

**The Setting:** *“Dinner for One or the 90th Birthday” is set in a large dining salon with a table set for five people, including Miss Sophie, who is seated at the head of the table (on the right). A staircase is seen on the right, a serving bar on the left side of the room. On the floor between the table and the serving bar is a tiger rug, complete with head. Miss Sophie (played by May Warden) comes down the stairs into the dining salon. Her butler, James, greets her...*

**James:** Good evening, Miss Sophie, good evening.

**Miss Sophie:** Good evening, James.

**James:** You are looking very well this evening, Miss Sophie.

**Miss Sophie:** Well, I am feeling very much better, thank you, James.

**James:** Good, good...

**Miss Sophie:** Well, I must say that everything looks nice.

**James:** Thank you very much, Miss Sophie, thank you.

**Miss Sophie:** Is everybody here?

**James:** Indeed, they are, yeah. Yes... They are all here for your anniversary, Miss Sophie.

**Miss Sophie:** All five places are laid out?

**James:** All laid out as usual.

**Miss Sophie:** Sir Toby?

**James:** Sir Toby, yes, he's sitting here this year, Miss Sophie.

*No one except Miss Sophie is seated at the table as James indicates where the four invisible guests are seated.*

**Miss Sophie:** Admiral von Schneider?

**James:** Admiral von Schneider is sitting here, Miss Sophie.

**Miss Sophie:** Mr. Pommeroy?

**James:** Mr. Pommeroy I put round here for you.

**Miss Sophie:** And my very dear friend, Mr. Winterbottom?

**James:** On your right, as you requested, Miss Sophie!

**Miss Sophie:** Thank you, James. You may now serve the soup.

**James:** The soup, thank you very much, Miss Sophie, thank you. They are all waiting for you. Little drop of mulligatawny soup, Miss Sophie?

**Miss Sophie:** I am particularly fond of mulligatawny soup, James.

**James:** Yes, I know you are.

**Miss Sophie:** I think we'll have sherry with the soup.

**James:** Sherry with the soup, yes... Oh, by the way, the same procedure as last year, Miss Sophie?

**Miss Sophie:** Same procedure as every year, James. Is that a dry sherry, James?

**James:** Yes, a very dry sherry, Miss Sophie... very dry. Straight out of the cellar, this morning, Miss Sophie.

*James goes around the table pouring sherry for each guest. Then he walks over to the serving bar with the sherry bottle, tripping on the tiger rug head as he does so. He puts the bottle down and goes back to the table, standing behind the chair where Sir Toby is supposedly seated. He lifts Sir Toby's glass and makes a toasting gesture towards Miss Sophie, who also has a glass in her hand.*

**Miss Sophie:** Sir Toby!

**James:** Cheerio, Miss Sophie!

*James takes a drink for Sir Toby.*

**Miss Sophie:** Admiral von Schneider!

**James:** Ad... Must I say it this year, Miss Sophie?

**Miss Sophie:** Just to please me, James.

**James:** Just to please you. Very good, yes, yes... Skol!

*James drinks and clicks his heels together as he says "Skol!" and reacts in pain.*

**Miss Sophie:** Mr. Pommeroy!

**James:** *(in falsetto voice)* Happy New Year, Sophie!

*James drinks the entire glass for Mr. Pommeroy.*

**Miss Sophie:** And dear Mr. Winterbottom!

**James:** *(in a deep voice)* Well, here we are again, old lovely...

**Miss Sophie:** You may now serve the fish.

**James:** Fish. Very good, Miss Sophie. Did you enjoy the soup?

**Miss Sophie:** Delicious, James.

**James:** Thank you, Miss Sophie, glad you enjoyed it.

*James hobbles over to the serving bar, once again stumbling over the tiger head. Takes the fish over to Miss Sophie.*

**James:** Little bit of North Sea haddock, Miss Sophie.

**Miss Sophie:** I think we'll have white wine with the fish.

**James:** White wine with the fish? The same procedure as last year, Miss Sophie?

**Miss Sophie:** The same procedure as every year, James!

**James:** Yea!

*James goes over to get the white wine, once again stumbling over the tiger head. He gets the wine bottle and fills each person's glass. As he pours for Sir Toby, he has an imaginary, silent conversation with Sir Toby, then pours him some more wine as if it had been requested. As he takes the bottle back to the serving bar he fails to stumble over the tiger head, provoking laughter from the studio audience. Then he heads back to the table and stumbles over the tiger head.*

**Miss Sophie:** Sir Toby!

**James:** Cheerio, Miss Sophie, me gal.

*James drinks the wine from the glass of each guest as he toasts/greets Miss Sophie.*

**Miss Sophie:** Admiral von Schneider!

**James:** Oh, must I, Miss Sophie?

**Miss Sophie:** James, please!

**James:** Skol! *Clicks heels together and again reacts in pain.*

**Miss Sophie:** Mr. Pommeroy!

**James:** Happy New Year, Sophie gal!

**Miss Sophie:** Mr. Winterbottom!

**James:** You look younger than ever, love! By gum, you look younger than ever, luv, younger than ever! Ha, ha, ha...

## Dinner For One

*James is now showing the effects of his many toasts, weaving about and hesitating as he rounds the table. He takes Miss Sophie's plate.*

**Miss Sophie:** Please serve the chicken!

**James:** Ya...

*James stumbles over to the serving bar, tripping over the tiger head. He brings the chicken to Miss Sophie, wobbling as he does so.*

**Miss Sophie:** That looks a very fine bird!

**James:** That's a lovely chu... chuk... chicken, that I'll tell you, a lovely...

**Miss Sophie:** I think we'll have champagne with the bird!

**James:** Champagne, ya... Same, same prosheeed-ure as last year, Miss Sophie?

**Miss Sophie:** The same procedure as every year, James!

*James stumbles over to the serving bar for the champagne, again tripping over the tiger head. He pours champagne for each person, now wobbling and weaving even more than before.*

**James:** Sophie, me gal...

**Miss Sophie:** Admiral von Schneider!

**James:** Must I, Miss Sophie?

**Miss Sophie:** James!

**James:** Schkol!

*James tries to click his heels but misses and dances about for a moment.*

**Miss Sophie:** Mr. Pommeroy!

**James:** Happy New Year, Sophie, gal...

**Miss Sophie:** Mr. Winterbottom!

**James:** It's one of the nicest little women... hic... one of the nicest little women, that's ever breathed, that's ever breathed... I now declare this bazaar opened! So forth...

*James makes a loud burping sound, then grabs Miss Sophie's chair, almost tipping her over backwards. He somehow manages to take her plate of chicken over to the bar, stumbling over the tiger head as the plate flies up in the air.*

**James:** Would you like some fruit?

*Takes a fruit plate over to Miss Sophie, zooming past her and half-way up the stairs, then back down to her.*

**Miss Sophie:** I think we'll have port with the fruit!

**James:** Oh, no! Sa... same procedure, sa... same procedure as last...

**Miss Sophie:** Yes, the same procedure as every year, James!

*James gets the bottle of port and returns, shakily, to the table. He has difficulty pouring the port, sloshing it all over as he attempts to pour for Miss Sophie and her guests. Finally, he takes a swig from the bottle as he hops over the tiger head. He then returns to the table, wobbily.*

**Miss Sophie:** Sir Toby!

**James:** Sugar in the morning, sugar...

**Miss Sophie:** Admiral von Schneider!

**James:** Schkol!

**Miss Sophie:** Mr. Pommeroy!

**James:** *(Spills glass)* I'm sorry, Madam, sorry. *(Scoops the spilled port off the table cloth into his glass and drinks.)*

**Miss Sophie:** Mr. Winterbottom!

*James accidentally grabs a flower vase, removes the flowers and drinks from the vase.*

**James:** Huuhh, I'll kill that cat!

**Miss Sophie:** Well, James, it's been a wonderful party!

**James:** Well, it's been most enjoyable.

**Miss Sophie:** And I, I think I'll retire.

**James:** You're going to bed? Sit down, I'll give you a hand up, Madam.

*James escorts Miss Sophie to the base of the stairs.*

**Miss Sophie:** As I was saying, I think I'll retire.

**James:** Ya... ya, ya. By the way, the same procedure as last year, Miss Sophie?

**Miss Sophie:** The same procedure as every year James!

**James:** Well, I'll do my very best!

Dinner For One

*The two go up the stairs and disappear off-stage.*