

Discharging Duties

By

Tom Welles

Running Time – Approx 30 Mins

CAST LIST - One Male & Two Female

COUNCILLOR MARGARET FARNDON (Female, any age) – A member of the Town Council

ROBERT WESTFALL (Male, any age) – Stonemason and sculptor.

ISOBEL – (Female, any age but youngest of the three) – Assistant to Robert

Synopsis

A sculptor has been contracted to make a statue to stand outside the Town Hall. The action starts as he has unexpectedly prepared a more interesting design than the 'traditional' statue that had been anticipated. He shows the new designs to the emissary from the council and she is brought round to accepting his more radical treatment of the subject. She is less impressed by the fact that he has taken on an extra member of staff in anticipation of the subsequent work that this high profile project may generate.

The second scene is in the same setting but some weeks later. The man who was to be the subject-matter of the statue is no longer in favour. The arcane language of the signed contracts contains a loophole and the council are able to wriggle out of their commitment and the monument will now be abandoned. An alternative project is suggested and, for financial reasons, the sculptor has to accept this hopelessly inferior commission.

Although not immediately apparent, it is set in 1936. Hopefully people will see the resonance with the world of today as changing attitudes to the past feed into the debate over public art and memorialisation: Should statues of men, who in their own time were seen as great, be retained as part of history... or should they simply dropped over the harbour wall and into oblivion!

SCENE ONE - *The Studio of Robert Westfall.*

ISOBEL is present she is wearing a raincoat. It is too big and is flapping open. She occasionally swishes it round. Pirouetting and posing. We become aware that she is being watched by WESTFALL who is sketching her. After a few moments MARGARET ENTERS, she has not immediately been seen by the other two. Finally WESTFALL realises that MARGARET is there.

WESTFALL: Councillor

MARGARET: Mister Westfall. I am sorry to interrupt.

WESTFALL: (*Slightly flustered*) I had not realised it was so late. Come in.

MARGARET: I can come back later if that is more convenient

WESTFALL: No, not at all. Everything is complete. It won't take a moment to gather the drawings together. There have been one or two minor alterations, but hopefully it will not detract in any way from anything that we have previously discussed.

MARGARET: And the contracts are signed?

ISOBEL: Yes, they are...

ISOBEL is busy removing the raincoat and collecting papers

MARGARET: I was scared that there might be some ambiguity about the terminology, I know that the language of the council can be a little antiquated?

WESTFALL: I do not believe that there was anything that need concern us.

ISOBEL: There was one thing...

WESTFALL: No, it was all in order. (*To ISOBEL, trying to shut her up*) If you can get the papers...

MARGARET: I am sorry who is this?

WESTFALL: Isobel is my... assistant

MARGARET: Is this a new arrangement? I wasn't aware that you had an assistant...

ISOBEL: I've only been here for a fortnight

WESTFALL: There may very well be an increase in my workload and I need to be prepared.

MARGARET: As a result of the commission from the council?

WESTFALL: And hopefully any future work that it might generate.

MARGARET: Her duties extend to modelling for you?

WESTFALL: It was simply that I wanted to try out an idea

ISOBEL: (*Passing all documents to WESTFALL*) It's like that sometimes, Robert often gets ideas in his head at funny times.

MARGARET: Is that so?

WESTFALL: If I am not careful too much of my time can be spent on tasks that, while necessary to run the stonemasons, are hardly my greatest love. My real talents are in the artistic side of the business and with that burden now lessened it has been a fruitful couple of weeks. Hopefully I can demonstrate, (*WESTFALL starts to show MARGARET the documents*).

MARGARET: These should be for presentation to the committee rather than myself

WESTFALL: I appreciate that, but I wonder if I might show them to you as you have been so supportive. I want the submission to impress the committee and I would value your opinion.

MARGARET: (*She seems more relaxed following this flattery*) very well, I have a few minutes.

WESTFALL: Even now I am undecided as to the best treatment of the subject.

MARGARET: I thought that we had more or less decided on a final design.

ISOBEL: He had, but he's gone off it.

WESTFALL: I am less sure than I was but I will leave it to the Subscribers and the council to advise me as to their preference. (*Pointing to a photograph*) As you see, I have created a maquette of the formal design

ISOBEL: That's the small models that he uses to...

MARGARET: I am aware what they are

WESTFALL: There are further pictures of it here (*Shows a picture*)

MARGARET: That is as I remember it....The pose has a quiet dignity about it.

WESTFALL: It is quite traditional and in some ways un-challenging

ISOBEL: It's old fashioned

WESTFALL: It probably is less modern than would be my personal preference but I suspect that it is what people might expect.

There is a pause as MARGARET looks at the pictures. ISOBEL and WESTFALL exchange glances

ISOBEL: Robert wants there to be a second one... It's what we were doing when you arrived. Look at these (*She takes the drawings and shows them to MARGARET*)

WESTFALL: I realise it is presumptuous of me to attempt something that was not discussed before

An uneasy few moments pass as MARGARET examines the pictures

MARGARET: I see that we lose the full military uniform, which I think is sad and the whole demeanor is... I don't know...

ISOBEL: More casual

MARGARET: (*Indicating something in the picture*) He looks slightly... well... bedraggled.

ISOBEL: I like it better.

MARGARET: (*To WESTFALL*) Do you like it better?

WESTFALL: In many ways this interpretation speaks to me more than the other one, it has drama and although it is certainly more modern it also does something to capture the timeless forms of Classical Antiquity,

MARGARET: Does it? Yes, I suppose I can see something of that

ISOBEL: He said that we should make a statement... (*to WESTFALL*) that's what you said, wasn't it?

WESTFALL: I don't know that I did, but...

ISOBEL: Yes, you did, it was in that letter that you were writing, (*Finds letter*) You said that the statue should be (*reading*) a statement that shows the council's commitment to a new sort of future. Surely statues do not need to be sterile and conformist bits of neglected street furniture? (*Looking up*) That's what he said.

MARGARET: Is that so?

WESTFALL: I may have said that... She is quoting from a letter that I was composing. It's full of all sorts of ideas that I was considering. The fact is that I just felt that this was a chance to get away from the values of Victorian times and their way of depicting important figures. If it's not popular then...

ISOBEL: I like it and so does he

WESTFALL: (*comparing two pictures*) I think that both of them have their merits.

ISOBEL: You like this one best... (*Reading again*) Art must challenge convention, and if it doesn't do that then...

MARGARET: I am not ruling out this second design. In fact, it is not even within my remit to rule it out, but I would say that the finished work needs to be a commemorative statue and as such there are a lot of things that have to be considered...

ISOBEL: ...and one of those things that needs to be considered is this... (*About to read again*)

MARGARET: ... No listen to me. The Council and the Statue Committee realise as much as anyone that people's tastes and opinions are changing. Admittedly in our town, it might not be as rapidly as elsewhere. But we are at the mercy of public opinion. We are elected officials and the ballot box never lets us forget that fact. What we need is a statue for the ages, not just for this year or next year.

ISOBEL: That's not true

MARGARET: I'm sorry

ISOBEL: Statues like this (*Points at drawings*) are going to tell us as much about us than they ever do about their subject...

MARGARET: Do they... if you don't mind me saying, that sounds like pretentious nonsense. Exactly how long is it since....

ISOBEL: It's what he says here. (*Holds up letter, it seems that she was quoting from it again*)

WESTFALL: I wasn't talking of the specifics of *this* commission. I just meant that it is a rather complicated subject, with many different shades, and it is difficult to see a monument through the eyes of the future.

MARGARET: It is, and we must not do that. We just make a decision as best as we can and just have to have faith and belief that the monuments to great men who built the Empire or governed the Empire or served the Empire will not be swept aside.

ISOBEL: You've missed the point it's not about Empires is it... listen to this... (*Reading again*) Strip away the uniform and underneath...

WESTFALL: (*Before she can read any more*) Isobel... I thought that you were going to go and get the signed contracts.

ISOBEL: I was just saying...

WESTFALL: Please, if I could just have a minute with Councillor Farndon.

ISOBEL EXITS

WESTFALL: Forgive me, she is just learning and she's still a little...

MARGARET: Opinionated

WESTFALL: She gets carried away. That letter was to a fellow sculptor, it was something that I had been dictating to her earlier. It's full of high ideals and nonsense.

MARGARET: She takes dictation too? It seems that there really is no end to her talents.

WESTFALL: Councillor...

MARGARET: Please call me Margaret,

WESTFALL: Margaret... Suffice to say that if the second design were to get approval, it would be a powerful image, it would be respectful but modern. Yes - It would be a more radical representation... but the subject is a modern man, with a modern outlook on life. And remember, I can easily make further amendments, these are no more than sketches.

MARGARET: And they are beautiful and they are very clever... But you were selected above the others for this job because we felt that as a stonemason rather than an artist you would have an understanding of what a monument should be like, you would understand that it should have a feeling of permanence. In some ways this new version looks as if you might have caught a fleeting moment rather than something by which he should be remembered.

WESTFALL: But it is those seemingly inconsequential moments that can capture the essence of a man. Look at the expression, it was just a glance, no more than that... but I think it suggests resolve or determination... and the eyes... look at those... It's almost as if his eyes are fixed on the horizon... he is looking to the future, maybe a brighter future free from many of the shackles of the past. I also think that his expression captures his innate compassion, which perhaps the other design may lack... You mentioned his uniform, but to me that looks stiff and lifeless. In the new design he is standing up against the elements, he looks strong with his coat loose and billowing in the wind.

MARGARET: That was what she was modeling for you?

WESTFALL: She helps in many ways. She is very good, very organised...

MARGARET: What else does she do for you?

WESTFALL: She helps with the business side of things... She undertakes all those tasks that I have little time for and even less inclination. Things like... well like this... (*reaches for an envelope*) I'm not sure when I would have found time for it otherwise. I've got her to collect together the receipts and invoices for the initial expenditure associated with the statue. In a sense, I have already started preparatory work for the commission.

MARGARET: You would like reimbursement now?

WESTFALL: Like all sculptors I tend to be dependent on high-cost commissions and it can lead to an unevenness in the money entering the company. (*Hands over an envelope of papers.*) The decision-making of the Council can be rather slow. It's a good thing, I want them to be certain about what they want... but I was hoping that these could be rushed through (*Watches MARGARET open the envelope. Seems slightly panicked by this*) You can look at them back at the Town Hall if you wanted to...

MARGARET: I have established an account for subsidiary expense. It is intended for insurance, transport and things of that nature, I expect that I can arrange for its earlier implementation (*Reading receipts*) so this is a train fare?

WESTFALL: Yes, that was related to sorting out the raw materials. The choosing of the stone is of course more than just placing an order. We specifically need Portland stone as it's fine-grained but also durable. It's also more easily worked than others.

MARGARET: It is important to choose the *exact* stone?

WESTFALL: I would say that it was imperative. I needed to visit the quarry and see the actual stone that I intend to use. It is something that people who work in bronze do not have to worry about, but for someone who works in stone, well it is one of the most important aspects of the commission - one of the purposes of sculpture is to unlock the geological memory that is held within specific strata of the rock. I needed to seek out a block of stone that spoke to me and have it reserved for our project.

MARGARET: (*Looking at receipts*) These are from three weeks ago... And it seems that you had an overnight stay prior to conversing with the stone.

WESTFALL: Yes, it was a long journey....

MARGARET: Dinner for two and one room at The Royal Hotel, Weymouth.... (*Holds up some other invoices*) What are these?

WESTFALL: I need some new tools for the job, ones that I do not currently possess... and there has been other travel and research as well. I have had the honour of dealing with Mario Rutelli's studio in Italy they have been kind enough to supply photographs and measurements as they had conducted meetings and sittings from when their own statue was being created. So, there are various postage costs and also a trip to Wales to meet him while he was briefly over there on business... In fact, it was a letter to Signor Rutelli that I was writing earlier.

MARGARET: Hopefully you will not be going to Italy?

WESTFALL: (*He shakes his head*) Margaret, if I have muddied the waters in any way, please forgive me. I sense that you preferred it when there were just one design. In which case please disregard the latest...

MARGARET: No, I would rather put forward drawings that you are completely happy with. I would not to rein in your enthusiasm. I realise that, as an artist, there will always be a restless creativity involved in your work.

WESTFALL: I knew that you would understand... (*Shows the latest drawings again*) see how this is here... I never tire of the depiction of fabric in stone. It is one of the most fascinating things about Greek or Roman statues. In a sense it would be my own tribute to the work of the masters... It will be a challenge bit I *want* a challenge.... The greatest danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short...

MARGARET: But in setting our aim too low and achieving our mark (*WESTFALL looks taken aback*) Michelangelo. That reminds me (*She gets from her bag and holds up a book*)

WESTFALL: You have read it? I didn't think...

MARGARET: Most interesting, a real education I never realised that there were so many words from a sixteenth century artist still surviving.

WESTFALL: When you speak the truth the words will survive as surely as if they were chiseled in the hardest stone

MARGARET: (*Trying to place the quote*) Bernini?

WESTFALL: No, me.

MARGARET: (*Nods and pauses*) That is... most profound. (*She thinks again and seems to have reached a decision*) I think it is important that you are fully committed to the pose and, if you are, I will act as your emissary to the committee and emphasise the merits of this new design. Obviously it will need to be finalised and a maquette created.

WESTFALL: I will start work on that immediately

MARGARET: I just hope there are not too many unforeseen distractions as we would still like it to be the centre-piece for King Edward's Coronation. We want to be one of the first towns to pay tribute with a statue to the new king. The statue of William the Fourth was unveiled on the day of his coronation. I think that the Council thought it would bring great credit to our town if we were able to do something similar with the statue of King Edward. If they were to favour the latest incarnation, would it still be ready in time?

WESTFALL: I will make sure that it is. You have my word.

MARGARET: Then you have *my* word that I will suggest that the committee seriously considers the second version with a view to adopting it. (*Prepares to EXIT*)

WESTFALL: Now, let's collect the contracts...

MARGARET: There is a great deal of goodwill towards the project. They trust you - It was your deep understanding of the art form that so impressed the committee in the first place. (*Heading towards the door*) I also need to discuss transportation. What we do not want is for the statue of King Edward to be unceremoniously tied to a carriage and pulled through the streets like Louis the Sixteenth on the way to the guillotine. We want it to be dignified and also for it to be largely secret until the great unveiling outside The Town Hall.

(MARGARET and WESTFALL EXIT. With the stage empty we hear a slightly edited version of Edward VIII abdication speech. It can be a recording of the freely available speech or if technically difficult it can be simply read out or simply omitted.)

EDWARD VIII: You all know the reasons which have impelled me to renounce the throne. But I want you to understand that in making up my mind I did not forget the country or the empire, which, as Prince of Wales, and lately as King, I have for 25 years tried to serve.

But you must believe me when I tell you that I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love.

SCENE TWO - *The Studio of Robert Westfall. It is some weeks later*

ISOBEL and MARGARET are sitting in silence. They seem uneasy.

ISOBEL: I never thought he'd pack it in just like that.... Leave everything and clear off...They reckon that he's gone to Austria... although I think he's in France. He always seems to go there. I expect he needs a bit of a rest (*MARGARET is trying to ignore her but is finding it increasingly difficult*)...Must be exhausted after... what is it now... six months of sitting on his throne.

MARGARET: And all because of that wretched woman

ISOBEL: I feel a bit sorry for her - why should anyone be stuck with someone they don't love - I say good luck to her. (*Margaret is now agitated and shaking her head*) Why should she live her life to satisfy what's expected of her, why should she...

MARGARET: ...Yes, well that is one point of view. Clearly it would have been better if they could have exercised a modicum of discretion but he's obviously proved rather a weak man and, as such, something of a disappointment to us all.

ISOBEL: Why should he keep quiet though? It was obviously making them both miserable

MARGARET: We must agree to disagree, as far as I am concerned if they behave in the way that they did, then there are bound to be consequences.

ISOBEL: There's still going to be the statue though?

MARGARET: I need to speak to Mister Westfall

ISOBEL: I'm his assistant

MARGARET: (*wry laugh*) yes, well you can assist him once he turns up.

ISOBEL: They're going to try and wriggle out of it aren't they... makes me sick... The Council can do what they want and Royalty can do whatever they want, that's the problem.

MARGARET: No matter what has happened, we need to retain our respect.

ISOBEL: And what respect have we been shown... what respect has the country been shown...

MARGARET: Please, I really do not think...

ISOBEL: And the Welsh miners that the King claimed to like, where is their respect? Do they have a chance to clear off and live a life of privilege and luxury and...

MARGARET: This is not helping, I am sure that His Royal Highness tried to do his best. It was just that woman interfering.

ISOBEL: Perhaps you'd like a statue of the two of them, Edward and his American divorcee friend, how about that? The trouble with that lot is...

MARGARET: I really think we had just better wait until Mister Westfall returns.

ISOBEL: But that lot are always...

MARGARET: Listen, a few moments ago she was a poor woman that was trapped in a loveless marriage. You see how complicated it is? Now you have the same condemnation as everybody else has for a man and a woman who... (*trying to think of the word*)... carry on... outside the sanctity of marriage. There... I didn't want to have to say that but, there you are.

ISOBEL: It's not her, it's the whole lot of them.

MARGARET: (*To shut her up*) Please.

Another uneasy silence

ISOBEL: Did you want a cup of tea?

MARGARET: No thank you

MARGARET checks time. ISOBEL notices

ISOBEL: He's only gone for a newspaper; don't know why he's been this long. If you need to go I can tell him that you called...

MARGARET: I would rather wait.

After an Uneasy silence ROBERT ENTERS, he is wearing the coat that we saw before

WESTFALL: They are all sold out

MARGARET: I am not surprised; it has all been quite a shock.

WESTFALL: I'm sorry, have you been here long?

ISOBEL: Ages

MARGARET: No, not long.

WESTFALL: (*Removing coat and joining the other two*) So...

MARGARET: Mister Westfall, to get straight to the point... The Council Committee met yesterday, an emergency meeting, and... well.... I think it was Leonardo Da Vinci who once said that art is never finished... merely abandoned...

WESTFALL: You are asking me to abandon the commission? The statue of the king is no longer required.

MARGARET: Of course, it is not my decision, it is simply my duty to deliver the message from the council... and I am afraid that with the latest developments, if we can call them that, there will need to be a number of things to reconsider

ISOBEL: There's still going to be a king.

MARGARET: Obviously

ISOBEL: Last thing I heard it was all going ahead it's just his brother instead of the other one. Richard could just stick a different head on it.

MARGARET: Yes but...

WESTFALL: It's not as simple as that. It would be a different statue, but the statue can be of George if that is what is required. It will mean a modification to my current drawings but I should be able to work swiftly to....

MARGARET: That possibility has been discussed at The Council committee meeting, and there may be such a statue of King George at some time in the future. But they sense that the mood has changed. Now that we have had the abdication *everything* is... different. Just a few months ago we all felt that we were at the start of a new and rather wonderful Edwardian period. He was a young king who people admired. He seemed modern and just the man to see us through all the challenges that lay ahead... But now spirits have dampened.

ISOBEL: They're not celebrating the Coronation?

MARGARET: They are, but the council needs to reflect the opinions of the town

WESTFALL: The money has been raised by public subscription, can it be halted now? Surely the Council's jurisdiction comes to an end with...

MARGARET: If I could stop you there, the subscriptions are pledges of sums of money and many of those prospective donors have changed their mind.

ISOBEL: They can't. A pledge is a pledge

MARGARET: A pledge has no legal basis, and if the bill for Mister Westfall's work were to fall at the door of the Council, well the expense would be difficult to justify. The feeling now is that perhaps the commemoration should take the form of an endowment of a bed at the General Hospital. Other suggestions at the meeting were for an arrangement similar to that of The King George the Fifth's memorial fund with the provision of playing fields for young children. I am sure that you would not argue with those suggestions.

WESTFALL: It's not a case of arguing, it's a case of honouring agreements

MARGARET: No one would have foreseen the abdication. There may still be a small memorial to the king. If so, there is the feeling that it should take the form of a drinking fountain or something else of some practical use.

ISOBEL: The Royal Family know that the statue is going to be scrapped?

MARGARET: I imagine that they may have more on their mind at present. They are understanding of these unprecedented times. Our own Sergeant-at-mace has had the honour of corresponding with both His Royal Highness's Aide-de-camp and the Senior equerry of The Royal Wardrobe and they have... (*Disconcerted by ISOBEL's expression and shake of the head*) I am sorry, why do you smile?

ISOBEL: It's having to listen to all those stupid names...

MARGARET: Well, the fact is that our decision has been relayed to The Palace and they fully understand.... Even if you do not.

WESTFALL: We have signed contracts. They were *contracts*, written contracts... I have no doubt that they will be enforceable by law.

MARGARET: I have shown the documents to the Contract Committee and they agree that you would certainly have a good case...

ISOBEL: Well then

MARGARET: A good case once the Coronation has taken place. The most likely date is, I believe. The twelfth of May, at that point the various clauses will become legally enforceable. Before that date...

WESTFALL: But the documents were signed weeks ago

MARGARET: Yes. Perhaps I could show you. Forgive me, I have forgotten my spectacles...perhaps you could read it (*WESTFALL reaches for document that MARGARET has produced.*) I was wondering if your assistant might like to read it with her meticulous eye for detail.

ISOBEL: (*Takes document and examines it*) Which bit...

MARGARET: Perhaps there (*Points at page*)

ISOBEL: (*Reading*) The full erection of the statue of Edward, Albert, Christian... George, Andrew... Patrick... David Windsor, hereafter referred to as The King, shall be completed before, and in no instance later than, three months after the aforementioned coronation.

MARGARET: Yes.... And if you could read the declaration too that would be helpful

ISOBEL: (*Reading*) I, Robert Fenwick Westfall shall discharge my duties in relation and in accordance with the above and acknowledge that the full commission comes into effect on the day of the coronation...

MARGARET: If I could stop you there. (*Emphasising*) The Coronation

WESTFALL: (*Annoyed*) That's not fair...I am expected to discharge my duties but The King does not discharge his does he... (*more calmly*)... forgive me. It's not your fault. It's just that (*Busy reading the document*) to me it just looks like nonsense. I mean this part (*Reading*) With one voice and consent of tongue... Who writes in that manner?

MARGARET: Some of the language used by the Council can be a little archaic.

WESTFALL: I do not even know what it means

MARGARET: Perhaps there is a lesson there: I am afraid the contract is fairly watertight... I think that the coronation was used as the key moment in the process as there was some caution following the cancellation of the coronation of his grandfather. Thankfully, on that occasion, it proved no more than a postponement.

WESTFALL, realising the situation is hopeless, hands back contract

ISOBEL: (*To Westfall*) We'll be alright...There'll be other jobs, we'll go to France like you said

MARGARET: I think you will find that there are even fewer kings in France.

ISOBEL: He doesn't need to do this kind of work, there's other statues, other monuments

MARGARET: If you have other commissions then that is excellent. The Committee were worried that perhaps...

WESTFALL: I do need to talk to you. Isobel, do you think you might leave us... (*ISOBEL looks put out and thinks about saying something*) Perhaps you could make us some tea.

ISOBEL: She doesn't want any tea and besides I...

WESTFALL: (*assertively*) Just leave us...

ISOBEL: Why should I, this affects me as much as it does you

WESTFALL: Please (*With reluctance ISOBEL EXITS*) What do I do now? Can I speak to the council?

MARGARET: There is no point. It would not serve any use. I was at the meeting and the feeling was that perhaps the age of statues is coming to an end, at least as public monuments. I vociferously contested this and I tried to explain.

WESTFALL: It is statues that help us to make sense of the past.

MARGARET: I am simply reporting what was said

WESTFALL: They need to understand that if statues go then history goes with them....

MARGARET: I understand your disappointment.

WESTFALL: Look, I realise that we could not proceed as we were... but there must be something

MARGARET: There is. We have come with an alternative proposition... but may be today is not the best day for this to be pursued. Perhaps another day when the dust has settled. (*Looks as if she is about to leave*).

WESTFALL: Please do not take my anger personally. Forgive me. I am just disappointed... There is always this eternal paradox: I am an artist and all artists must challenge society and yet I am in the position of having to accept the patronage of others. Obviously I wish that it could be some other way. I need this commission and if not *this* commission, then another.

MARGARET: Very well... I understand that you may not find our suggestion as exciting as that which we have previously discussed, but it is connected with the Coronation. There will be a reasonable fee involved, but I doubt if it would enable you to keep on additional staff or....

WESTFALL: What is it? Is it a royal statue?

MARGARET: As you know the town does have some fine royal statues already. There has been a suggestion that rather than embark on a new project that instead we show our respect to the Royal family by restoring what we already have. It was felt that we should try and get our current statues spick and span in time for the coronation. I am talking about William the Fourth... if I could show you (*has some photographs that she now produces*) The statue was originally unveiled on William's Coronation Day, in September 1831... It is quite an imposing piece. As you see he is depicted without a crown... befitting of the modesty of the man. He was a man who was never born to be king, it was not something that he sought, and he simply followed his brother into the job when it became his duty. I think that in some ways the story rather echoes that of our new king. What do you think of the piece?

WESTFALL: It is very much in the style of its time

MARGARET: It is traditional but I think the statue captures a certain dignified reticence. He had a career as a Naval man and of course he was affectionately known as Sailor Bill.

WESTFALL: (*looking at picture of statue*) Presumably that is why he has been depicted draped in sea weed

MARGARET: They are his chains of office the collar and badge of St George, the insignia of the garter, although it is a little weathered.

WESTFALL: What is that there? (*squinting at picture*)

MARGARET: The crown on a pedestal

WESTFALL: Looks rather like an unwanted birthday cake.

MARGARET: It is interesting that you say *unwanted*. Perhaps that is part of the problem. The statue of King William was financed by the donation of one man. We were glad to have the statue but it was not paid for by public subscription... it was not brought forth on a tide of good will from his subjects... as a result, I fear that the love for the piece was never really there.

WESTFALL: I wonder whether they would build a monument to him now? How many children did he have outside of wedlock? You will need to remind me. Was it nine, ten, eleven?

MARGARET: They were different times; we cannot judge them by the standards of today.

WESTFALL: Just as well that we do not, the streets would be stripped of statues of men who were once thought great and yet their values have now fallen from favour. Every day there would be more statues ground down to dust (*Has been flicking through the pictures*) What is this?

MARGARET: The statue was later moved to his present site on the east side of the park. That would be about twenty years ago in order to accommodate the new bandstand.

WESTFALL: He was not as much loved as a bandstand then?

MARGARET: Times change. But we are keen that he should be preserved. I cannot remember the name of the sculptor.

WESTFALL: (*looking at picture*) It says it here, John Montague Boyd

MARGARET: You know of him?

WESTFALL: He was based here. This yard, the studio and office have always been used by stonemasons and artists. It must have been within a couple of years of completing this piece of work that he was declared bankrupt. You want me to repair his statue?

MARGARET: Let me explain: The Committee for the erection of the statue has been swiftly repurposed... and if I could just read to you the appropriate document (*Reading a new document*) a committee consisting of no less than twelve councillors has been appointed to inspect the state and condition of the Bath Stone figure standing at a height of ninety-seven inches notwithstanding inclusion of pedestal. A specification for the necessary repair and embellishment thereof shall herewith be prepared under their direction...

WESTFALL: (*interrupting*) Could you just tell me in English?

MARGARET:... Well, there has been some damage, perhaps you could see it there.... (*pointing at picture*) as you see there has been a rather hasty repair

WESTFALL: (*looking at picture*) No... I'm not sure

MARGARET: See there... its completely broken off, whether this was done in some form of ill-informed protest or just as a prank, I really cannot imagine.

WESTFALL: I suppose it could have been taken as some sort of souvenir.

MARGARET: Or it might simply have dropped off. (*Passes over the first of a number of documents*). What you see here was stuck on some years back by a local plasterer.... There, that might be a clearer picture. You can clearly see the join. There are also some other pictures which may help, should you decide to undertake the work, they are taken from various paintings in the Royal collection... this is it in profile...

WESTFALL: If I am to supply a new nose then I will still need scaffolding, pulleys, planks... many of the things on the original quotation. We will still need the crane, probably a couple more specialist tools... probably not the claw chisels but some finer rasps...

MARGARET: If you itemise what is needed I feel sure that, under the circumstances, there will be a sympathetic response.... will you undertake the work?

WESTFALL nods.

MARGARET: Then I shall see to it that the contracts are drawn up. (*Now preparing to EXIT*) Well, Mister Westfall, it has been a pleasure to see you again. These have been such strange times. The Council thanks you for your understanding.

WESTFALL: Have you heard what will happen to him?

MARGARET: I believe that the former king has left the country. I understand that while he will have no official duties, I am sure he will spend his time standing up for British values. That is so important at a time of such uncertainty on the Continent....Do you not think? Of course, there is the understanding that he will fully relinquish all of his royal titles

WESTFALL: In that case I have an advantage over him... after all it seems that I am soon to take up my duties as the official Restorer of The King's Appendage.

MARGARET: And another thing - there will be, at my request, a small plaque commemorating your restoration. It will be placed at the front of the monument to recognise your work in repairing the statue. That will be there forever.

WESTFALL: Forever? I doubt that.

MARGARET: (*Not really listening and about to Exit*) The Contracts Committee will be meeting a week on Wednesday, perhaps we could have your estimation of costs before then?

WESTFALL: I'll do my best.

MARGARET: Thank you

MARGARET EXITS. WESTFALL left alone looking disappointed.

LIGHTS FADE

Again, if technically possible, we hear more of the Edward VIII abdication speech.

EDWARD VIII: A few hours ago I discharged my last duty as King and Emperor, and now that I have been succeeded by my brother, the Duke of York, my first words must be to declare my allegiance to him. This I do with all my heart.

God bless you all. God save the King!

THE END