'you see, on a little tour of the minor islands, just to re-affirm, in the post-war era, their British sovereignty.

SØNDERGAARD: Oh I see! In case any of your flags got blown down by the war?

BUNNING: Well... yes. In a manner of speaking.

SØNDERGAARD: I see!

BUNNING: Good! Good!

SØNDERGAARD: ... But what brings you to *Denmark*?

BUNNING: Ah! Yes, now, you said that before! This isn't Denmark!

SØNDERGAARD: Yes it is.

BUNNING: No, it isn't! Denmark's on the other side of the world!

SØNDERGAARD: Most of it, yes. Not this bit, though. This bit is Skarvsten Ø, and it's right here.

BUNNING: It is not! This is Goodwill Island, a British Overseas Territory!

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, I see! You want *Goodwill* Island?

BUNNING: Yes!

SØNDERGAARD: Of course! It's over there.

BUNNING: ...What? Where?

SØNDERGAARD: Right there.

BUNNING: ... what, in the distance?

SØNDERGAARD: No, no. Very much in the foreground. Underneath all those cormorants.

BUNNING: ... That? That's not an island! That's just a rock! (SNIFFS) And a damn smelly one, at that!

SØNDERGAARD: Cormorants will be cormorants

BUNNING: No, no. My chart is quite clear. This is Goodwill Island, and it's British.

SØNDERGAARD: Well... I say it's Skarvsten Island and it's Danish. So I suppose it's stalemate.

BUNNING: I'm afraid it isn't. as I say, I happen to be Governor of this Island.

SØNDERGAARD: Ah!

BUNNING: Yes. So, in my official capacity-

SØNDERGAARD: Snap.

BUNNING: What?

SØNDERGAARD: I'm also Governor of this island. Well, not 'also'. I'm the actual Governor.

BUNNING: No you're not!

SØNDERGAARD: But I am. The Governor of Skarvsten Ø, as invested personally in Copenhagen by his Majesty King Christian the Tenth.

BUNNING: ... Oh.

SØNDERGAARD: I know. It was very exciting. He gave me a mint.

BUNNING: Look-

SØNDERGAARD: Not as part of the ceremony. I don't think. So... not to sour the mood, but just so you know: if you fly your flag from that flagpole, I will be forced to notify my government that Great Britain has invaded Denmark.

BUNNING: ... I see.

SØNDERGAARD: I know! Exciting, isn't it? Although, if it *does* come to that, would you mind awfully telling them for me? My supply ship's not back for four months.

BUNNING: But you have a radio, surely?

SØNDERGAARD: No.

BUNNING: But what would you do in an emergency?!

SØNDERGAARD: I think it's probably quite important I don't have an emergency.

BUNNING: ... Right. Well. Look, I tell you what. You stay here for now...

SØNDERGAARD: Good plan so far.

BUNNING: And I will relay your claim to the Foreign Office, and take guidance as to what steps they wish me to take.

SØNDERGAARD: Yes, jolly good idea. Well off you go.

BUNNING: Now listen, off the record -

SØNDERGAARD: Yes?

BUNNING: Denmark didn't send you here to guard an uninhabited island. Why are you here?

SØNDERGAARD: Well, strictly between ourselves... I'm watching the penguins.

BUNNING: The penguins?

SØNDERGAARD: The penguins.

BUNNING: Why? What are they up to?

SØNDERGAARD: I don't know. That's why I'm watching them.

BUNNING: ... Ah.

JOHN: One week later

ATMOS: RIGHT ON THE SHORELINE.

FX: OVER NEXT, A SMALL MOTOR LAUNCH APPROACHES AND  
LANDS. IT'S SMALL AND LIGHT ENOUGH TO BE COME  
RIGHT UP ON TO THE PEBBLY BEACH.

IN NEXT LINES, BOTH MEN ARE ENJOYING THE JOKE.

BUNNING: (DISTANT) Ahoy!

SØNDERGAARD: (CALLING) Ahoy! Do you seek permission to enter  
Danish territory?

BUNNING: No, because I have absolutely no plans to do so.

SØNDERGAARD: Well, you are rapidly approaching part of Denmark

BUNNING: On the contrary, I am nowhere near any of Denmark.

SØNDERGAARD: You are so near Denmark you're about to bump into Denmark.

FX: GRAUNCH OF HULL AGAINST PEBBLY BEACH

SØNDERGAARD: ... Welcome to Denmark!

BUNNING: Not Denmark. But thank you!

FX: OVER NEXT, HE CLAMBERS OUT, AND PULLS THE LAUNCH FURTHER ONTO THE BEACH.

BUNNING: Well! I talked to London... and you know, you're quite right, Skarvsten Island IS a Danish Territory!

SØNDERGAARD: Yes. I know. I believe I even said so.

BUNNING: Ah! But the catch is... *this* isn't Skarvsten Island.

SØNDERGAARD: Isn't it? By which I mean: 'Yes it is.'

BUNNING: No, it's not! No, this one is, after all, Goodwill Island. And in fact, that smaller island you pointed out to me, with the cormorant colony on it...

SØNDERGAARD: The one you said was just a smelly rock?

BUNNING: ... That was hasty of me. In fact, *that* is Skarvsten Island.

SØNDERGAARD: ... No it's not.

BUNNING: Well. Yes it is. I have an official maritime chart here.

FX: MAP OPENED

BUNNING: See? The larger island is clearly marked 'Goodwill', the little rock 'Skarvsten'. You can't deny that.

SØNDERGAARD: I can't. Is it by any chance a British chart?

BUNNING: Of course.

SØNDERGAARD: And it supports the British claim. How extraordinary.

BUNNING: It's not a British 'claim', it's simply the fact!

SØNDERGAARD: Of course. But if you were to consult a Danish chart, I think you would find it supported other, more Danish facts.

BUNNING: I doubt that very much indeed.

SØNDERGAARD: Well, I have such a map in my Governor's Mansion. Would you care to step inside?

BUNNING: ... Inside what? Where is it?

SØNDERGAARD: Here.

FX: A WOODEN DOOR OPENED

BUNNING: Good Lord! That's very well hidden!

SØNDERGAARD: Well, yes. It's a hide. Come on in.

FX: THEY ENTER

ATMOS: A SMALL HUT

BUNNING: ... Gosh.

SØNDERGAARD: Try not to be too intimidated. And mind your head.

BUNNING: Yes, it's... cosy, isn't it?

SØNDERGAARD: It is definitely that. That is probably the main thing it is.

FX: SMALL STONE CARVINGS EXAMINED

BUNNING: So... you really ARE studying penguins?

SØNDERGAARD: Oh yes.

BUNNING: I thought you were joking

SØNDERGAARD: I know.

BUNNING: Anything in particular, or just, generally keeping an eye on them?

SØNDERGAARD: I want to know why penguins get divorced.

BUNNING: ... Of course, you needn't tell me if you'd rather not.

SØNDERGAARD: No, really. They do, you see. Get divorced.

BUNNING: Do they?

SØNDERGAARD: In a manner or speaking. You see, suppose you are a puffin.

BUNNING: Not a penguin?

SØNDERGAARD: For now, a puffin. You see, if you are a puffin, you find yourself a mate when first you become interested in such things, and then, that's it, you and your good lady-puffin are together for life.

BUNNING: Ah!

SØNDERGAARD: On the other hand, suppose you're a pheasant.

BUNNING: Yes?

SØNDERGAARD: Well, not to be indelicate, but if you are a pheasant, you live pretty much for pleasure alone.

BUNNING: Oh dear.

SØNDERGAARD: Yes. 'Love them and leave them', that is very much your motto. 'Plenty more pheasants in the tree'.

BUNNING: One wouldn't think it to look at them.

SØNDERGAARD: *However*, if you are a Lancelot penguin, you may stay together for two, three, four breeding seasons... and then, for some reason, you divorce. And I hope to find out why.

BUNNING: And what have you discovered?

SØNDERGAARD: Well. I've only been here two years, but as far as my early findings go, I would say the leading cause of divorce amongst penguins is undoubtedly Lauren Bacall.

BUNNING: ... Is that so?

SØNDERGAARD: Indeed. In the six penguin divorces I have observed so far, Lauren Bacall was directly responsible for five. And I wouldn't be surprised if she had a flipper in the sixth somewhere.

BUNNING: Ah. Lauren Bacall is a penguin?

SØNDERGAARD: A very bad penguin. A penguin, frankly, whose morals would shock a pheasant. Even now she's too timing Gary Cooper with Humphrey Bogart.

BUNNING: My word.

SØNDERGAARD: Now then! The map.

BUNNING: What map? Oh! Yes, of course! The map!

FX: MAP SPREAD OUT

SØNDERGAARD: So! Here it is...

BUNNING: It's in Danish.

SØNDERGAARD: I know, we're incorrigible. Nonetheless, you will clearly see this island is marked Skarvsten, and the little rock is marked Goodwill.

BUNNING: Ah. Well. I suppose there's nothing for it but to report back to Whitehall...

SØNDERGAARD: Or you could just take the rock.

BUNNING: And why would I do that?

SØNDERGAARD: Because it is absolutely covered in cormorant poo.

BUNNING: ... You're not a natural salesman are you?

SØNDERGAARD: No, but, I mean, it's valuable, isn't it? 'Guano'? They use it as fertiliser or some such...

BUNNING: They used to, a hundred years ago. I think We'd rather have the island, I'm afraid.

SØNDERGAARD: ... Oh.

BUNNING: But. I'll tell what I'll do. I shall recommend to Whitehall- that the island be regarded as Disputed Territory.

SØNDERGAARD: What would that mean?

BUNNING: Well the long and the short of it is, you'd be left in peace amongst your penguins.

SØNDERGAARD: Wonderful!

BUNNING: Well, I can't promise, but I'll radio London and see what they say.

SØNDERGAARD: Thank you!

BUNNING: Oh, that reminds me... this is for you.

FX: PACKAGE HANDED OVER

SØNDERGAARD: For me?

BUNNING: It's nothing, really... just an old wind-up radio we had knocking around the residence...

SØNDERGAARD: Oh! Thank you!

BUNNING: It won't get you Copenhagen, I'm afraid. But you should be able to reach us on South Georgia in an emergency. It's essentially just a glorified Morse key.

SØNDERGAARD: ... Ah. I suppose this would ideally be combined with a knowledge of Morse Code?

BUNNING: Oh, my dear boy! You don't know Morse? Didn't you learn in the war?

SØNDERGAARD: No... I had rather a dull war, I'm afraid. I know 'V'? [IMITATES BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH] Dee dee dee dah...

BUNNING: Very helpful. Do you know SOS?

SØNDERGAARD: Is there a V in it?

BUNNING: It's easy. Dit dit dit. Dah dah dah. Dit dit dit.

SØNDERGAARD: Short short short, long long long, short short short?

BUNNING: Yes. I mean, write it down or something for heaven's sake. Anyway I'd better be off...

BUNNING: I say! Did you do these carvings?

SØNDERGAARD: Oh... well, yes. It passes the time.

BUNNING: They're rather good. Is this a chess set?

SØNDERGAARD: Yes

BUNNING: So... the kings are penguins, and... what are these?

SØNDERGAARD: They're all penguins. Different species. The two kings are Emperors; the queens, curiously, are Kings. The bishops are Humboldts, and so on, down to my own little Lancelots as pawns.

BUNNING: Marvellous. Also I notice instead of the traditional black and white sides, you've gone for grey. For both.

SØNDERGAARD: Yes. There's only one type of rock on the island you see. Do you play?

BUNNING: Oh... a little. I'm not very good, I'm afraid.

SØNDERGAARD: Perfect!

BUNNING: Oh, aren't you either?

SØNDERGAARD: No, I'm very good, but I like to win. So! Do you want to be grey, or grey?

JOHN: A week later

ATMOS: THE CABIN

FX: SØNDERGAARD IS HUMMING AND MAKING SOUP.

FX: KNOCK

BUNNING: (OUTSIDE) Governor Søndergaard?

FX: DOOR OPENED

SØNDERGAARD: Ah, Bunning! I didn't hear your boat ! Do you seek permission to enter Danish territory?

BUNNING: Certainly not.

SØNDERGAARD: Well, permission granted, anyway. Come in, come in! I have soup on.

BUNNING: (SNIFFS) Oh, is *that* what that is? Good Lord. Now, look here, Søndergaard. I need to speak with you in your official capacity. As your country's representative, you know.

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, right-o! Should I put on a special hat?

BUNNING: ... Do you *have* a special hat?

SØNDERGAARD: No.

BUNNING: Well, then, no. Now. Look here. (HIS TONE CHANGES, BECOMES ODDLY NEUTRAL AND WOODEN) Rather bad news, I'm afraid. I've spoken to London, and they cannot allow the arrangement we discussed. The British government categorically reasserts its dominion over Goodwill Island.

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, yes, you certainly-

BUNNING: And it *also* re-asserts that Goodwill Island is the larger island we're standing on, and Skarvsten Island is the little rock next door.

SØNDERGAARD: Ah. Very well, in my official capacity as an official official, I reassert the Danish claim that: 'No, other way round.' So, stalemate, yes? Good. Soup?

BUNNING: No, *not* stalemate, I'm afraid. If you are not willing to acknowledge British sovereignty, then I am instructed to request you to leave the island immediately.

SØNDERGAARD: Oh! I see. And if I refuse?

BUNNING: Then I shall be compelled to evict you by force.

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, really? You and whose army?

BUNNING: Me and His Majesty King George VI's army. Or rather, his Navy. There is a British gunboat on manoeuvres in the vicinity, and I am authorised to radio it for assistance if you intend to resist.

SØNDERGAARD: ... Are you serious?

BUNNING: Of course. *Do you intend to resist?*

SØNDERGAARD: Do I intend to resist... a gunboat? By myself?

BUNNING: (SLIGHTLY INCREASING THE GLASSY-EYED NEUTRALITY)  
Yes. That's what I'm asking you. Do you?

PAUSE.

SØNDERGAARD: ... Yes. Why not? Yes I do!

BUNNING: (COMPLETELY RELAXES, RETURNS TO OLD SELF)

BUNNING : Good man! Thought you would. Excellent! Now then, what about this beastly soup of yours?

SØNDERGAARD: ... I don't understand. What just happened?

BUNNING: (BEAMING) Diplomacy just happened, my dear fellow! Good Lord, *I don't* want to hoik you away from your precious penguins! What d'you take me for?

SØNDERGAARD: Then why couldn't you just say so?

BUNNING: Oh, I couldn't do that! You must understand, when I come here, I have policy instructions from the Foreign Office which it is my strict duty to follow, whatever my personal opinion may be. However! I was also instructed, in the event of resistance, to use my own discretion to assess the strength of the resisting forces. So, how many of you are there?

SØNDERGAARD: Well... just me. But I reckon the penguins would be on my side if it came to it. Well, not Lauren Bacall. But the rest of them.

BUNNING: And are you armed?

SØNDERGAARD: I have this soup ladle. Give you a nasty crack on the head with that.

BUNNING: Mm. And the soup itself looks pretty hot.

SØNDERGAARD: It is!

BUNNING: What sort of soup is it?

SØNDERGAARD: Seaweed and crab.

BUNNING: Good Lord. Is that better than it sounds?

SØNDERGAARD: No. Worse.

BUNNING: Then why do you eat it?

SØNDERGAARD: Because that's all there is.

BUNNING: Well, then. Since the Danish appear to be a well-armed and disciplined force, backed by an unknown quantity of indigenous fighters; and not only that but I have every reason to believe they are developing hazardous biological weapons...

SØNDERGAARD: Hey!

BUNNING: ... I must reluctantly inform the gunboat that force is contra-indicated in this case.

SØNDERGAARD: Hooray!

BUNNING: So long as it is clearly understood that this is a British island, to which Britain has restated its claim.

SØNDERGAARD: That is fully understood, and utterly rejected. This is a Danish island, which you have invaded, and which the Danish government requests and requires you to leave instantly.

BUNNING: Very well.

SØNDERGAARD: Well, I say instantly... maybe after a game of chess?

BUNNING: Oh rather ...

SØNDERGAARD: And a bowl of soup?

BUNNING: Absolutely not.

JOHN: Two hours later.

BUNNING: ... Alright. I think the best I can do is Chinstrap to King's Humboldt 4...

FX: CLICK OF A STONE CHESS PIECE LAID DOWN.

SØNDERGAARD: Yes. That *is* the best you can do. But, I'm afraid...

FX: CHESS PIECE

SØNDERGAARD: Rockhopper to Emperor's Chinstrap 6. Checkmate.

BUNNING: Ah! Well played!

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, not at all. Honestly, you did very well, considering for half an hour you thought the Rockhoppers were Bishops.

BUNNING: Some people would have reminded me.

SØNDERGAARD: Some people don't win at chess.

FX: PIECES RESET UNDER NEXT

BUNNING: How's Lauren Bacall?

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, still a terrible penguin. She's had an egg with Humphrey Bogart but she's making eyes at John Wayne.

BUNNING: She's a one.

SØNDERGAARD: Bunning... I was wondering... what would you have done, before, if I *had* surrendered the island?

BUNNING: Oh! Well. I'd have accepted, of course.

SØNDERGAARD: Would you?

BUNNING: Oh yes. Would have had to. My duty, you see. Orders perfectly clear about it. I'd have been jolly sick about it, but I'd have accepted your surrender, and taken you off the island in the launch.

SØNDERGAARD: Or the gunboat.

BUNNING: The-? Oh! Yes, or the gunboat.

SØNDERGAARD: So there is really a gunboat?

BUNNING: Naturally. I said so, didn't I?

SØNDERGAARD: What's it called?

BUNNING: Never you mind what it's called.

SØNDERGAARD: It must have a name.

BUNNING: Alright, it's called HMS Hammer-Of-The-Danes.

SØNDERGAARD: What, like Thor's Hammer?

BUNNING: No, no. Not a hammer *belonging* to the Danes. A British hammer, with which to hammer the Danes.

SØNDERGAARD: You have a special hammer for that?

BUNNING: We have a special gunboat for that. Well! I'd best be off. Radio if you want anything. How's your Morse coming along?

SØNDERGAARD: Er... Long long long, short short short, long long long?

BUNNING: ... "O.S.O"?

SØNDERGAARD: Dammit.

JOHN: A week later

ATMOS: SHORE

FX: BOAT GRAUNCHES ONTO BEACH, AS BEFORE.

FX: BUNNING DISEMBARKS, SØNDERGAARD APPROACHES

[THEY NOW ENJOY THIS EXCHANGE AS A PRACTICED ROUTINE BETWEEN THEM]

BUNNING: Ahoy!

SØNDERGAARD: Ahoy ! Do you seek permission to enter Danish Territory?

BUNNING: No, because I'm not going to do that.

FX: BUNNING JUMPS ON TO THE BEACH

SØNDERGAARD: Oh no! Skarvsten Ø is being invaded!

BUNNING: Oh no! Goodwill Island is under occupation! Surrender immediately or I shall summon a gunboat!

SØNDERGAARD: Which gunboat?

BUNNING: The HMS Do-As-You're-Told-You-Uppity-Dane.

SØNDERGAARD: That's a long name for a gunboat.

BUNNING: Don't you worry, there's a lot of gunboat to paint it down the side of.

SØNDERGAARD: Skarvsten Ø will never surrender! And be warned - my mighty native army has swelled to even greater numbers, (DROPPING OUT, NORMAL FRIENDLY TONE) ... because Greta Garbo's egg hatched last night!

BUNNING: (DROPPING OUT TOO) Oh, wonderful! Mother and baby doing well?

SØNDERGAARD: Yes, yes. Mother off fishing in the Atlantic Ocean, baby being looked after by Jimmy Cagney.

BUNNING: Good Lord. These modern marriages... (BACK TO PLAYACTING) Well! On consideration, I will signal for the HMS... Whatever-I-Said-Before to allow you to remain for now, but that in no way prejudices Great Britain's territorial claim, which I now officially re-assert, in accordance with international law.

SØNDERGAARD: An assertion which Denmark officially rejects, in accordance with it being silly.

BUNNING: Very well. (NORMAL) So! Who does that leave with eggs still to hatch? Diana Dors, Lauren Bacall...

SØNDERGAARD: Oh! *Bloody* Lauren Bacall!

BUNNING: What's she done now?

SØNDERGAARD: Abandoned Humphrey Bogart! And her egg!

BUNNING: No!

SØNDERGAARD: Yes! Eloped, with Stan Laurel! From whom, frankly, I expected better.

BUNNING: So, the egg?

SØNDERGAARD: Well... Poor old Bogey's doing the best he can by himself. But without anyone to protect it while he's off fishing... well, sooner or later a skua will get it.

BUNNING: What's a skua?

SØNDERGAARD: ... A bird that eats penguin eggs.

BUNNING: Ah. Yes. I suppose I could have deduced that. So, it's hopeless?

SØNDERGAARD: I'm afraid so. The only chance is if one of the unmated females takes pity on him, and moves in, but I'm not hopeful.

MOURNFUL SILENCE

BUNNING: ... *Bloody* Lauren Bacall!

SØNDERGAARD: She really is a terrible penguin. Now then! This way for stew!

THEY BEGIN TO MOVE

SØNDERGAARD: Er.. don't forget your bag.

BUNNING: What bag?

SØNDERGAARD: ... that one. Your bag!

BUNNING: That's not my bag.

SØNDERGAARD: What? Of course it is! I just saw you bring it off the launch!

BUNNING: (ENJOYING HIMSELF) It is not. Never seen it before in my life. It must be your bag.

SØNDERGAARD: It's not my bag!

BUNNING: Well, it's certainly not mine, and I refuse to take it. This is clearly a scurrilous Danish plot to smuggle something off this beautiful British island.

FX: BAG OPENED

SØNDERGAARD: Well, look! It *must* be yours! None of this stuff is mine! Corned beef, chocolate, brandy- I don't have any of these... oh...

BUNNING: Yes?

SØNDERGAARD: ... Well, you were too clever for me. You're quite right. We had a, a listening device concealed in this tin of pineapple chunks - Oh, *pineapple!*

JOHN: One week later.

THIS TIME, THEY ARE ENJOYING REELING THROUGH THEIR ABBREVIATED ROUTINE AS FAST AS THEY CAN

ATMOS: THE HUT

FX: KNOCK

FX: DOOR OPENED

SØNDERGAARD: Hello! Do you seek permission to enter Danish territory?

BUNNING: *British* territory!

SØNDERGAARD: *Danish* territory!

BUNNING : Goodwill Island!

SØNDERGAARD: Skarvsten Ø!

BUNNING: Leave!

SØNDERGAARD: Refuse!

BUNNING: Gunboat!

SØNDERGAARD:           Called?

BUNNING:                Er... HMS... Copenhagen's Nightmare.

SØNDERGAARD:           Defiance!

BUNNING:                Officially assert!

SØNDERGAARD:           Officially reject!

BOTH:                   Stalemate!

(THE ROUTINE ENDS)

SØNDERGAARD:           Good. Now! Come in, come in! I have excellent news about Bogart's egg!

BUNNING:                Oh, really? Has someone moved in with him?

SØNDERGAARD:           Yes!

BUNNING:                Oh good! Who? Greta Garbo? Not Mae West?

SØNDERGAARD:           No... John Wayne.

BUNNING:                ... Oh!

SØNDERGAARD: Yes.

BUNNING: ... Well, I never.

SØNDERGAARD: Do you disapprove?

BUNNING: Certainly not! Good for him. A friend in need, eh?

SØNDERGAARD: Yes.

BUNNING: So... is this... common? With penguins? Chaps... palling up?

SØNDERGAARD: I don't know. I've never seen it before.

BUNNING: No, but in, I don't know, the literature...

SØNDERGAARD: I haven't read the literature. I'm not some sort of... penguin expert!

BUNNING: ... Are you not?

SØNDERGAARD: Of course not!

BUNNING: ... I have to say, you do rather give the *impression* of being some sort of penguin expert...

SØNDERGAARD: Well... I suppose I am *now*. Of these particular penguins. But... I didn't come to the island to see the penguins, you see. I came to the island, and there happened to be penguins on it. So I... took an interest.

BUNNING: Then... why *did* you come?

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, well... (PAUSE) You see... I think I mentioned... I had rather a dull war. I was interned, you see. In Java. Rather a tiresome place. Hot, you know. And crowded. And the staff were rude. So... I used to amuse myself by picturing the precise opposite. An island somewhere... Cold. Quiet. And entirely to myself. It was something to think about. And then when it was all over... I thought... well. I wonder if I can find it.

BUNNING: And you did.

SØNDERGAARD: Well. Near enough. Anyway! I have a bone to pick with you, Bunning!

BUNNING: Oh yes?

SØNDERGAARD: Yes! Last time you came, you left something behind, and I must demand you now remove it from Danish territory.

BUNNING: ... Did I?

SØNDERGAARD : You certainly did. This.

FX: CIGAR BOX CONTAINING SMALL STONES HANDED OVER.

SØNDERGAARD: ... And I must say, if you had your own set of chess men all this time, I do think you might have said.

FX: BOX OPENED, PIECES TAKEN OUT, UNDER NEXT.

BUNNING: Oh, my dear chap! They're marvellous!

SØNDERGAARD: Notice the colour...

BUNNING: Oh! They're darker! How did you manage that?

SØNDERGAARD: Ah! I had a thought! I waded out to little Goodwill island-

BUNNING: -to Skarvsten island, yes-

SØNDERGAARD: -and got the rock from there! Which means, not only can we tell them apart... but *your* pieces are actually made from part of the British Empire.

BUNNING: Well. That's nonsense, of course. But they're certainly a delightful souvenir of Denmark. But look here, I can't possibly accept them! They must have taken you days!

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, nonsense. If I can accept tinned peaches, which are more precious to me than rubies, you can jolly well accept a box of funny-shaped pebbles.

JOHN: One week later

ATMOS: HUT

FX: KNOCK

FX: DOOR

SØNDERGAARD:           Bunning, hello! Do you seek permission to enter  
Danish territory?

BUNNING:                Yes.

SØNDERGAARD:           ... What?

BUNNING:                Yes. Please.

(BUNNING IS JARRINGLY COLD AND FORMAL, BUT NOT STAGILY WOODEN, AS IN  
THE EARLIER SCENE. A PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMAT, DOING HIS JOB. NOT  
UNFRIENDLY, BUT NOT IN THE LEAST FRIENDLY.)

SØNDERGAARD:           ... No, I said, are you seeking permission to  
enter Danish territory?

BUNNING:                Yes I am. Yes, I... am. Yes I am.

SØNDERGAARD:           ... I don't understand.

BUNNING:                May I *have* your permission?

SØNDERGAARD:           Oh. I don't...

BUNNING:                Or not?

SØNDERGAARD:           ... Yes, of course.

BUNNING: Thank you very much.

FX: ENTERS

SØNDERGAARD: (ONE LAST ATTEMPT AT KEEPING THE JOKE GOING)  
Well, welcome to Denmark!

BUNNING: Thank you.

SØNDERGAARD: ... Look, what's going on?

BUNNING: The British Government would like to formally  
offer an apology

SØNDERGAARD: ... Would it?

BUNNING: Yes. I regret to say that further research by the  
Foreign Office has uncovered a grievous error of  
many years standing. New evidence has now emerged  
proving, beyond reasonable doubt, that *this*  
island is in fact Skarvsten Ø.

SØNDERGAARD: Oh! ... Good?

BUNNING: The British government whole-heartedly regrets  
the error, and hereby formally cedes all  
territorial claim to the island.

SØNDERGAARD: (TRYING TO WORK OUT THE GAME) Oh! Oh, I see! Ha!  
No wonder you are looking all stiff and cross!

BUNNING: (DRY COURTEOUS CHUCKLE) Heh. ... So!

FX: PAPER PRODUCED

BUNNING: ... as Governor of the island, if I might just  
have your signature acknowledging Great Britain's  
ceding of the claims as just stated... ?

SØNDERGAARD: Of course! But come on, let's do this properly!  
We must toast your ignominious defeat! This calls  
for brandy!

BUNNING: Most kind, but I fear I must return immediately.

SØNDERGAARD: ... But you'll stay to eat? I've made a stew !  
And there's almost no seaweed in it. That's your  
second favourite amount of seaweed.

BUNNING: Perhaps another time.

SØNDERGAARD: I'm sorry... have I done something to upset you?

BUNNING: Naturally not. So. If you're ready to sign?

SØNDERGAARD: ... What will happen if I sign it?

BUNNING: Nothing.

SØNDERGAARD: Nothing?

BUNNING: No. Nothing will change.

SØNDERGAARD: ... And if I don't sign it?

BUNNING: You mean, if you renounce Denmark's claim?

SØNDERGAARD: No. If I just, don't sign it, until I've had a chance to talk to Copenhagen.

BUNNING: Well... you're the appointed Governor. I think if you didn't sign, Great Britain would take it to mean the land was unclaimed. In which case... I suppose, I would signal to the HMS Rochester, which happens to be nearby, to immediately claim it for Britain. And I'm afraid you'd be required to leave.

SØNDERGAARD: The HMS Rochester?

BUNNING: Yes.

SØNDERGAARD: That's not a very funny name.

BUNNING: The Royal Navy is not in the habit of giving its battleships funny names.

PAUSE

SØNDERGAARD: So then... I should sign it?

BUNNING: If you like.

PAUSE

SØNDERGAARD: I shouldn't sign it?

BUNNING: It's entirely a matter for you.

SØNDERGAARD: But what do *you* think?

BUNNING: Personally?

SØNDERGAARD: Yes!

BUNNING: I have no personal opinion on the matter.

SØNDERGAARD: can't you give me a *hint*?

BUNNING: (FORMALLY) No I can't. No. I. Can't. No I can't.

SØNDERGAARD: (OUTBURST) Why are you being so horrible?!

BUNNING: I beg your pardon. I hope I am behaving with nothing less than full diplomatic courtesy.

SØNDERGAARD: Yes! That's exactly... (AN IDEA DAWNS) Yes. That's right. So... does that mean... Should I... should I *not* sign this?

BUNNING: Whyever not?

SØNDERGAARD: Hang on, hang on! (THINKING IT OUT)... because If this island really *is* Danish after all, you would have come over, all excited, and congratulated me, and we would have had brandy. No, or: you would have come over, and pretended to be very cross about it, and I would have pretended to be very triumphant, and it would all have been a lot of fun, and we would have had brandy. But you didn't do that. So... does that mean... is this some horrible trick?

BUNNING: I assure /you-

SØNDERGAARD: But if it were, you would have told me, because you're my friend.

BUNNING: I am not /your-

SØNDERGAARD: Oh, of course you are. But no... you *wouldn't* tell me, because you have to obey your damn orders. But you'd have given me a hint, like last time! But you're not doing that this time. You really do seem to want me to sign it...

BUNNING: I certainly-

SØNDERGAARD: I said be quiet! Unless... that was part of the orders? If they ordered you to do your best to trick me ? ... Yes, if they did that, then even though we're the only two people in a hundred miles, in your peculiar British head you would think it your duty to do your best to trick me.

BUNNING: Can I-

SØNDERGAARD: But! You might say to yourself. It is *not* my duty to do so as if I was his friend. No one expects me to do that. And any conclusions Søndergaard should happen to draw from my unfriendliness are no fault of mine. ... So... I think ... no.

BUNNING: No?

SØNDERGAARD: No, I will not sign.

BUNNING: I see. Then I must claim this island for Great Britain, and summon the Rochester to evict you.

SØNDERGAARD: Let them come. The Rochester, her sister-ship the Dane-Hammer... let them all come. The penguins and I are ready for them.

BUNNING: That's your final word?

SØNDERGAARD: It is. [... ] So. Go on then. Are you claiming it for Britain?

BUNNING: Well... on consideration... (HIS TONE BEGINS TO CHANGE) ... on *consideration*, Governor Søndergaard, do you know what, I'm not sure I *will* do that, no. *Because* if this island is British... then that means that that miserable little smelly rock over *there* is Danish! And do you know, these days, London are rather keen for *that one* to be British.

SØNDERGAARD: Oh! It's you! It's you! You're back!

BUNNING: (IGNORING HIM) Ever since some idiot Dane hacked off some chunks of it, carved them roughly into the shape of penguin chess men , and presented them to a serving British diplomat! Who then, as per protocol for gifts from foreign officials, had to send them to be evaluated! Which revealed the intriguing news that while the carving was crude and without value-

SØNDERGAARD: Hey!

BUNNING: -the rock it was carved from was pure Phosphorite! Have you heard of Phosphorite, Søndergaard?

SØNDERGAARD: No...

BUNNING: Nor had I. But *Phosphorite*, it turns out, is what happens to guano if you leave it alone for a couple of million years. *Phosphorite* is to guano as coal is to wood... or diamonds are to coal. And most interestingly of all... *Phosphorite* is apparently what that entire damn rock is made of! So... if you *had* signed that document, then yes, you could have stayed here and watched your penguins... just so long as they weren't in any way disturbed by the vast British mining operation next door!

SØNDERGAARD: I see, I see! But wait, now won't *Denmark* mine it?

BUNNING: They'd better not try! That rock happens to be the sovereign British territory of Goodwill Island.

SØNDERGAARD: So... then, whose is *this* island, now?

BUNNING: Ah! That's the interesting thing. Neither country can now claim this one without losing their claim on the Phosphorite one. So no-one claims it. It's No Man's Land. Except, I suppose... yours. Entirely to yourself.

SØNDERGAARD: (EXHALES.) ... Thank you. (SUDDENLY) And I suppose it would have *killed* you to give me a hint what to do, would it?

BUNNING: (MOCK DRAWING HIMSELF UP) As you correctly deduced, Søndergaard, my clear duty - and my orders - were to say nothing except that which advanced my country's interests. The only possible lassitude I could allow myself was in... how I said it.

SØNDERGAARD: Which, thank heavens, I understood!

BUNNING: ... Er...

SØNDERGAARD: What?

BUNNING: Well... you did, and you didn't.

SØNDERGAARD: How do you mean?

BUNNING: Tell me, how are you getting on with your Morse studies?

SØNDERGAARD: Oh... I haven't really given any more time, I'm afraid. Still stuck with just 'V' and 'S.O.S'

BUNNING: Really? *How interesting.*

SØNDERGAARD: What? Oh... don't tell me you tried to give me a hint in *Morse Code*?!

BUNNING: Not at all. Not ... At ... All. Not at all.

SØNDERGAARD: Ohhhhh. [... ] No, I'd never have got that. Stew?

GRAMS: SIG. UNDER

JOHN: 'Penguin Diplomacy', by John Finnemore, starred Tom Goodman-Hill as Søndergaard and Martin Clunes as Bunning. It was produced by David Tyler, and was a Pozzitive production for the BBC.

GRAMS: UP AND OUT