

Please Enjoy the Following Sample

- This sample is an *excerpt* from a Samuel French title.
- This sample is for **perusal only** and may not be used for performance purposes.
- You may not download, print, or distribute this excerpt.
- We highly recommend purchasing a copy of the title before considering for performance.

For more information about licensing or purchasing a play or musical, please visit our websites

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk



Kindly Leave the Stage

A Play in Two Acts

by John Chapman

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



New York Hollywood London Toronto

SAMUELFRENCH.COM

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE* is subject to a Licensing Fee. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. In its present form the play is dedicated to the reading public only.

The amateur live stage performance rights to *KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE* are controlled exclusively by Samuel French, Inc., and licensing arrangements and performance licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur Licensing Fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a licensing quotation and a performance license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Licensing Fees are payable one week before the opening performance of the play to Samuel French, Inc., at 45 W. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010.

Licensing Fee of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

Stock licensing fees quoted upon application to Samuel French, Inc.

For all other rights than those stipulated above, apply to: Laurence Fitch Ltd., Belsize Business Centre, 258 Belsize Road, Suite 306, London NW6 4BT England.

Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured in writing from Samuel French, Inc.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing and advertising for the play: "Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc."

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

No one shall commit or authorize any act or omission by which the copyright of, or the right to copyright, this play may be impaired.

No one shall make any changes in this play for the purpose of production.

Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are *strongly* advised in their own interests to apply to Samuel French, Inc., for written permission before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of *KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE* *must* give credit to the Author of the Play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production. The name of the Author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent the size of the title type.

CHARACTERS

CHARLES
MADGE
SARAH
RUPERT
MRS. CULLEN
ANGELA
NURSE
EDWARD

TIME & PLACE

The play is set in the living room of an expensively appointed garden flat in Hampstead.

ACT I

Evening.

ACT II

The same, fifteen minutes later.

ACT I

Scene 1

The sitting room of an expensively appointed garden flat in Hampstead. It has an alcove for the dining area. It is EVENING and as the CURTAIN RISES a couple are seen seated at the table, CHARLES and MADGE.

The table is set for four people. CHARLES and MADGE are in their early forties and well dressed. THEY are eating dessert and look somewhat ill at ease. There is a pause before Charles speaks.

CHARLES. What d'you think?

MADGE. It's awful.

CHARLES. I mean the pudding.

MADGE. Oh, I really hadn't noticed—not bad.

(Another pause.)

CHARLES. Needs a bit more sugar perhaps.

MADGE. Mm?

CHARLES. A little on the tart side, isn't it?

MADGE. Does it matter?

CHARLES. No, I suppose not.

MADGE. I think we should just get up and go.

CHARLES. Bit rude don't you think?

MADGE. It's not exactly the height of good manners for the host and hostess to have a blinding row in front of their friends and storm out of the room.

CHARLES. Perhaps there'll be a reconciliation.

(There is the sound of some PLATES CRASHING in the kitchen followed by a WOMAN'S MUFFLED CURSE.)

MADGE. I wouldn't bank on it.

(SARAH enters from the kitchen with a tray of coffee and puts it on the table. SHE is elegant and in her mid-thirties and in a violent temper which is held in check.)

SARAH. There's some cheese on the side there.

CHARLES. Thanks

MADGE. Sarah darling, coffee really isn't necessary.

SARAH. Of course it's necessary. Have you ever had dinner without coffee before?

MADGE. I don't know—I suppose I must—

SARAH. In my house?

MADGE. No no, not here of course.

SARAH. There's no need for an exception to the rule tonight.

CHARLES. I think, Madge felt that the sooner we were off the better.

SARAH. She needn't. We invited you to dinner and until you've reached the brandy and cigars you shall stay.

MADGE. I shan't want either darling.

SARAH. Charles enjoys them, don't you?

CHARLES. Normally perhaps. But under the present—er—circumstances, I think I could do without.

SARAH. Well don't, not on my account. Have you finished with the apple amber?

MADGE. It was delicious, Sarah.

(SARAH picks it up and exits to kitchen.)

CHARLES. Not quite as good as yours, darling.

MADGE. I shouldn't mention the fact.

CHARLES. 'Course not.

(RUPERT enters from the hall with a large steamer trunk.)

RUPERT. God, are you still here?

CHARLES. Sorry, old man.

RUPERT. No, it's all right. Just as well really. Excuse me, I've got a little tidying up to do. You'll be able to calm her down a bit when I've gone. *(HE goes to the writing desk.)*

CHARLES. She seems reasonably calm at the moment.

RUPERT. Before the next storm.

MADGE. I can't tell you how sorry we are, Rupert —

RUPERT. Oh can't you?

CHARLES. And if there's anything we can do—

RUPERT. Well there isn't, is there? We've run aground—hit the rocks. It's a total wreck, there's nothing to salvage.

CHARLES. I'm not sure what sparked the whole thing off. I mean, there we were thoroughly enjoying the pork en croute and the next minute the balloon had gone up.

RUPERT. (*Putting papers in his brief case.*) We got married, that's what started it.

MADGE. But that was twenty years ago.

RUPERT. And that outburst tonight has finished it. My only regret is that two of our dearest friends should have been here to witness it. But one can't legislate for the volcanic eruptions of life.

SARAH. (*Enters.*) I'm stacking the machine so if— (*Stops on seeing Rupert.*) For Christ's sake, don't tell me you're staying.

RUPERT. I wouldn't stay if I had two broken legs and a heart attack.

SARAH. What are you doing, writing me a farewell note?

RUPERT. I'm just getting some of my personal effects if you've no objection.

SARAH. (*Sees the trunk.*) We're dividing the property already are we? What are you taking, the sofa?

RUPERT. Credit cards, check books, that's all.

SARAH. Not the joint one?

RUPERT. (*Holding it.*) Well—I can't see that it makes much difference.

SARAH. Put the bloody thing back

RUPERT. All right, all right.

SARAH. You see what he's like? Devious.

RUPERT. The account's empty anyway.

SARAH. And mean.

RUPERT. Who spent it all?

SARAH. In case you've been away, some shops now make a small charge for food, wine, brandy, cigars—

RUPERT. Oh that rapier wit. In future all communication will be carried on through my solicitor.

CHARLES. Just a minute, that's me.

RUPERT. Oh God—so it is.

MADGE. That'll make things awfully awkward. Why don't you just separate?

SARAH. We don't want to separate.

RUPERT. No, it's got to be divorce for the sake of the children.

CHARLES. You haven't got any children.

RUPERT. Not by Sarah, but with my next wife the place'll be crawling with them.

SARAH. Someone in mind, have you?

RUPERT. Plenty.

SARAH. Oh, it's a harem is it? Now look Charles, you're our solicitor, not his, so you can represent me, O.K.?

CHARLES. Well—

RUPERT. Balls. Charles was my friend long before you came on the scene. We were up at Oxford together. It's been a lifelong association. Added to which, he's in full possession of all the facts, so it won't cost a fortune in research and endless letters.

SARAH. There you are, that's it, that's all he thinks of, money. Money, money.

RUPERT. It won't be too far from your mind when you're trying to live on your allowance.

SARAH. I doubt if I shall notice the difference.

MADGE. Actually, Charles's not a specialist in divorce.

CHARLES. More conveyancing really.

SARAH. Then convey him out of my life. Who wants coffee?

RUPERT. I wouldn't mind some.

SARAH. You haven't time. Now when would you like me to come to your office tomorrow? (*SHE pours three cups out.*)

CHARLES. I've got a string of meetings, Sarah.

RUPERT. And one of them will be with me. Shall we say ten-thirty?

CHARLES. Not possible I'm afraid.

MADGE. Then may I suggest you come to me.

RUPERT. I beg your pardon?

MADGE. I'm still a member of the legal profession.

SARAH. You haven't practiced for years.

MADGE. I only stopped for the childrens' sake. I'd enjoy starting up again.

CHARLES. Don't you think we ought to discuss it first, darling?

MADGE. We are doing.

RUPERT. Quite honestly, Madge, I'd prefer to deal with Charles.

SARAH. He's already booked.

RUPERT. Will you shut up?

SARAH. You see what a boor he is? He always shouts if he doesn't get his own way.

RUPERT. If I say I'm having Charles, then I'm bloody well having him.

CHARLES. Not unless I agree.

RUPERT. Why the hell shouldn't you?

CHARLES. Because you're over-bearing, conceited, and always have been. And the way you flew at Sarah during dinner—I'm surprised she didn't pour the gravy over you.

SARAH. Hear hear!!

RUPERT. I think you've had too much to drink.

CHARLES. I haven't had any since you charged out of the room.

SARAH. Have a brandy, dear.

CHARLES. Thank you, I will.

(SARAH pours one out.)

RUPERT. Hang on, that's mine!

SARAH. Only half of it—so he's having some of mine.

RUPERT. You can see, Madge, how extremely irritating she can be, I shall go and make some coffee. *(HE goes towards the kitchen door.)*

SARAH. You're sure you can remember how?

RUPERT. Did you get that Madge? If you hang around for another half hour, you ought to be able to compile quite a dossier on mental cruelty. *(RUPERT exits.)*

CHARLES. Frankly, I think we ought to be going.

SARAH. Before Rupert does? Don't be stupid. If you're not here he might attack me.

CHARLES. Has he done so before?

MADGE. I don't think we should discuss things like that. The case hasn't officially opened yet.

CHARLES. It's a perfectly reasonable question.

MADGE. My client isn't here to defend himself.

SARAH. Your client is a raving idiot with a very nasty temper. And the sooner he packs his bag and leaves, the better.

RUPERT. *(Opens the kitchen door.)* Where do we keep the bloody coffee?

SARAH. Next to the bloody tea, you helpless cretin.

RUPERT. Thank you, but it's a bit late in the day for compliments.

(SARAH picks up a cup and hurls it at Rupert and misses.)

MADGE. Heavens, are you all right?

RUPERT. Yes, she quite often misses.

(SARAH picks up another cup.)

CHARLES. *(Restraining her.)* Sarah please, you're not helping matters.

(The front DOOR BELL rings.)

SARAH. Oh God.

RUPERT. Who the hell—

CHARLES. Are you expecting anyone?

RUPERT. No. And we're not seeing anyone either.

SARAH. Madge—you go.

MADGE. Right.

SARAH. And whoever it is, get rid of them.

(MADGE exits.)

RUPERT. Probably the Vicar—collecting for a jumble sale.

SARAH. Perhaps he'll take a discarded husband.

RUPERT. Don't bottle it up, let it all come out.

CHARLES. Behave yourselves.

(MADGE enters.)

SARAH. Who was it?

MADGE. It was—and is—your mother.

SARAH. What?

(MRS DOROTHY CULLEN enters. SHE is smartly dressed and in her late sixties.)

MRS. C. Darlings, do forgive me. It's rather late in the day to be calling but I was driving in from the country and the car started making some very odd noises, so I thought I'd stop off here and let Rupert have a look at it. Don't let me break up your dinner party.

CHARLES. You haven't Mrs. Cullen, we were about to leave anyway.

SARAH. What are you doing in London?

MRS. C. Your father's having a few days golfing so I thought I'd stay in town and see some friends and possibly a show. You know what it's like trying to drag your father to the theatre.

MADGE. You're still enjoying life in the country?

MRS. C. Very much—yes. My husband never liked London. He hasn't set foot in the City since he retired, but he's perfectly happy for me to gallivant whenever I feel like it. So it makes for a very peaceful existence. How are the children?

MADGE. Fine thanks.

MRS. C. Final exams by now, I suppose.

MADGE. Mercifully we're through them now.

MRS. C. Oh, we're all getting so old.

CHARLES. I'm bound to say in your case—it doesn't seem to show.

MRS. C. How very gallant. Rupert dear, you haven't said a word since I arrived.

RUPERT. I'm sorry—it's very nice to see you again—you're looking terribly well.

MRS. C. Is that it?

RUPERT. Yes.

MRS. C. Ah. And what about you, Sarah.

SARAH. I'm all right.

MRS. C. You're looking peaky.

SARAH. Probably because I'm feeling "peaky."

MRS. C. I think both of you could do with a holiday.

RUPERT. I'm sure we'll both have one.

MRS. C. Where?

SARAH and RUPERT. (*Together.*) Italy/France.

MRS. C. Where?

CHARLES. Sort of on the border I believe.

MRS. C. I see. Now what about my car, Rupert?

RUPERT. Oh yes.

CHARLES. I'll have a look at it Mrs. Cullen. Rupert doesn't know one end from the other.

MRS. C. Rather like me.

CHARLES. Where are the keys?

MRS. C. In the dashboard, where they always are.

CHARLES. But you might lose the car doing that.

MRS. C. Well, at least I never lose the keys.

(*CHARLES exits.*)

SARAH. Have you eaten, Mother?

MRS. C. Yes—but I wouldn't say no to a cup of coffee.

RUPERT. I'll see if we've any cups left. (*RUPERT exits to the kitchen.*)

MRS. C. Have I upset him?

SARAH. No, Mother—that's his normal behaviour.

MADGE. Where will you stay in London?

MRS. C. I generally go to a small hotel just off Kensington Gore. Quite cheap and reasonably cheerful.

SARAH. How's Dad's lumbago?

MRS. C. Much the same—he can push a golf trolley round eighteen holes, but hand him the Hoover, and he's locked solid.

SARAH. You shouldn't let him get away with it.

MRS. C. He doesn't. It's a very fair arrangement, he dislikes housework and I loathe golf.

RUPERT. (*Enters with a cup and saucer. To Mrs. Cullen:*) How d'you want it? Black? White? Sugar?

MRS. C. Just a little cream and no sugar.

MADGE. If you're not too busy you must come and have dinner with us one evening.

MRS. C. How very kind, I'd like that. And perhaps we could all have a meal at my hotel sometime.

RUPERT. We may be rather tied up for the next few days.

CHARLES. (*Enters.*) I'm afraid it's your big end Mrs. Cullen.

MRS. C. I beg your pardon?

CHARLES. It's gone.

MRS. C. You mean stolen?

CHARLES. No. The engine's broken. You can't possibly drive it.

MRS. C. You don't mean it.

CHARLES. I'm afraid so. You could wreck the entire car.

MRS. C. Perhaps I should get a cab then.

SARAH. I think you better stay here in the spare room.

RUPERT. I shall be in the spare room.

SARAH. You'd better not be.

MRS. C. Have you got a knife, Sarah?

SARAH. Knife? Why?

MRS. C. To see if I can cut the atmosphere.

SARAH. OK. We have some big news. And you're the first in the family to hear it.

MRS. C. God, you're not going to have a baby?

SARAH. No: a divorce.

MRS. C. Well—at your age, that's probably a lot safer. I take it Madge and Charles know?

SARAH. Yes.

MADGE. They decided this evening. It was all rather sudden.

MRS. C. It must have been.

CHARLES. Madge and I are handling the case.

MRS. C. Makes it rather expensive having two solicitors surely?

SARAH. Charles is representing me.

MADGE. And I'm doing the same for Rupert.

MRS. C. How cosy.

RUPERT. Would you like a drink, Dorothy—brandy or something?

MRS. C. If we're all staying up I may as well.

SARAH. You're behaving as though we're all having a jolly evening.

MRS. C. What do you expect me to do? Throw myself on the sofa and weep?

SARAH. You don't seem in the least surprised that Rupert and I are breaking up.

MRS. C. It's the pattern today—you hear of nothing else, and frankly I can't imagine why it hasn't happened before.

MADGE. You've seen the signs have you?

MRS. C. Madge dear, you don't need signs when two utterly impossible people try to live together.

SARAH. Since when have I been impossible?

MRS. C. Once you turned fifteen—you became rebellious, egotistical and your father let you wrap him round your little finger.

SARAH. Absolutely untrue.

MRS. C. You treated him like a door-mat. You alienate people.

SARAH. Rubbish.

MRS. C. He loved you Sarah. Just as once Rupert loved you.

RUPERT. And too she me.

(There is a pause. RUPERT has another stab at the line.)

RUPERT. Too, and she me. *(Another pause. RUPERT tries again.)* Me, she and too.

(Another pause.)

PROMPTER. *(Off.)* And she me too.

RUPERT. Don't quibble.

CHARLES. Rupert.

RUPERT. I'm sorry.

(The CAST realize RUPERT is "lost" and try to put the play back on the lines again.)

SARAH. *(Going back a few lines.)* Since when have I been impossible?

MRS. C. *(Totally thrown.)* Pardon?

SARAH. Since when have I been impossible? *(Tries to give Mrs. C. the line.)* Once I turned fifteen?

MRS. C. *(Grabs at it.)* Ah—yes. Once you turned fifteen, you became rebellious, egotistical and your father let him wrap you round his little finger.

SARAH. Absolutely untrue.

RUPERT. And absolutely wrong.

MRS. C. I mean your father let you wrap him round his little finger.

MADGE. *(Helpfully.)* Your little finger.

MRS. C. Oh very well, "my" little finger.

SARAH. *(To the rescue.)* You mean my little finger.

MRS. C. Do I?

SARAH. Yes.

MRS. C. That's right of course, *your* little finger.

SARAH. Absolutely untrue.

MRS. C. You treated him like a door-mat. You alienate people.

SARAH. Rubbish.

MRS. C. He loved you Sarah. Just as once Rupert loved you.

RUPERT. And too she me.

(The play stops as before. ALL EYES are riveted on Rupert. He has yet another go at it.)

RUPERT. Me she, and too.

(Another pause, then the PROMPTER is heard.)

PROMPTER. *(Off.)* And she me too.

RUPERT. Shut up!!

CHARLES. *(Quietly.)* Oh God.

RUPERT. What are you "Oh Godding" about?

CHARLES. *(Stage whisper.)* Pull yourself together.

RUPERT. D'you know what I'm going to do when the show's over?

CHARLES. *(Lost.)* No.

RUPERT. Kill you.

(The CAST now realize RUPERT's having a mental aberration and try to improvise.)

CHARLES. Perhaps we ought to go, Madge.

MADGE. Yes all right, Charles.

SARAH. *(Desperately.)* I'd rather you didn't.

MRS. C. *(Equally anxious.)* No, no please stay. I haven't seen you for such a long time. *(Groping.)* We must have so much to say to each other.

MADGE. *(Flatly.)* Yes.

MRS. C. Yes.

MADGE. Er—er—

MRS. C. *(Grabbing onto a previous line.)* How—er—
how are the children?

MADGE. Fine thanks.

MRS. C. "O"s' and "A"s' by now I suppose.

MADGE. Mercifully we're through them now.

MRS. C. Oh, we're all getting so old.

CHARLES. I'm bound to say in your case it doesn't show.

MRS. C. How very gallant.

RUPERT. (*To Charles.*) Nasty little crawler.

MRS. C. (*Thrown for a second.*) Er—Rupert dear, you haven't said a word since I arrived.

RUPERT. Then you must be bloody deaf. I've said I'm going to kill this creep.

(*Panic seizes EVERYONE again.*)

SARAH. Er—

MRS. C. Er—

CHARLES. Er—

PROMPTER. (*Off.*) And she me too.

RUPERT. If you say that again, I'll shove the prompt copy down your throat!

MRS. C. I think I've chosen a bad night.

CHARLES. I think we all have. (*To the prompter.*) Bring the curtain down.

PROMPTER. (*Off.*) I can't.

SARAH. Press the button.

PROMPTER. (*Off.*) I've tried, but there's another twenty minutes to the Interval and there's no one there. They're all next door in the pub.

CHARLES. Wish I was.

RUPERT. I'll bet you do, Charley boy.

CHARLES. (*Trying to ignore Rupert and get back to the play.*) Er—Madge and I are handling the case Mrs. Cullen.

MRS. C. Yes, you told me.

CHARLES. Oh did I? Er—yes—well—

Hungry for More?

THIS IS A SAMPLE OF THE SCRIPT

Buy the **full script** and explore other titles

www.samuelfrench.com

www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk



[Breaking Character]

An Online Resource for Theatre Makers



Titles are subject to availability depending on your territory.