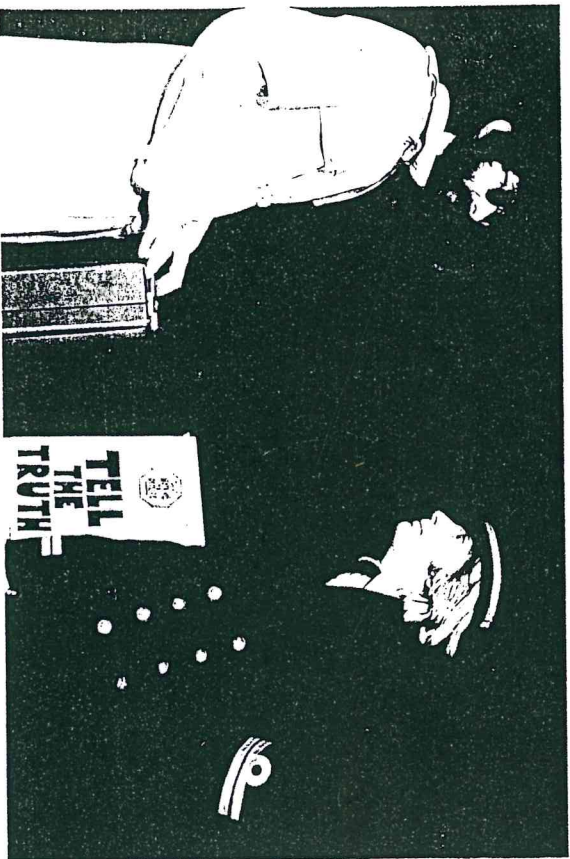


The Customs Officer



SCENE
The customs hall at an airport or port in England

CHARACTERS
A customs officer
Vladimir Strogonov

I OFFICER Good morning, sir.
STROGONOV Good morning.
OFFICER Welcome to England.
STROGONOV Thank you.
OFFICER Are you staying long?
STROGONOV Yes. Er . . . no. Perhaps. I'm not sure.
OFFICER I see. Could I see your passport, please?
STROGONOV Yes. Here you are.
OFFICER Thank you.
STROGONOV *Strogonov gives the customs officer a passport. (Reading from the passport.)* Mrs Elizabeth Robinson?
Oh, sorry. Try this one.
STROGONOV *He gives the customs officer another passport.*

OFFICER This is very strange, sir. Why have you got *two* passports?
STROGONOV Well, I travel a lot.
OFFICER I see. Hmm . . . *(Reading from the passport.)* Name: Vladimir Strogonov.
STROGONOV Strogonov.
OFFICER Pardon?
STROGONOV Vladimir Strogonov.
OFFICER Strogonov, yes. Nationality . . . Nationality: British?!

II OFFICER That's right.
STROGONOV Vladimir Strogonov doesn't *sound* very British.
OFFICER Doesn't it?
STROGONOV No - and *you* don't look very British, either.
OFFICER Don't I?
STROGONOV No, you don't.
OFFICER Oh.

OFFICER Name, nationality . . . occupation. Occupation: Spy?
STROGONOV What?
OFFICER It says here that you're a spy.
STROGONOV Let me see.
OFFICER *He looks at the passport.*
STROGONOV Yes, it looks like 'Spy', doesn't it?
OFFICER Yes, it does.

STROGONOV It's a spelling mistake.
OFFICER A spelling mistake? What is your job then?
STROGONOV I'm a brush salesman.
OFFICER A brush salesman?
STROGONOV Yes. Would you like to buy a new toothbrush?
OFFICER No!

STROGONOV A paintbrush?
OFFICER No!
STROGONOV A hairbrush?
OFFICER No!! Now, you say your name is Vladimir Strogonov, and you say you're British. Your passport says you're a spy, and *you* say you're a brush salesman.

STROGONOV That's right.
OFFICER Well, it all looks very suspicious, doesn't it?
STROGONOV Yes, I suppose it does.
OFFICER Now, have you got anything to declare?

III OFFICER Yes, I have.
STROGONOV What?
OFFICER I love my wife.
STROGONOV I'm not interested in your wife.
OFFICER I'm very pleased to hear it. I can assure you that my wife is not interested in you either.