SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an excerpt - an appetiser, if you will - from a full Samuel French title.

This sample is just for you to try out, and it can't be used for performance, downloaded, printed or distributed in any way.

Take it for a whirl and see if it tickles your fancy!

For more information about licensing this or other shows, or to browse thousands more plays and theatre books to buy please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

SF PERUSALS

While the Sun Shines

A Comedy in Three Acts

by Terence Rattigan

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830
New York Hollywood London Toronto
SAMUELFRENCH.COM

Copyright © 1943 by Terrence Rattigan
Copyright © 1945 by Terrence Rattigan

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *WHILE THE SUN SHINES* is subject to a royalty. 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 *WHILE THE SUN SHINES* are controlled exclusively by Samuel French, Inc., and royalty arrangements and licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur royalty fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a royalty quotation and license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Royalties are payable one week before the opening performance of the play to Samuel French, Inc., at 45 W. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010.

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

Stock royalty quoted upon application to Samuel French, Inc.

For all other rights than those stipulated above, apply to: Robert A. Freedman Dramatic Agency-Suite 2310, 1501 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

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.

ISBN 978-0-573-61781-2 Printed in U.S.A. **#25084**

WHILE THE SUN SHINES

STORY OF THE PLAY

Mr. Rattigan has given a mild wartime slant to his play. On the eve of his marriage, the young and wealthy Earl of Harpenden puts up a pickled American Lieutenant for the night; and in the morning dates him up with a former girl friend. The American mistakes the earl's fiancée for the girl friend, and the two of them fall in love with each other before he discovers his mistake. What with a French officer also in the race, the girl friend very much in evidence, and the fiancée's father, a deadbeat duke, adding to the complications, an evening of hilarious fun is the result.

Copy of program of the first performance of *While The Sun Shines* as produced at the Lyceum Theatre, New York:

MAX GORDON

Presents

WHILE THE SUN SHINES

By
TERENCE RATTIGAN

CHARACTERS

HORTON ..... *J. P. Wilson*
THE EARL OF HARPENDEN.....*Stanley Bell*
LIEUTENANT MULVANEY.....*Lewis Howard*
LADY ELISABETH RANDALL.....*Anne Burr*
THE DUKE OF AYR AND STIRLING....*Melville Cooper*
LIEUTENANT COLBERT.....*Alexander Ivo*
MABEL CRUM.....*Cathleen Cordell*

***

The action passes in the sitting room of Lord Harpenden's chambers in Albany, London.

ACT I: *Morning.*
ACT II: *Night. Later the same night.*
ACT III: *The next morning.*

***

Opened September 19, 1944 at the Lyceum Theatre, New York.

Directed by George S. Kaufman.

While The Sun Shines was first produced at the Globe Theatre, London, on December 24, 1943, with the following cast:

HORTON ..... *Douglas Jeffries*
THE EARL OF HARPENDEN.....*Michael Wilding*
LIEUTENANT MULVANEY.....*Hugh McDermott*
LADY ELISABETH RANDALL.....*Jane Baxter*
THE DUKE OF AYR AND STIRLING.....*Ronald Squire*
LIEUTENANT COLBERT.....*Eugene Deckers*
MABEL CRUM.....*Brenda Bruce*

***

The play directed by Anthony Asquith.

While The Sun Shines

ACT ONE

SCENE: *The sitting room of Lord Harpenden's chambers in Albany, London A large, square room, furnished solidly with late eighteenth-century mahogany furniture Double doors down Right lead into the bedroom; a single door, Left, into the hall Large windows up Right; door leading to the kitchen up Left.*

AT RISE: HORTON, *Lord Harpenden's manservant, comes in up Left He is carrying a breakfast tray with legs which he places in front of sofa He is a thin, gloomy-faced man of about fifty. He knocks gently on the bedroom door. Receiving no reply, he opens the doors and goes in—to emerge instantly. He closes the door again, ponders a second, and then knocks loudly.* LORD HARPENDEN *comes out Right, looking tousled and sleepy. He is a young man of twenty-three or twenty-four, of rather frail appearance.*

HARPENDEN. What's the matter?

HORTON. Your breakfast is ready, my Lord.

HARPENDEN. But why did you dart in and out like that, like a scared rabbit?

HORTON. I—beg your pardon, my Lord.

HARPENDEN. *(Picks up the "Times" which is lying on the back of the sofa)* Bring another breakfast, will you, Horton?

HORTON. Yes, my Lord.

HARPENDEN. What have you got?

HORTON. Well, there's some Spam.

HARPENDEN. No, don't waste the Spam; it's too useful for sandwiches, late at night. What about sausages?

HORTON. I can manage one, my Lord. *(Starts to go.)*

HARPENDEN. That'll do.

HORTON. It's tea and not coffee, isn't it, my Lord?

HARPENDEN. What do you mean?

HORTON. Miss Crum prefers tea to coffee for breakfast.

HARPENDEN. Miss Crum? Who said anything about Miss Crum?

HORTON. Isn't it Miss Crum?

HARPENDEN. No, it is not Miss Crum.

HORTON. *(Doubtfully)* It looked like Miss Crum.

HARPENDEN. *(Raising his voice)* I don't care who it looked like—it is not Miss Crum. It isn't Miss Anything.

HORTON. Mrs. Kennedy?

HARPENDEN. Horton—you haven't forgotten that I'm getting married tomorrow?

HORTON. No, my Lord.

HARPENDEN Very well, then. Now will you kindly go into that room, draw the curtains, take a good look around, and then come out and tell me how sorry you are.

HORTON. I hardly like to do that, my Lord.

HARPENDEN. Go on.

(HORTON *goes into the bedroom. There comes the sound of CURTAINS being drawn, then* HORTON *reappears and closes the door.)*

HORTON. I'm extremely sorry, my Lord.

HARPENDEN. *(Sits sofa)* Thank you, Horton.

HORTON. It looked just like Miss Crum, *the way she sleeps with her arm over her face—*

(He is interrupted by a wail from HARPENDEN, *who has taken the cover off his breakfast dish.)*

HARPENDEN. Horton, what's happened to my grandmother's other egg?

HORTON. Well, my Lord—

HARPENDEN. There were two—you know there were. She sent me two, and I had one yesterday—now where's the other?

(There is a slight pause before HORTON *can gain enough courage to answer.)*

HORTON. There was an accident, my Lord.

HARPENDEN. *(With a wealth of reproach)* Oh, no!

HORTON. I was just taking the egg out of the refrigerator—

HARPENDEN. Please, Horton, this is too painful. I'd rather not hear any more about it.

HORTON. No, my Lord. I'm very sorry. *(The TELEPHONE rings.* HORTON *goes to answer it)* Hullo—Yes, M'lady. *(Puts the receiver down)* Lady Elisabeth.

(HARPENDEN *gets up and takes the receiver.* HORTON *goes out up Left.)*

HARPENDEN. Hullo, darling. How are you? Have a good journey?—Not the whole night?—Couldn't you get a sleeper?—Yes, but I consider coming up to marry me is work of national importance— How are you?—Yes, I know, but apart from that, how are you?—Good. You didn't have any trouble about leave? (MULVANEY, *a young American in the late twenties, appears at the bedroom door. He has pajamas on with a blanket wrapped around him)* When?—Wednesday?—Well, that gives us six days. *(To* MULVANEY*)* Good-morning.

MULVANEY. Good-morning. *(He looks around the room, blinking in the daylight.)*

HARPENDEN *(Into telephone. Crossing to Center)* No, darling, nobody you know— Well, not this morning, darling, because I've got an interview at the Admiralty. Let's meet for lunch. One o'clock at Pruniers. All right? Where are you staying? Brown's?—How

did you get in?—Six weeks ago?—No, I had a very quiet morning, in bed at ten— *(Look at* MULVANEY*)* All right, don't believe it—it's true— See you at lunch, then— Goodbye. *(He replaces the receiver. To* MULVANEY*)* Well!—

MULVANEY Pardon me—where am I?

HARPENDEN. You're in my chambers in Albany.

MULVANEY. Chambers?

HARPENDEN Flat Apartment.

MULVANEY What's Albany?

HARPENDEN. It's a sort of block of chambers—apartments—off Piccadilly.

MULVANEY. And—er—this is the last question—who are you?

HARPENDEN. My name's Harpenden.

MULVANEY. Was that your bed I slept in?

HARPENDEN. Yes

MULVANEY. My name's Mulvaney.

HARPENDEN How do you do? You're in the Air Force, aren't you?

MULVANEY That's right.

HARPENDEN Pilot?

MULVANEY. Bombardier.

HARPENDEN. Liberators?

MULVANEY. Forts.

HARPENDEN Do you mind if I start my breakfast? Yours is on the way.

MULVANEY. Oh. *Have* I been there since ten o'clock last night?

HARPENDEN. What? Oh, no. I didn't see any point in volunteering the information to one's strictly brought up fiancée that one spent half the night in The Jubilee.

MULVANEY The Jubilee? Now, that name seems sort of—was I there last night?

HARPENDEN. You looked in—

MULVANEY *(Nodding)* And out?

HARPENDEN. Shall we say your exit was more involuntary than your entrance?

MULVANEY It's coming back to me. They gave me the bum's rush, didn't they?

HARPENDEN You could put it that way, I suppose. I didn't really see it. One minute you were there, doing a *pas seul* in the centre of the floor, and the next minute you were in the street

MULVANEY. What's a *pas seul?*

HARPENDEN. A little dance all by yourself.

MULVANEY. Was that what I was doing?

HARPENDEN That is the charitable view of it.

MULVANEY. And the uncharitable view?

HARPENDEN. Pinching Mrs. Warner's behind.

MULVANEY. Who's Mrs. Warner? Did I know her?

HARPENDEN The proprietress of The Jubilee.

MULVANEY. I see. So I'm in the street. What happens then?

HARPENDEN. Well, when I left the place, about half an hour later, I tripped over you in the blackout.

MULVANEY I was lying there all that time?

HARPENDEN It looks that way, rather.

MULVANEY. Knocked out?

HARPENDEN Passed out

MULVANEY I didn't come to till just now?

HARPENDEN Oh, you came to last night. You addressed me, very affectionately, as Gertie.

MULVANEY. I called you Gertie?

HARPENDEN. Amongst other things.

MULVANEY. How did I come to do *that,* I wonder?

HARPENDEN. Not knowing Gertie, it's hard for me to say.

MULVANEY. She's my girl friend back home.

HARPENDEN So I gathered.

MULVANEY. You don't look a bit *like her.*

HARPENDEN. So sorry.

MULVANEY Well, go on What happened then?

HARPENDEN You wouldn't tell me where you lived. At least you gave your address as 856 Orinoco Avenue, Elizabeth City, Ohio.

MULVANEY. That's where I live all right.

HARPENDEN Yes, but it didn't help the immediate problem of finding you a bed

MULVANEY. You could have taken me to the Washington Club or somewhere.

HARPENDEN I thought of that, but not knowing the customs of the American Army I wasn't sure how they would view the parking on their doorstep at four o'clock in the morning of a very pickled leftenant, inclined to embrace everyone he saw and call them Gertie.

MULVANEY. So you brought me here.

HARPENDEN The porter and I carried you up and put you to bed.

MULVANEY. Say, I hope I didn't disgrace you.

HARPENDEN Oh, that's quite all right The porters here have been used to putting people to bed for well over a hundred years Lord Byron had chambers in Albany.

MULVANEY *(Interested)* He did? Say, isn't that something? This place—it is kind of old world, at that.

HARPENDEN. Yes, it is. I like it very much. My family have always lived here.

MULVANEY. Do they live here now?

HARPENDEN No, I haven't any family—at least, I'm an orphan.

MULVANEY Tough. Gee, it gives one quite a kick to have slept in a place Byron used to sleep in. Did he write any of his poetry here, do you think?

HARPENDEN. I expect so. He was always writing it.

MULVANEY. *(Quoting)*

So we'll go no more a-roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart—

(Falters) How does it go on?

HARPENDEN I'm afraid I don't know. I don't read Byron.

MULVANEY *(Remembering)*

Though the heart be still as loving
And the moon be still as bright.

Imagine your not reading Byron.

HARPENDEN Imagine.

(HORTON *comes in with another breakfast tray.)*

MULVANEY. That's funny, you know.

HARPENDEN. *(Piqued)* I don't see why it's funny—quite a lot of people don't read Byron.

MULVANEY. Yeah. But—hell—you live here.

HARPENDEN. Here's your breakfast.

MULVANEY. I couldn't use it.

(HORTON *looks at* HARPENDEN *in doubt.)*

HARPENDEN. You'd better try and eat something. It's supposed to be good for these occasions.

MULVANEY. Well, I'll try a cup of coffee.

HARPENDEN All right, Horton You can clear this away now. *(He indicates his tray.)*

HORTON. Very good, my Lord. Will you be wearing your uniform, my Lord?

(MULVANEY *puts his coffee cup down with a clatter.)*

HARPENDEN Yes. My best one. I'm going to the Admiralty.

HORTON. Very good, my Lord.

MULVANEY. *(To* HARPENDEN*)* Are you a lord?

HARPENDEN Er—yes—

MULVANEY. You said your name was Harpenden.

HARPENDEN. That's right.

MULVANEY. You mean you're Lord Harpenden?

HARPENDEN. Well—er—!

HORTON. The Earl of Harpenden. *(Goes out up Left.)*

MULVANEY. So you're an earl?

HARPENDEN *(Goes into bedroom)* Er—yes—I'm afraid so! Wait a bit. I'll get you a dressing gown? *(Exits Right.)*

(There is a pause while MULVANEY *gazes at* HARPENDEN *intently* HARPENDEN *enters; puts blanket on sofa; helps with gown.)*

MULVANEY. Oh—no—you're the first earl I ever saw.

HARPENDEN. Oh, they're quite common, really, you know—

MULVANEY. It's funny. You seemed quite an ordinary kind of guy.

HARPENDEN *(Picks up blanket)* I am quite an ordinary kind of guy.

MULVANEY Don't give me that. You're an earl. Say, what do I call you?

HARPENDEN My friends usually call me Bobby.

MULVANEY. I couldn't call you that.

HARPENDEN Why not?

MULVANEY. It doesn't seem right.

HARPENDEN Last night you called me Gertie.

MULVANEY. *(Ashamed)* I'm sorry!

HARPENDEN What's your Christian name?

MULVANEY. Joe.

HARPENDEN Right It's Joe and Bobby from now on. Now listen—I've got to go and dress. How long is your leave? *(Crosses, stops Right)*

MULVANEY. Seven days.

HARPENDEN Where are you staying?

MULVANEY. Nowhere yet I only got here yesterday.

HARPENDEN Well, you can stay here if you like.

MULVANEY Hell, no—I couldn't do that.

HARPENDEN That's all right. I won't be here after tomorrow. I'm getting married, you see, and we're spending our leave together in Oxford.

MULVANEY Well—congratulations!

HARPENDEN *(Exits Right with blanket)* Thanks, Joe.

MULVANEY. What's that going to make her? I mean, what's the feminine of earl?

HARPENDEN. *(Off)* Countess.

MULVANEY *(Disappointed)* Oh, Countess. I knew a girl became a Countess She married an Italian.

HARPENDEN Really?

MULVANEY She got herself a divorce, and now she's back in Elizabeth City, working in Woolworth's but she's still a Countess

HARPENDEN. *(Enters Right)* Well, of course, Italian

countesses don't mean very much—I don't mean to be rude to your friend.

MULVANEY That's OK—Elly's a good girl.

HARPENDEN. *(Calls)* Horton, are my boots ready?

HORTON. *(Off)* I'm just polishing them, m'Lord.

HARPENDEN Well, now, it's settled, isn't it? You're going to stay here for your leave?

MULVANEY. Well, it's darned kind of you—Bobby.

HARPENDEN. My man will look after you.

MULVANEY *(Giggling)* Your man. This thing really slays me!

HARPENDEN. *(Smiles politely)* Well, I must go and dress.

MULVANEY. Just a minute. Before I finally accept your very kind invitation, would it be all right to,—well, you know, a guy might feel kind of lonely at times, and—

HARPENDEN. Yes, that's all right. Horton's very discreet.

MULVANEY. It's a kind of hypothetical question, anyway. I don't know a darned soul in this town.

HARPENDEN. *(Sits on sofa)* Don't you? Oh, well, we'll soon fix that. What's your type—anything special?

MULVANEY. Under fifty.

HARPENDEN *(Has begun to dial a number)* I'm ringing up someone who's very good-looking, very amusing, and mad about Americans. *(Into receiver)* Hullo Extension 3651, please. Thanks. *(To* MULVANEY*)* She works at the Air Ministry— Typist—

MULVANEY. Fine!

HARPENDEN. *(Into receiver)* Hullo. Cou[illegible] to Miss Crum, please? Lord Harpenden— VANEY*)* I'll ask her round for a drink and could invite her to dinner or something. *(Int* Hullo, Mabel— Bobby— How are you?— told you before not to go out with Poles— Y they're pets, but that's not the point— Loo what time is that horrible old Sir Archibald off today?—Well, what are you doing at t it's your day off?—Oh, I see. What abo

round here for a drink?—Albany— In about an hour— There's an American I want you to meet— Yes, a pet—he's a Bombardier— He's got the most wonderful story about a raid on Bremen that'll thrill you to the marrow— All right, darling— I may be out, but he'll be here anyway—yes, tomorrow— St. George's, Hanover Square. You're coming, aren't you? —Yes, you did. You met at a cocktail party, about a year ago— Yes, that's right. "Fair, very pretty and plays the piano beautifully."—Darling, you are speaking of the woman I love. Yes, of course I love you too, but in a different way— All right. Bless you. *(He rings off)* She's coming round this morning. She's got the day off, so you can ask her to lunch.

MULVANEY. I've never done a raid on Bremen.

HARPENDEN. *(Vaguely)* Haven't you? Oh, well, I don't suppose she'll mind.

MULVANEY. Say, this is darned kind of you— Bobby.

HARPENDEN. Oh, that's all right. Just look on it as a bit of reciprocal lend-lease. *(He goes into the bedroom.)*

MULVANEY. *(Calling)* Can I use your phone?

HARPENDEN. *(Off)* Yes—of course.

MULVANEY. *(Goes to the telephone. He dials a number. Sits on sofa)* Hullo. Can I speak to Colonel Murphy, please? Lieutenant Mulvaney—

HORTON. *(At kitchen door)* Was your breakfast to your liking, sir?

MULVANEY. *(With an air of dignity)* Yes, thank you, Horton, old boy. *(He giggles suddenly.* HORTON *raises his eyebrows and goes into the kitchen with tray. Into receiver)* Hullo, Murphy. Say, listen, what happened to you guys last night?—Yeah, I remember as far as that, but how come I got to a joint called The Jubilee all by myself?—Oh, what was she like?—OK, I'll tell you, but you won't believe me I slept in the same bed with an earl— No, not a girl, stupid, an earl. E-A-R-L. An earl— Hell, no, I wouldn't kid you, Murph. (HORTON *comes out of kitchen and goes into the bedroom. Continuing, angrily)* Because he says he's an earl—

Well, you got to believe a guy when he says a thing like that— (HORTON *comes out of the bedroom with* MULVANEY'S *uniform over his arm)* No, they don't wear crowns. Only when they go to Westminster Abbey— *(He catches sight of* HORTON*)* Hey, where are you going with my uniform?

HORTON. I was going to brush it, sir. I think you've been lying down some place.

MULVANEY. Righty-oh, old fellow. *(He giggles again.* HORTON *goes out up Left. Into receiver)* That was his man, Horton. Doesn't it slay you?—The earl? Well, he's young—younger than me— You can, too, be an earl when you're young. Remember Little Lord Fauntleroy— Well, the little Duke, then—you're a disbelieving son of a— A place called the Albany— Sort of old-fashioned apartment house, only the apartments are called chambers. Yeah, chambers—wise guy—Lord Byron lived here—Lord Byron— No, he's dead. Don't you know anything except how to drive a B-17?— (HORTON *comes in)* This guy's called Harpenden— The Earl of Harpenden— Not a bad little guy. *(He catches sight of* HORTON*)* A cracking good sort if you know what I mean— See you tonight at the Club— OK. Goodbye. *(He rings off.)*

HORTON. Excuse me, sir, did you want your buttons cleaned?

MULVANEY. Er—no, thanks. We don't clean our buttons.

HORTON. Very good, sir. *(He turns to go.)*

MULVANEY Say, don't go for a minute.

HORTON. Sir?

MULVANEY. How long have you been the earl's man?

HORTON. I've been with his Lordship all his life. Before that I was with his father.

MULVANEY. You're not the only man he's got, are you?

HORTON. No, sir. We have two large country estates, and before the war they needed a very big staff to keep them up.

MULVANEY. What's happened to them now?

HORTON. One is a hospital, and the other has been taken over by the Air Force.

MULVANEY. That's tough. You know, I've read a lot about how these English aristocrats are being ruined by the war—

HORTON. Oh, no, sir. We are far from being ruined. Luckily our money doesn't come from our estates.

MULVANEY. What does it come from, then?

HORTON. Ground rents, sir—in London, mostly.

MULVANEY. Real estate, huh? That's pretty valuable, I guess—

HORTON. Yes, sir. We must be worth all of two million pounds.

MULVANEY. Holy smoke! Eight million bucks!

HORTON. Yes, sir. Probably a good deal more than that.

MULVANEY. *(Whistles. He ponders for a second.* HORTON *waits patiently for his next question)* You know, it doesn't seem right to me that a guy should be worth all that money and not have had to work for it.

HORTON It happens in your country, too, sir.

MULVANEY. Yeah, I suppose it does. Still, we don't call them earls.

HORTON. No, sir.

MULVANEY. *(Muttering to himself)* Eight million bucks!

(HARPENDEN *comes out of the bedroom. He is dressed as an ordinary seaman, less boots.* MULVANEY *does not see him* HARPENDEN *goes up to him, making no sound in his stockinged feet.)*

HARPENDEN. I say, do I need a shave?

MULVANEY. *(Turns and starts when he sees the uniform)* Is that fancy dress or are you really a gob?

HARPENDEN. I'm really a—gob. Tell me, do I need a shave?

MULVANEY *(Examining his chin)* I guess it'll pass all right.

HARPENDEN. *(Doubtfully)* It's got to pass a lot of lynx-eyed old admirals. *(He strokes his chin)* Damn! I think I do need a shave.

MULVANEY. Why don't you have a shave, then?

HARPENDEN. I've only got one saw-toothed old razor blade, and I can't get another.

MULVANEY. Not even for eight million dollars?

HARPENDEN. *(Crosses. Opening the door up Left and calling)* Horton. Are my boots ready? *(He surveys himself critically in the mirror.)*

HORTON. Yes, my Lord.

MULVANEY. Can you beat that—an earl being a gob.

(HORTON *enters with boots.*)

HARPENDEN. *(Takes a cigarette)* Do you mind not using that revolting word? We say "matelot."

MULVANEY. OK, matelot. Say, what sort of ship are you in?

HARPENDEN. Destroyer.

MULVANEY. Seen any action?

HARPENDEN. Here and there. Bit of nonsense at Narvik. Some goings-on in the Channel.

(HORTON *finishes putting on boots and exits.*)

MULVANEY. Does he always do that?

HARPENDEN. Yes.

MULVANEY. What a Navy! How long have you been in this racket?

HARPENDEN. Three years.

MULVANEY. And they haven't made you an officer yet?

HARPENDEN. Not yet. They may this morning, though; that's what my interview at the Admiralty is about.

MULVANEY. How come you haven't been up for an interview before?

HARPENDEN. I have been—three times. This is an annual ceremony.

MULVANEY. And they turned you down—each time?

HARPENDEN. Er—flat, my dear Leftenant.

MULVANEY. How come—you being his earlship and all that?

HARPENDEN. His earlship and all that I may be, but, as I am reluctantly forced to conclude, I am also an extremely incompetent sailor.

(DOORBELL rings.)

HARPENDEN. You'd better get dressed, unless you want to receive Mabel Crum in your negligee.

(HORTON *enters up Left and goes into hall.)*

MULVANEY. OK. This is going to make a hell of a story when I get home. *(Exits into bedroom.)*

ELISABETH. *(Off)* Good morning, Horton.

HORTON *(Off)* Good morning, m'lady. (HORTON *re-enters)* Lady Elisabeth

(HARPENDEN *gets up, surprised* ELISABETH *comes in.* HORTON *goes out up Left.* ELISABETH *is very young, and seemingly quite unconscious of the fact that she is very beautiful. She is in W.A A.F. corporal uniform)*

HARPENDEN. Hullo, Elisabeth darling. *(He kisses her on the cheek)* I told you—I've got to dash off to this interview in a second.

ELISABETH I'm sorry, Bobby, but I just simply had to fly in and wish you luck

HARPENDEN. That's very sweet of you. I need it. Well, how are you? Poor little thing. Did you have an awful journey?

ELISABETH. Awful.

HARPENDEN. Didn't you sleep at all?

ELISABETH. Not a wink.

HARPENDEN. You look very well on it, I must say. *(He points to her arm)* Hullo, haven't you gone down one? You were a sergeant last time I saw you.

ELISABETH. Yes, I know.

HARPENDEN. What's the trouble?

ELISABETH. My C.O.'s a cat.

HARPENDEN So's my captain if it comes to that.

Funny, we're neither of us awfully good at our jobs, are we?

ELISABETH. Oh, I'm quite good at mine. I just have had bad luck. That's all.

HARPENDEN. What did you do this time?

ELISABETH. I lost the plans of the Station Defence.

HARPENDEN. Good Lord!

ELISABETH. Well, we found them again all right. I'd only left them in the Ladies' Room.

HARPENDEN. But that's nothing at all. What bad luck!

ELISABETH. You're a beast, but I love you.

HARPENDEN. *(Kisses her)* Do you really?

ELISABETH. Oh, I don't know about really.

HARPENDEN. You're not beginning to have doubts on our wedding eve?

ELISABETH No, Bobby, it's just that it's easier for you to know about these things than it is for me.

HARPENDEN Why, may I ask?

ELISABETH Well, I've practically never known any other man in my life, except you—living up in that awful old Northern fastness of ours. I've always loved you, though, especially since you've been a sailor, because you look so beautiful in that uniform, with those lovely baggy trousers and that low neck—

HARPENDEN Your view seems to be shared by their Lordships at the Admiralty. They like it on me, too.

ELISABETH. Now you—you've known hundreds of girls—thousands probably.

HARPENDEN. No, darling. Just hundreds.

ELISABETH. So it's easier for you to judge.

HARPENDEN. Judge what?

ELISABETH. Whether you love me really or not.

HARPENDEN. *(He kisses her)* I love you really.

ELISABETH. More really than you love Mabel Crum?

HARPENDEN Who's Mabel Crum?

ELISABETH. Darling, you know very well who Mabel Crum is. So do I, too. We hear things, you know, even up in Inverness.

HARPENDEN *(Rises)* I have simply no idea what you're talking about.

ELISABETH Oh, yes, you have. *(Reproachfully)* Oh, darling, how could you?

HARPENDEN How could I what?

ELISABETH Mabel Crum But she's awful.

HARPENDEN How do you know?

ELISABETH Why, she must be awful—even Daddy knows her.

HARPENDEN. I don't see why the fact that she's an acquaintance of your father's should necessarily prove that this girl is awful—whoever she is.

ELISABETH Oh, yes, it does. You know what Daddy's like.

HARPENDEN. Darling, you shock me—really you do.

ELISABETH. Don't you remember I met this Mabel Crum at a party when you were on leave, about a year ago? I pretended not to know anything about it then, because we weren't even officially engaged. But I hear now you've been seeing her again.

HARPENDEN Your gossip, my sweet, is as untrustworthy as your father's racing tips. I haven't seen Mabel Crum for months and months. In fact, I've really no idea what can possibly have *(A stroll Left)* happened to her. *(He glances furtively at the front door, then at his watch)*

ELISABETH. *(Reproachfully)* Bobby!

HARPENDEN What do you mean—Bobby?

ELISABETH. I always know when you're lying. You give yourself away every time.

HARPENDEN How?

ELISABETH. I'm not going to tell you how. It's a little trick that's going to come in very useful after we're married After we're married I shall know the exact minute when you start seeing Mabel Crum again.

HARPENDEN. *(Crossing Right)* Elisabeth! I consider that a perfectly revolting thing to say. Have you no moral standards of any sort?

ELISABETH. *(Sincerely)* How do I know?

HARPENDEN What do you mean, how do you know?

ELISABETH. I've never had a chance of finding out.

HARPENDEN *(Softly)* And this is the girl I'm marrying! *(Sits on sofa)*

ELISABETH. *(Sits beside him)* It's only because I don't know anything about men. I've only got Daddy to go by.

HARPENDEN. For the sake of the future of the human race, I trust that is a misleading model.

ELISABETH. He's coming round to see you this morning—on business, he says.

HARPENDEN Oh, God! Doesn't he ever do any work at the War Office?

ELISABETH Oh, he's not really in the War Office. Just sort of half.

HARPENDEN What is the job?

ELISABETH. Liaison Officer to the Poles.

HARPENDEN. Oh, does he speak Polish?

ELISABETH. No, but he says he understands their point of view.

HARPENDEN. Oh—

ELISABETH. Oh, Bobby.

HARPENDEN. Yes.

ELISABETH. Daddy's getting up a new company—something to do with ladies' clothes.

HARPENDEN Really.

ELISABETH. Darling, no matter how much Daddy urges you, don't put any money into Zippy-Snaps, will you?

HARPENDEN. It's easy for you to sit there and say don't put any money into Zippy-Snaps, will you. But if he gets me in a corner— Anyway, thank God, he'll miss me. I've got to go out. *(He gets up from the sofa)*

ELISABETH. Oh, Bobby, I've just remembered. Oh, how awful! I should have told you before. There's someone else coming round to see you this morning.

HARPENDEN. Yes, darling? Who's that?

ELISABETH. I told you I had to sit up all night in the train, didn't I? Well, we were eight in the carriage, and next to me there was the most enchanting little Free French lieutenant. Wasn't that funny?

HARPENDEN Hilarious.

ELISABETH. Well, anyway, we talked all night, in French mostly, so the others couldn't know what we were saying.

HARPENDEN. Darling, am I to understand that for ten hours you regaled each other with a selection of smutty stories?

ELISABETH. No, darling, but you know what Frenchmen are. We talked of all sorts of things—his private life, my private life, General DeGaulle's private life—

HARPENDEN. Darling, will you stop burbling and come to the point?

ELISABETH. Well, he was going up to London on leave and the poor little man had no idea where he was going to stay, so I said— *(Noticing* HARPENDEN *start)* What's the matter?

HARPENDEN. So you said he could stay here?

ELISABETH. I hope you don't mind, but I knew you wouldn't be using the flat after tomorrow, and I thought just for the one night you wouldn't mind him bunking in that bed with you. *(She points to bedroom door.)*

(HORTON *enters from kitchen with uniform.)*

HARPENDEN. Darling, there is already a vast American bombardier bunking in that bed with me. See that uniform? (HORTON *disappears into bedroom)* I refuse pointblank, for you or for Free France, to sleep three in a bed.

ELISABETH. Oh, dear! Who's the American?

HARPENDEN. It's rather a long story. You say this is a little Frenchman?

ELISABETH. Quite little. Of course I only saw him sitting down.

HARPENDEN. Would he fit on the sofa, do you think?

ELISABETH. I should think so.

HARPENDEN All right. You'd better stay here and explain the situation to him. I've got to go. *(A thought strikes him. He looks nervously at the hall door.)*

ELISABETH What's the matter?

HARPENDEN. Oh, nothing, nothing. Or perhaps, now I come to think of it, it would be better if I just left a message for him with Horton. I mean I don't want to keep you—

ELISABETH. That's all right. I'd like to stay here. I've got nothing to do all morning.

HARPENDEN. Oh! Splendid. *(Pause)* Darling, do you mind if I make a phone call?

ELISABETH. I thought you were in a hurry.

HARPENDEN. Yes, but this is something I've just thought of that's got to be done. Official business—for my Captain. *(He is dialling as he speaks. Into receiver)* Hullo, Air Ministry. Extension 5651, please— Hullo —oh— This is Lord Harpenden. Could I possibly speak to the young lady I spoke to earlier this morning—I forget her name— Oh, yea, of course, how stupid of me. *(To* ELISABETH*)* Terrible head for names! *(Into receiver)* Oh, hullo— Yes, this is Lord Harpenden. You may remember I spoke to you earlier on a certain matter. I see that you've taken no steps to expedite delivery— Well, the fact is that something has come up that renders the immediate project temporarily inoperative— (HARPENDEN *laughs as* ELISABETH *looks at him)* Yes, that's exactly it— Exactly— I'll ring you later. Goodbye.

ELISABETH. *(Without suspicion)* What have you got to do with the Air Ministry, darling?

(DOORBELL rings.)

HARPENDEN. Oh, Lord! Here's your Frenchman. You can entertain him. Oh, we work a lot with the RAF, you know—Coastal Command—flying boats—cooperation's all the thing these days. *(He looks at his watch)* Oh, Lord, I'm late. Goodbye, darling. *(He kisses her.)*

(There is a RING at the front door. HORTON *enters and goes to hall door. There is the sound of VOICES in the hall.)*

DUKE. *(Off)* Good morning, Horton.

HORTON. *(Off)* Good morning, your Grace.

ELISABETH. No, it's not. It's Daddy.

HARPENDEN. Damn!

HORTON. *(Opens the door)* His Grace.

(The DUKE *comes in. He is in Colonel's uniform, about fifty-five, rather portly, with the remnants of great good looks.)*

DUKE. Ah, hullo, my boy. I've caught you in. Good. How are you? Good. Looking well, anyway. *(To liquor cabinet Right)* It's right in here, isn't it? Well, my dear, how are you?

HARPENDEN. Yes, sir, it's in there. Thank you. If you'll excuse me, I must—

DUKE. That's all right, my boy; I won't keep you a second. Just wanted a little chat on certain rather pressing matters—business, you know—awful bore and all that, but it's no good shirking these things, what? What?

ELISABETH. *(Up)* Daddy—Bobby's got an interview at the Admiralty, and if he doesn't start soon he'll be late.

DUKE. What's that? Mustn't be late for the Admiralty, my boy. That'll never do. *(Opens cabinet, takes out bottle and glass and pours drink.)*

HARPENDEN. No, sir. I quite agree.

DUKE. So I'll come straight to the point. I've just come from your lawyers. We've been looking over that marriage settlement. Well, now, that's a very handsome document, I must say—very handsome indeed. There's just one thing—

HARPENDEN. Do you mind, sir, if we discuss it some other time? If I'm late for this interview—

DUKE. Quite so, my boy, but this won't take a minute. Who's the president of your interviewing board?

HARPENDEN. I really don't know.

DUKE. Well, find out his name and if you're late I'll give him a tinkle this afternoon and explain you were with me.

HARPENDEN. Thank you, sir. That's very kind of you, but—

DUKE. That's all right, my boy. No trouble at all. I know all these old admirals—do anything for me, most

of 'em. They're ten a penny at the Turf. Now where were we—ah, yes—the settlement. Now, here's where I think it falls down. I notice that no provision whatever has been made for your wife's family.

HARPENDEN That was agreed, sir.

DUKE. Agreed by whom? Not by me.

HARPENDEN. No, sir. By your daughter's lawyers.

DUKE. Quite so—but I must say they seem to me to have slipped up badly there. Now, there are one or two most deserving cases in our family that need attention—for instance, Elisabeth's Aunt Amy.

ELISABETH Daddy—Aunt Amy's perfectly happy in that nursing home—and she's got plenty of money of her own—

DUKE Quite so, my dear, but she could always do with a little more—what?

ELISABETH I can't see why, seeing that she thinks she's Karl Marx.

DUKE. That hallucination is unfortunate, I know. However, if you like, we can leave Aunt Amy out. Now—coming a little nearer home—

HARPENDEN. It's agreed between us, sir, that I am to make you an allowance.

DUKE Quite so, my boy, quite so, but these things are better on paper. On paper, my boy, signed, sealed and delivered.

HARPENDEN. I can't see why—

DUKE. My dear fellow, these days we must face facts—a war on—whole world blowing up—what?—we must *(Looks at drink—then drinks)* face facts.

ELISABETH. *(Sharply)* Bobby! *(She shows him her watch)*

HARPENDEN Oh, Lord. I'm really going to be late. Please, sir, could we face them some other time?

DUKE I'll tell you what I've got a car; I'll drive you round to the Admiralty, and we can talk some more about it on the way. What do you say?

HARPENDEN. Thank you, sir; only we must start now.

DUKE Yes, yes That's all right. (HARPENDEN *dashes into hall. The* DUKE *gets up, has a sudden*

thought and goes to telephone) By Jove, I nearly forgot.

ELISABETH. *(Frantically)* Oh, Daddy, do please hurry—

DUKE. That's all right, my dear. It'll only take a second.

ELISABETH. But Bobby's got an interview at the Admiralty.

HARPENDEN. *(Reappearing)* Oh, Lord, what's happened now?

DUKE Just a little tinkle, my boy. I won't keep you a jiffy.

ELISABETH. Don't worry, darling.

DUKE *(Into receiver)* Hullo—is that MacDougall and Steinbeck?—This is Primrose Path speaking—Primrose Path— I want to put a bet down on the three-thirty race. Yes, the three-thirty. I want fifty pounds across the board— What's that? Oh, well, it's in the post. Yes, posted it myself— My dear sir, I can assure you. The old account?—Ah, well, there was a little mistake over that. My servant forgot to post it—Yes, devilish stupid of him— My good man, I presume you know who I am?—Oh, you do— Well, really, that's nice treatment, I must say— Very well, then. I shall remove my custom elsewhere— And a very good day to you, sir. *(He rings off, furiously)* Bolsheviks! *(He begins to dial another number.)*

ELISABETH. Daddy—please.

HARPENDEN. Oh, God!

DUKE. *(Muttering)* Damned lot of Yahoos—MacDougall Steinbeck. *(Into telephone)* Hullo—give me the hall porter, please— *(DOORBELL.* HORTON *goes to door)* Hullo, Barker—this is the Duke of Ayr and Stirling—Tibby—will you put on two shillings across the board on Bernadotte in the three-thirty for me—That's right. *(Impatiently)* Yes, yes, yes— When I see you— *(He rings off There is a RING at the front door)* All right, my boy. Now we can go off. Quite ready?

HORTON. *(Answers bell and comes in)* Leftenant Colbert.

HARPENDEN. God in Heaven! (COLBERT *comes in. He is a small, clean-shaven, very neat-looking officer in the Fighting French Forces.* HARPENDEN *dashes up to him)* Hullo. How are you? Lovely to see you. Make yourself at home. I've got to go. *(He disappears into the hall)*

(COLBERT *looks after him, rather surprised. Then he bows to* ELISABETH.)

ELISABETH. Hullo. This is my father—Lieutenant Colbert. Daddy, hurry up! *(She runs out after* HARPENDEN *)*

DUKE. *(With an atrocious accent)* Enchante, Monsieur, enchante. *(Shakes hands)* Il fait chaud aujourd-'hul, n'est-ce-pas?

COLBERT. Oui, Monsieur. Je L'ai remarque moi-meme.

DUKE Votre figure me semble familiere. Vous connaissez Paris?

COLBERT. Oui, Monsieur, je connais Paris.

DUKE I haven't been to Paris since the Duc de Caze won the Grand Prix. How I used to love Paris—Paris in the spring— The restaurants—the cafes—the boulevards—

COLBERT. Et les jolies femmes, Monsieur?

DUKE Ah, les jolies femmes— I remember as a boy, there was the most charming little thing—

COLBERT. Comment?

DUKE. Un charmant petit morceau—

(HARPENDEN *and* ELISABETH *dash in.)*

ELISABETH. Daddy, please!

HARPENDEN. Oh, for Heaven's sake, sir!

DUKE All right, my boy, I'm coming. *(To* COLBERT*)* We must meet again, Monsieur. Vous devez venir avoir un morceau a manger avec moi, a mon club— Turf.

COLBERT Avec plaisir.

DUKE. *Capitale. (To* ELISABETH*)* Goodbye, my dear.

I'll pick you up later. Now, my boy— *(He goes out in hall, followed by* HARPENDEN.*)*

HARPENDEN. *(Following him out)* Oh, God!

DUKE. *(Off, his voice coming from the hall)* The point about this settlement, my boy, is that it's a form of insurance—

ELISABETH. Sit down, won't you?

COLBERT Thank you. *(He sits down Left Center.)*

ELISABETH It's all right about using this flat, except that you'll have to sleep on the sofa, just for tonight.

COLBERT. That is very kind. Who was that sailor?

ELISABETH. That was my fiancé—Bobby Harpenden.

COLBERT. Your fiancé?

ELISABETH You're surprised?

COLBERT. You told me he was an earl. I had not expected to see him dressed in that manner.

ELISABETH. You pictured him with a little coronet and an ermine cloak?

COLBERT Hardly, milady. But I imagined him a little older and with big moustache and a hooked nose —I do not know why.

ELISABETH. He's very good-looking, don't you think?

COLBERT. Not for me.

ELISABETH What?

COLBERT. He is altogether too—qu'est-ce que c'est fade?

ELISABETH. Insipid.

COLBERT. Yes. Too insipid.

ELISABETH. Oh.

COLBERT. I am sorry, milady, but I must say what I think.

ELISABETH That's quite all right, only do you mind not calling me milady?

COLBERT I beg your pardon. What must I call you, then?

ELISABETH. Well, last night we were calling each other Elisabeth and Rene.

COLBERT. Last night was—last night.



"WHILE THE SUN SHINES" *Act II, See Page* 52

ELISABETH. And today's today. I don't see what difference that makes.

COLBERT. *(Rises)* Milady—Elisabeth—last night I made one of two errors. Either I said to you too much —or I did not say enough.

ELISABETH What more did you have to say?

COLBERT. Very much more indeed.

ELISABETH. Then say it now.

COLBERT. You would be very angry with me. No. It is better I keep silent.

ELISABETH. Very well. Just as you please.

(Pause)

COLBERT. I shall say it. Elisabeth—do not marry this man.

ELISABETH. Not marry Bobby? Why ever not?

COLBERT. I implore you. Turn back before it is too late.

ELISABETH. But—but I love him. Why shouldn't I marry him?

COLBERT. You love him Yes. You told me so last night. But you also told me you had for him no—no white-hot burning of the heart.

ELISABETH Oh, dear! Did I really say that?

COLBERT You did not employ those words, but that is nevertheless what you said. You love him—oh, yes, we will agree. So does one love one's brother or one's little puppy dog. But you are not *in love* with him. No, no, no, milady, Elisabeth Not in a thousand years

ELISABETH But I may be in love with him It's just that I don't know, that's all. Anyway, ordinary, quiet, restful love is a much better basis for marriage than this white-hot burning of the heart—or whatever you call it.

COLBERT Oh, no, Elisabeth. That is where you make such a terrible mistake.

ELISABETH. But—but even if I'm not in love with Bobby—and I don't admit that for a minute, mind you —even if I'm not, at least he's in love with me.

COLBERT. Is he?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and enjoy other theatre-related larks, do follow us on our spangley social media channels.



Samuel French London



SamuelFrenchLtd

SF **PERUSALS**