SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

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 about purchasing a play or musical, please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.com
www.samuelfrench.co.uk

SF PERUSALS

She Stoops to Comedy

David Greenspan

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

SAMUELFRENCH.COM
SAMUELFRENCH-LONDON.CO.UK

Copyright © 2013 by David Greenspan
All Rights Reserved
Cover Design © by Bradford Louryk / David Greenspan and Marissa Copeland appear courtesy of Actors' Equity

SHE STOOPS TO COMEDY 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 and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-70070-5

www.SamuelFrench.com
www.SamuelFrench-London.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED STATES AND CANADA
Info@SamuelFrench.com
1-866-598-8449

UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE
Theatre@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk
020-7255-4302

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French, depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *SHE STOOPS TO COMEDY* may not be licensed by Samuel French in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Samuel French office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *SHE STOOPS TO COMEDY* is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play(s) does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to Samuel French before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Samuel French.

No one shall make any changes in this title(s) for the purpose of production. 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. No one shall upload this title(s), or part of this title(s), to any social media websites.

For all enquiries regarding motion picture, television, and other media rights, please contact Samuel French.

MUSIC USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for all music clearances and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Samuel French, against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of music by licensees. Please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

SHE STOOPS TO COMEDY had its world premiere produced by Playwrights Horizons at the Peter Jay Sharp Theater in New York, NY on April 3, 2003. The production was directed by David Greenspan, with sets by Michael Brown, costumes by Miranda Hoffman, and lighting by Matthew Frey. The Production Stage Manager was Beth Stiegel-Rohr. The cast was as follows:

ALEXANDRA PAGE . . . . . David Greenspan
ALISON ROSE . . . . . Marissa Copeland
KAY FEIN/ JAYNE SUMMERHOUSE . . . . . E. Katherine Kerr
HAL STEWART . . . . . Philip Tabor
EVE ADDAMAN . . . . . Mia Barron
SIMON LANQUISH . . . . . T. Ryder Smith

CHARACTERS

ALEXANDRA PAGE – an actress, assumes the role of Harry Samson

ALISON ROSE – Alexandra's lover, also an actress

KAY FEIN – close friend of Alexandra, an archeologist or a lighting designer

HAL STEWART – a filmmaker

EVE ADDAMAN – Hal's girlfriend – also a filmmaker

JAYNE SUMMERHOUSE – rival to Alexandra, also an actress, she's studying filmmaking.

SIMON LANQUISH – an actor

SETTING

The stage of course.

TIME

As indicated.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Alexandra Page is played by an actor, not an actress. At no time in the play is that actor in drag.

A cast of six. One actress plays Kay Fein and Jayne Summerhouse.

A bed. Four stools. Legs down left and right that serve as off stage. Cell phones should be mimed.

Alexandra should be visible during her first "off-stage" scene in the bathroom. During the final scene, she must be out of sight, truly off stage prior to her entrance.

The actors must never "step out" of character to comment on the play. They must remain in character and in the play when faced with incongruities or sudden "revisions."

ALEX. The urge then to move across the words the page to paint a character on the stage.

The impulse then to translate onto the stage. The stage I say as fast as flexible as the page.

This then to make through revision the stage a play of words moving its characters its plot its action.

Okay fine you say so what a comedy perhaps not funny. Words then you see as you hear them not always connected but enough. This is the way I'll do it.

An actress, name: Alexandra Page. Her lover, Alison Rose. An actress also. Alexandra Page and Alison Rose. This is not funny. Okay, fine. Kay – Fein. Their friend, Kay Fein. Alex's friend, Kay Fein. An archeologist just back from a dig. A room with curtains and a bed and a door and an offstage. Okay. Fine. Talk, Kay. Talk, Kay Fein.

KAY. Alex, what're you doing?

ALEX. What am *I* doing? What're *you* doing? I mean here. I thought you were on a dig.

KAY. I was. I'm back. What're you doing in there?

ALEX. I'm changing. I'll be right out. I was shocked to get your call, Kay. Shocked. Where were you again?

KAY. In Egypt. I was in Egypt. You know, the usual stuff. My hands filthy with the past. Ancient history under my fingernails. And then that call from Charlotte – at my hotel – in Cairo – that you and Alison had split up.

ALEX. And you dropped everything?

KAY. I rushed to London, I flew to New York.

ALEX. You flew?

KAY. Well this is 1950.

ALEX. How fast we move – the modern age. And yet at times, Kay, it all feels so post-modern. Whatever that means.

KAY. Well, if it doesn't mean anything now, it will probably mean something then.

ALEX. I don't know how it happened. Oh, Kay. A fight, of course. One of the many. I too am an actress. That's her talking. I had just gotten back from the coast. A small part in a big picture. After all these years on the stage, but I am a stage creature – a creature of the stage – and film, you know, the motion picture – I mean what does it do for me? What does it – what has it done for me? Hope Court had a tiny role a cameo, precious little Hope – and Laurence Lawrence – after that scandal in the men's room – you naughty boy I told him he wasn't amused. And Hal, a man of the theatre or so he says, now he's making pictures, trying to make it in pictures – I played his sister's best friend. I was horrid – to everyone. Abysmal. And the food! Well, I got home –

KAY. I got home after the dig in Egypt and Charlotte told me that you and Alison had split up.

ALEX. She told you what?

KAY. She said she heard from Jayne Summerhouse –

ALEX. Jayne Summerhouse? Foreshadowing.

KAY. That you and Alison had split up.

ALEX. Who said that, Jayne said that? That's ridiculous. No. We had words, yes, but that has nothing to do with the fact that Alison is not in this scene. Alison was cast in *As You Like It.*

KAY. The one by Shakespeare?

ALEX. I think so. We fought about what? I don't remember these things. Her not spending enough time with me. She's been taking this acting class. We were arguing about the kitty litter. It hadn't been changed. In days. It was her fault. Clearly. Or maybe it was my day to do it. It's of no importance. We were fighting and she said

I didn't I wasn't interested enough in her career. I too am an actress, that's her talking. And anyway she left for Maine, someplace in Maine – don't come unless I call you it may be horrible and I don't want you to see it and tell me and then their Orlando was arrested. Some incident in a men's room – I don't ask for details – the naughty boy.

KAY. I hear that Hal is directing *As You Like It.*

ALEX. Which is not how he likes it. The movie was a bomb. His three-picture deal is kaput.

KAY. Some place in Maine, I hear.

ALEX. There's no place in Maine, believe me, I've been there. Some avant-garde take I guess on the play. A post-modern spin.

KAY. Well this is 1990.

ALEX. And you know Hal. Don't you?

KAY. He's a film director, isn't he?

ALEX. Small independent films. I had a role in one, one scene against Humé Hubert, this young French Canadian actor with a speech impediment. He's gonna be a major star.

KAY. I don't understand what's going on, Alex. Stay in the present. Leave the past to me.

ALEX. Kay, it's simple. I did this film – it was how many years ago I don't remember – 1995 or 4 or 3. So it was about two years ago. This is 1997. I guess I was awful because they cut me and replaced me with another actress. I had this one scene opposite the lead, Humé Hubert.

KAY. The young French Canadian actor with a speech impediment? I hear he's going to be a major star.

ALEX. That's the one. Anyway the actress I guess they replaced me with was believe it or not worse than I was – or something – they said I wasn't speaking to rest of the picture – whatever the fuck that means – but then this actress they got – I don't know what happened. Somehow or other I ended up back in the film.

KAY. I like Hal's movies, he's kind of avant-garde. Whatever that means these days.

ALEX. It means nothing. The avant-garde is over. Or at least it is for me. But he's not avant – garde – he's just – he just has taste, he's intelligent. He's not spelling the whole thing out. You do that – and if you're somewhat intellectual, not just intelligent but intellectual – you're considered avant-garde. Don't ask me. And you're not, you never were. And he's never directed a play before and he has some ideas, I guess about a play doing a play a Shakespeare play like a film because Shakespeare I think he feels practically invented the cinema. Whatever that means. I don't care it sounds interesting and Alison – who has spent years too many years in one revival of *Oklahoma* or *Carousel* – I mean for god's sake, how many times can you be a cockeyed optimist in Pittsburgh – don't get me wrong I like those things – or at least I liked the albums – one revival after the other and for Alison to have a chance to play Rosalind I mean she met Hal at a dinner party for the film I was in and cut from and then put back into and he liked her and he read her and he cast her and he didn't cast me didn't even audition me but that's all right, I understand.

KAY. Alex. Pause. So she's cast as Rosalind, that's exciting.

ALEX. It's thrilling. And she's a nervous wreck. I was coaching her, we were fighting, I was jealous, she was nervous, we were fighting and now she's fine. She left for Maine, they lost an actor – Hubert. He was playing Orlando.

KAY. The young French Canadian actor with a speech impediment.

ALEX. Naturally. Well we all knew he'd be a major star. He's in L.A. Doing something.

KAY. But Alex let's go back.

ALEX. How far?

KAY. 1970?

ALEX. Oh, Kay!

KAY. For atmosphere, not continuity.

ALEX. Well just for a moment.

KAY. I mean your career.

ALEX. My career?

KAY. The roles you've played, Alex. Hedda, Phaedra.

ALEX. *(Fehdra)* Phaedra. 1998. We're back.

KAY. Just recently, three Phaedras.

ALEX. *(Fehdras)* Phaedras. Four of them – those two modern adaptations – one of them set on the moon for christ sake all of us wearing those stupid space suits – aha-haah – then the Euripides finally the Racine. I'm fed up with Phaedra – why doesn't she just get over it.

KAY. Cleopatra, Clythemnestra.

ALEX. All out of town – of course. Except for the one on the moon. How embarrassing. And for no money. She left on Saturday. They begin rehearsal on Tuesday.

KAY. In Maine?

ALEX. Some shed near a pond. Heavens, the mosquitoes. Poor Hal, losing Humé on such short notice. Hell, I'd play the part. I'm so tired of the roles I get cast in. These angry, depressed women. Why do people think I'm so angry? I'm not angry. For god fucking sake. I'm not depressed. Today. I'd love to play Orlando.

KAY. Audition.

ALEX. What?

KAY. I'm kidding.

ALEX. *(with a bray of laughter)* I should audition, shouldn't I?

KAY. Cut your hair, put on a suit or something and show up.

ALEX. Right. Like I could pull that off. With my figure. I've gotta lose some weight.

KAY. Well, finish getting dressed, I'll take you out for breakfast.

ALEX. Thanks. Phone rings.

KAY. Hello. Oh hi, Seymour, it's Kay. Alex, it's your agent.

ALEX. I'll be right out.

KAY. No, she's changing. Metamorphosing. Well, you know her, the bathroom is her temple. She makes obeisance to the gods. No, I just got back into town. No, that was an earlier draft, I'm no longer an archeologist, I'm a lighting designer. I was in Cleveland. *The Matchmaker*, *Salesman*. Minneapolis. The Molnar play – the funny one – and then something else – I can't remember the names anymore – it all seems like one endless play. No, I loved it – sort of. *Oedipus*. Yes, but that's months away. In two weeks. Kind of vacation. In Maine. But then I'm lighting – you know Hal Stewart? The film director, right. He's doing *As You Like It*. Yes, Alison. She's fine, she's nervous. Hysterical that's she's going to be alone.

ALEX. I'm not hysterical.

KAY. Sure. Oh, she'll love that. 'Bye love. He said call him tomorrow. They're doing *Hamlet* in Buffalo. They wanna see you for the Ghost.

ALEX. You're kidding!

KAY. Alex, I'm bewildered. What is it with the contemporary theatre? This penchant for cross-dressing. Men around the cauldron. Noras with five o'clock shadow. It's the year 2000, but I mean really.

(Enter **ALEXANDRA** *disguised as a man.)*

ALEX. It's funny, isn't it.

KAY. Yes and –

*(***KAY** *turns, sees. Screams.)*

Oh, my god, who are you? Alex. Alex, there's a man.

ALEX. Kay, it's me.

KAY. Don't you come near me or I'll……Alex?

ALEX. What do you think?

KAY. You're not serious.

ALEX. Of course I am.

KAY. I see it all.

ALEX. I thought you would.

KAY. You're…"changing." Orlando.

ALEX. First I have to audition. Think I'll get it?

KAY. *(stunned)* You look like a man.

ALEX. I told Hal, after I read the script I told him I said, I'd love to audition. He said, no, I know your work from Jeff's play. I said, Okay, but I've never done a film before. Expanded the role when he thought of me. Cut me all the same. Now I audition.

KAY. Your hair!

ALEX. Does it look too butch. I hate those dykey cuts.

KAY. You cut your hair and dyed it.

ALEX. Dyed it? I had the dye taken out. Did you really think I was a red-head?

KAY. After all these years. Have I been so deceived?

ALEX. Kay, I am an actress. Please keep that in mind.

KAY. I feel like I hardly know you.

ALEX. It's just a costume. A few odds and ends.

KAY. Where are your breasts? What's that between your legs?

ALEX. Surely you've seen one of these before.

KAY. Not on you.

ALEX. There's a open call at 1:00. It's amazing what you can do with a little spirit gum and an Ace bandage.

KAY. You have a cock.

ALEX. *(holding it)* Wanna touch it.

KAY. *(recoiling)* Ahahaah!

ALEX. It's just chicken wire and polyester stuffing.

KAY. Where'd you get all that hair?

ALEX. *(arms, legs and chest)* It's Laurence Olivier's.

KAY. *(disbelieving)* Alexandra Page!

ALEX. He always shaved his legs for roles in tights. I got it from this guy in my building.

KAY. Would you be real.

ALEX. I am. The hair on my ass once belonged to Vivian Leigh.

KAY. You're going to audition for the role of Orlando. But why the anatomy?

ALEX. I'm not taking any chances. Remember the wrestling scene? Who knows what I'll be asked to do.

KAY. But Alex, do you really think you can pull this off? And what's your motivation for all this?

ALEX. How the hell should I know? Oh please don't examine the script too closely, Kay, we'll all be in trouble. Jealousy. Rivalry. I don't know. Look at a re-run of *Lucy*. I'm grabbing at straws. Why did she do half those things? Jayne Summerhouse. There you go. She's a treat – I mean a threat. It was a typo.

KAY. Jayne of course, she had a thing with Alison years ago.

ALEX. A thing *for* Alison.

KAY. Or so you tell yourself.

ALEX. Well, there you have it, motivation. I don't want Alison to sleep with Jayne Summerhouse. Or the fact that all I do is play tragic women in creepy modern adaptations. Blanche in a bathtub, Beckett in a tube stop, Congreve at the corner saloon.

KAY. Oh, stop acting.

ALEX. I will not. I love it. I love to act. And when I do get a chance to play one of those roles straight, it's in some boring production with some dweepy director who doesn't know the difference between convention and the conventional. No life! And I'm tired of it. I just wanna have some fun for god's sake. I'm tired of sitting on my ass.

KAY. Well there's your motivation.

ALEX. Huh? Right! Fine, whatever. And don't get me started on new plays. What I think of some of those. We'll get to that later. What was the question?

KAY. I don't remember.

ALEX. Do you think you can pull this off?

KAY. Right.

ALEX. I don't give a damn. The worst that can happen is I'm discovered. Uncovered. Another masquerade. Well, so what, it's my nature. I'm not afraid.

KAY. But sweetie can you act – really act – like a man?

ALEX. Oh man, man. Woman, woman. What's the difference?

KAY. There is a difference. I mean you look like a man. But can you play the part? And I'm not talking from a distance, when you're on the stage painted with light. I mean in the flesh. Can you convince those in life, convince yourself?

ALEX. I don't have to convince anybody, darling. That shit is for amateurs. The whole world's a fucking drag show. Look at them, they're all in costume. I'm not playing anything. I'm not acting. I'm not pretending. I don't have to act like a man. I don't know what a man is, or a woman. What is man? What is woman? Who in their right mind knows? Go back to Egypt. Dig! I guess you're an archeologist again. See what you find. I'm off to Arden. And why the hell not?

(Enter **HAL, EVE** *and* **ALISON**. *Exit* **KAY**.*)*

HAL. Sorry to keep you waiting. I'm Hal.

ALEX. *(her hairy arms)* I'm hairy. Samson. Harry Samson.

HAL. Harry?

ALEX. Samson. Harry Samson.

HAL. Well thanks for coming in. This is my assistant, Eve.

ALEX. Eve?

EVE. Addaman.

ALEX. Addaman?

EVE. Eve. Eve Addaman.

ALEX. Eve Addaman.

HAL. And this is our Rosalind, Alison Rose.

ALEX. Alison?

ALISON. Alison. Alison Rose.

HAL. Alison's Rosalind.

ALISON. Alison Rose.

ALEX. Rosalind.

ALISON. Alison.

ALEX. Alison.

EVE. Rosalind. Rosalind's Alison.

HAL. Alison Rose.

ALEX. Eve. Hal. Harry. Samson. Alison Rose. Alison's Rosalind. Alison Rose.

HAL. I think you've got it.

ALEX. It's nice to meet you.

HAL. Just give us a minute to get organized.

ALEX. Sure.

(exit **ALISON***)*

HAL. We'll start with the opening speech to Adam.

ALEX. Okay.

HAL. Then look at the scene between you and Rosalind.

ALEX. Right.

HAL. *(to* **EVE***)* Can we get rid of this bed?

EVE. Sure.

HAL. *(to* **ALEX***)* Looks like someone just finished a production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.*

ALEX. *(with reference to the bed, chortling)* Oh right.

HAL. You know the play?

ALEX. Done it – twice.

HAL. Play Brick?

ALEX. Not really.

HAL. *(to* **EVE***)* Actually, you know, why don't you why don't we leave it, that way there's something to sit on.

EVE. Okay.

HAL. *(to* **ALEX***)* You have a picture, resumé?

ALEX. No, actually, I don't. I just got back into town, haven't unpacked my stuff. I just ran down here when I heard you were seeing people.

HAL. That's all right, we know what you look like. Where have you been…

ALEX. Working?

HAL. Yea.

ALEX. Are you familiar with theatres in Montana at all?

HAL. Nope.

ALEX. Yea, I've spent a lot of time last few years working in Montana. At the uh Montana Rep.

HAL. Great.

ALEX. Yea.

HAL. Who's directing up there?

ALEX. Directing? Oh…you know, what's her name – my god I've worked with her for years I can't believe I – Levi. Simple. Levi Simple.

HAL. Name is familiar.

ALEX. Yea, he's been – she's been – he's been up there… since the beginning.

HAL. What kind of stuff they do?

ALEX. Did *The Guardsman* – old Lunt/Fontaine vehicle. That was fun – farce, kind of. Um…*Biff at Colonus.* Kind of an experimental piece – didn't really pan out – interesting idea, though. And then just your… standard stuff, usual stuff…that gets done…across the country…all the time…Everywhere.

HAL. Well great. And here's Alison.

(enter **ALISON***)*

ALISON. Sorry. Sorry. I got stuck in traffic. The trains.

HAL. No problem. We've got one more audition. If you don't mind waiting.

ALISON. No.

HAL. *(to* **ALEX***)* This is Alison Rose. She's playing Rosalind.

ALEX. Hi, nice to meet you. I'm Harry. Samson. Harry Samson.

ALISON. Hi.

(Long handshake, they look at each other.)

HAL. So give us a minute. *(to* **EVE***, surreptitiously)* Interesting chemistry between them.

*(***ALEX** *and* **ALISON** *finally let go hands.)*

ALEX. *(off long handshake)* Oh, sorry. Must be a little nervous.

ALISON. That's all right, don't be. Is this your first time doing Shakespeare?

ALEX. Oh, no, un, no, I've uh, done a little. Not too much. Quite a lot.

ALISON. Then I'm the one that should be nervous.

ALEX. Why do you say that?

ALISON. My first role, really. In Shakespeare. In a Shakespeare.

ALEX. Huh. You've been doing…

ALISON. Musicals mostly. Mostly musicals. Musical comedy.

ALEX. Musical comedy?

ALISON. Musical comedy. Musical theatre, musical comedy. Musical comedy.

ALEX. Musical comedy.

ALISON. Did *Pygmalion* – not too long ago. A few years ago. In high school.

ALEX. Oh, right, sure.

ALISON. Shaw.

ALEX. Right.

ALISON. *My Fair Lady*. That was interesting. But mostly… musical…comedy.

ALEX. Musical comedy.

ALISON. Musical theatre, musical comedy. Musical comedy.

ALEX. I'm sure you'll do fine.

ALISON. Hope so. You've been…

ALEX. Out of town lately a lot. Just got back in really – going back out again – I hope – if I get…

ALISON. What brought you back?

ALEX. What?

ALISON. What brought you back?

ALEX. Well, I uh split up with someone, recently. Woman I was living with.

ALISON. Oh really? Me too.

ALEX. Yea. What?

ALISON. I haven't told – well, yet. It's terrible I know, I just figure this summer, get some space – I can…you know.

ALEX. God. I'm shocked. About how hard it is when you –

ALISON. Breaking up?

ALEX. Yea. Yes. I mean for me.

ALISON. Really? Did she break up with you or did you break up with her? I guess it's always kind of a mutual thing whether you know it or not. I mean you saw it coming, yes?

ALEX. No. Not really. No. I was – it was kind of a…I was kind of you know…shocked I guess.

ALISON. You were – were you married?

ALEX. Yes. No. I mean for all intents and purposes.

ALISON. Same with us. We lived together for years. Did she work in the theatre?

ALEX. In a way. Kind of…depends on what you think theatre is.

ALISON. What do you mean?

ALEX. What do I mean? It's difficult to say – at this moment – but uh. What about the uh…Boy this is an old draft, isn't it?

ALISON. It sure is.

ALEX. This breaking up stuff, I completely forgot about the man you were with? Was he –

ALISON. A woman.

ALEX. I'm sorry?

ALISON. A woman. He was a woman. Is a woman.

ALEX. Oh, I'm sorry. I mean about –

ALISON. And she does – it's all right – works in the theatre.

ALEX. Wasn't working…

ALISON. Out between us? No. But she doesn't know I mean I haven't told her yet but I told you that I didn't, didn't I?

ALEX. I think so.

ALISON. And you've been working –

ALEX. Out of town mostly. Going back out again – I hope – if I get –

ALISON. What…what brought you back?

ALEX. I've been just tired of what I'd been doing. Kind of getting into a rut and I thought I'd just kind of mix things up a bit trying something new I hadn't done before. Plus my girlfriend is uh I don't know you know what I mean she's doing something for the summer in a show and so my agent got a call about a…well, you know what I mean.

ALISON. Sort of.

ALEX. It's tough – relationships.

ALISON. In a way. In a way. She's very self-involved.

ALEX. Your girlfriend.

ALISON. Lover.

ALEX. Ex-lover.

ALISON. Right. She's always reminding me – everyone in fact – that we're not girlfriends we're lovers, that we're not girls anymore.

ALEX. I see her point.

ALISON. But it's very annoying. Kind of pretentious the way she says it. Correcting people all the time about it. Somewhat arrogant.

ALEX. Did you ever tell her that?

ALISON. I can't remember. What about the woman you were with?

ALEX. Was she self-involved?

ALISON. No, I mean –

ALEX. Yes, in her own way. In her own quiet way. Has a way though of making it appear as though I'm the one that's self-involved. When in truth we both are.

ALISON. Interesting.

ALEX. Yes. But you were going to say?

ALISON. Nothing. Nothing.

ALEX. Your ex-lover anyone I might know?

ALISON. You might. Actually, though, I'd rather not…

ALEX. Oh, sure, sorry.

ALISON. It's fine. I was kind of blabbing.

ALEX. Should be – shouldn't be getting involved with – in other people's situations.

ALISON. Don't worry about it.

ALEX. Problem I have.

ALISON. It's all right. We'd probably have a lot to talk about.

ALEX. I'm sure we would. Who knows? Maybe we'll…

HAL. Hey, guys – I'm wondering – Alison would you mind if it's okay with Harry, how would you guys feel about reading a scene together?

ALEX. Love it.

ALISON. Okay.

HAL. Great, well welcome to Maine.

ALEX. Thank you.

HAL. You guys come up together?

ALISON. We were on the same train but didn't know it.

HAL. You're kidding.

ALEX. Yea.

HAL. That's wild.

ALISON. We shared a taxi from the station.

HAL. You guys come up together?

ALEX. We were on the same train but didn't know it.

ALISON. I didn't even know he was cast.

HAL. We didn't call you?

ALISON. No.

ALEX. We shared a taxi from the station, got acquainted a bit more. Dropped off our stuff at the hotel.

HAL. Great. Okay. It's gonna be great. I'm so excited. I'm really excited, think you guys are going to be great together. Going to be explosive.

ALEX. Oh yea.

ALISON. This is the theatre.

HAL. It is. Now.

ALISON. It's beautiful. What was it before?

HAL. It keeps changing. It's been a million things. It used to be a rehearsal hall. Before that someone lived here. Right now it's a theatre.

ALISON. Incredible.

ALEX. Theatre.

HAL. Yea.

EVE. Gotta get rid of this bed.

HAL. Oh no, leave it. I have this idea about using it. In the production.

ALEX. Really?

HAL. Oh yea. Something really kind of interesting. But… well, you'll see.

*(***JAYNE SUMMERHOUSE** *and* **SIMON LANQUISH** *enter with luggage.)*

JAYNE. *(with energized, dramatic fatigue)* Hi.

HAL. You're here!

JAYNE. We got lost.

SIMON. Of course.

JAYNE. Took the wrong road. Went down the wrong path. Made the wrong turn.

SIMON. What else is new?

JAYNE. But we're here. And don't you love us for it.

ALISON. Hi Jayne.

JAYNE. Alison! I can't believe it I'm so excited. So excited. I was so excited about doing it with you. This.

ALISON. Me too.

JAYNE. Just like old times. I won't elaborate.

ALISON. Oh yea.

JAYNE. *(to the others)* We were under grad together. In the dorms. Those awful curtains. So tacky. Then me going on to grad school. In Seattle. Really getting the training I needed. It was great. I work. I've worked. And you – musical theatre. So talented. Raking in the bucks. Those national tours. I was envious. Then I got the soap. How's Alex?

ALISON. She's good. She's okay.

JAYNE. I miss her. I love her. Give her my best. Give her my love.

ALISON. I will.

JAYNE. I haven't seen you for ages.

ALISON. I know.

JAYNE. *(to* **ALISON***)* Well you know I've been insane. I went back to school. Did you know that?

ALISON. No, I didn't.

JAYNE. Oh yes.

ALEX. For acting?

JAYNE. *(looking over* **ALEXANDRA***)* Film school. Columbia. *(back to* **ALISON***)* The program's incredible. The money I put away from the soap. Thank heaven that's over. It was fun. My character had a web site. But here I am. In the flesh. It's great the way this worked out. For the summer. Making a film while I'm up here. A pseudo – documentary about reality in the theatre. Hal's my mentor. I had to beg him. *(to* **ALEXANDRA***, imperiously, offering her hand)* Who are you? I'm Jayne.

ALEX. *(accepting her hand, shaking)* I'm Harry.

JAYNE. Airy?

ALEX. Harry. Samson. Payne?

JAYNE. Jayne. Summerhouse. Are you part of the cast? Or are you one of the technical people?

HAL. Harry is our Orlando.

JAYNE. Oh, no! What happened to Hubert?

HAL. He had to drop out. *(to* **ALEXANDRA***)* Humé Hubert was going to originally be playing Orlando.

ALEX. Oh gee.

HAL. He's in L.A. Doing something.

JAYNE. I'm devastated. What's he doing? I don't want to know. He was so right. So perfect. Everything about him. Brilliant. And that unique speech pattern.

HAL. *(to* **ALEXANDRA***)* Do you know him?

ALEX. I may have worked with him – once – a while ago. I think.

HAL. Hey Simon. Let me introduce you.

JAYNE. Silent Simon. Thinking. Evaluating. Playing it cool. Keeping to himself. Maintaining a distance. Let others come to him. At first, then boom, he won't stop talking. I'm teasing, I love you. We work together always. On almost every project. It's not intentional. I don't know how it happens. Neither does he. A surprise every time. Unless we've chatted the night before. Oh my god. So am I. That's amazing. It'll be great. It'll be fun. What a blast. We'll have dinner every night. Someone to talk to. Someone to listen. The audience thinks the others can hear this and maybe they can or maybe they can't, it being kept purposely ambiguous. If they can hear it – what I'm saying – the other characters – me rattling on in this fashion, it can be interpreted either as a depiction of psychotic behavior – clearly she's insane – or given the permissiveness of theatrical artifice, an exercise in brutal satire. If, on the other hand, the speech can be heard by the audience only, what is it then but a manifestation of my inner turmoil. Satire achieved, surely, and the vague emptiness that inhibits inhabits inhibits my soul. Laugh if you must and I hope you do. I am a character in fiction. I'm meant to be funny. And I intend to be.

HAL. *(introducing* **SIMON** *to* **ALISON***)* Do you know Alison Rose? Alison is our Rosalind. Our Ganymede.

SIMON. I think we've met. Through Alexandra Page. I was Gooper in *Cat* in Phoenix.

ALISON. Oh, I think so, yes.

JAYNE. That was one of Alex's campier performances if I remember correctly. I came out to see it. I was dating what's his name – Joe – who played Brick. That doesn't make any sense, I'm a lesbian. Maybe I was dating the lighting designer.

ALISON. Kay Fein.

JAYNE. I was dating Kay Fein. No, that's no good, she was probably an archeologist at the time. I was there in Phoenix – doing something else. Or I was playing Mae. That's perfect. Simon and I were working together. And I was dating Kay. She *was* a lighting designer then. Or are Kay and I ever in the same city together?

SIMON. It doesn't matter.

JAYNE. I'm sorry. I interrupted. But she *can* be over the top sometimes. Alex. So cartoony. And talk about chewing the scenery. I've seen her use a curtain rod for a toothpick. I love her give her my love.

SIMON. Anyway we have met, it's nice to meet you again.

ALISON. Likewise.

SIMON. Looking forward to working with you.

HAL. Simon's playing Touchstone.

SIMON. "And as cast." Whatever that means.

HAL. I'll tell you in a minute. *(introducing* **SIMON** *to* **ALEXANDRA***)* And this is Harry Samson.

SIMON. *(offering his hand)* Simon Lanquish.

HAL. And everybody knows Eve.

SIMON. Eve.

EVE. Addaman.

ALEX, ALISON, JAYNE, & SIMON. Addaman?

EVE. Eve. Eve Addaman.

ALEX, ALISON, HAL, JAYNE, & SIMON. Eve Addaman.

ALEX. More of the cast is coming up later?

HAL. Oh, that's what I was going to tell you. I have this idea, I'm going to do – being doing the play – with only four actors.

JAYNE. What?

ALISON. Only four?

SIMON. Is that what you meant by "and as cast?"

HAL. I have this idea. I'm going to be doing some doubling. And then I'll fill in the rest of the cast with some local actors. Local people.

(The actors stare blankly.)

I think I can keep the cast down to ten. It'll be more than just the four of you. You'll all be playing most of the major roles – some of you will. And then we'll have some local folks playing roles – make it kind of a community event. And Eve's gonna play a role also.

*(***EVE** *holds up her hand.)*

EVE. I'm playing Adam, the old man.

JAYNE. That's interesting.

HAL. Now you guys need to deal with your luggage and where you're staying, right?

JAYNE. *(as Celia)* I cannot go no further.

HAL. Wait, back up further.

JAYNE. I'm confused. Have we just arrived, or have we been here for a while?

HAL. *(after a brief hold)* What do you mean?

JAYNE. *(to* **ALISON***)* Because you say, This…Well, this is the Forest of Arden.

SIMON. Where are we?

HAL. Right.

JAYNE. *(pointing in the script for* **SIMON***)* Here, honey. Rosalind, Alison, disguised as Ganymede.

HAL. That's right.

SIMON. I see.

JAYNE. So we've just arrived.

HAL. That's right.

JAYNE. In Arden.

HAL. Yea, I think so.

*(***HAL** *looks to* **EVE***, who nods.)*

JAYNE. *(as Celia)* I pray you bear with me, I cannot go no further.

SIMON. *(as Touchstone.)* For my part, I had rather bear with you, than bear you.

HAL. Good, okay. Make sense.

JAYNE. Yea.??? But it's a double negative, isn't it – cannot go no further. Why don't I just say, I cannot go further, or I can go no further? Am I really saying, I can go further?

HAL. *(consulting the text.)* I pray you, bear with me, I cannot go no further – I don't think so. I think you're just saying you can – you can't go any further – but you say, I cannot go no further – I think that's just how she says it. I think that's the way you talk.

EVE. It's archaic.

HAL. Right. Just as the way we speak may seem – will seem archaic – confusing – you know in a hundred years – or three hundred years. Or even now. The way we talk.

JAYNE. That's what I love about Shakespeare. It's like a foreign language. Not like Chekhov, where everything is spelled out.

HAL. Un huh. *(after a brief pause)* Okay, great. Why don't we take a break.

EVE. Ten minutes.

JAYNE. *(to* **ALISON** *– with girlish excitement)* It's going so well. Don't you think?

HAL. *(to* **EVE***)* This day's a disaster.

ALISON. *(to* **JAYNE***)* I think so.

JAYNE. *(spotting* **SIMON** *exiting, lighting up a cigarette)* Simon, I'll go with you. *(as they exit)* Honey, you shouldn't be smoking.

*(***ALISON** *sits near* **ALEXANDRA**. **EVE** *and* **HAL** *confer.)*

ALEX. Hi there.

ALISON. Hi.

ALEX. How's it going?

ALISON. Okay. I think. How does it look?

ALEX. Okay. It's very early. You're doing well though.

ALISON. You think?

ALEX. Oh, yea.

ALISON. Do I seem like a musical comedy actress up there?

ALEX. What's a musical comedy actress?

ALISON. I don't know, superficial, artificial.

ALEX. No.

ALISON. I'm trying not to act.

ALEX. What do you mean?

ALISON. Like a boy.

ALEX. Like a boy?

ALISON. I mean…I am.

ALEX. Right.

ALISON. Trying to pretend – I am this woman and how she would…

ALEX. Yes.

ALISON. Disguise herself.

ALEX. Un huh.

ALISON. I don't know what I'm saying. Not…act it, but… just…kind of…act. Pretend. Behave.

ALEX. That sounds good.

ALISON. All the musicals I've been in over the years I've watched others – they won't relax – it's not that they're – that the *material* is artificial – it is of course – but that *they* are. These performers. And I've worked so hard at it. And thought so what it's only in a musical – what does it mean what would it mean in a play – not that I'm ready for Ibsen – but this –

ALEX. A comedy.

ALISON. Yes. Light.

ALEX. But serious.

ALISON. Yes. There's more – he's a genius – to it. But the principle applies. And that's the thing. One of the things. About my relationship. With Alex.

ALEX. Your ex-lover.

ALISON. *(startled by the "ex")* What? *(recovering)* Oh right – ex-lover. That she would never appreciate, or understand – what I was trying to accomplish. In the form. I mean she would compliment me – try to be helpful. But she judged the form, not the content. Or at least not the content of me.

ALEX. I see.

ALISON. *(after a pause)* I'm gonna get my hair cut for this. A buzz cut.

ALEX. A buzz cut?

ALISON. Think I could look like a boy?

ALEX. I don't know, what does a boy look like?

ALISON. Not like a girl.

ALEX. Oh right. But you don't want to look too much like a boy.

ALISON. Why not?

ALEX. Well, half the fun is knowing, you know, you're a girl – a woman.

ALISON. Really? For who?

ALEX. That you're a woman? Unh, I don't know, the audience, I suppose. Orlando.

ALISON. You think Orlando knows Rosalind is really a woman?

ALEX. I don't know – yet. I'd like to think he doesn't, but I'm not sure. Or maybe he's not sure.

ALISON. That's one of the things I like about what you're doing.

ALEX. What's that?

ALISON. It was odd when Hal cast you. I thought…I mean I enjoyed your audition. It was fun.

ALEX. Un huh.

ALISON. I guess I thought though you weren't my vision of what an Orlando should be.

ALEX. What did you have in mind?

ALISON. I don't know. I guess someone a bit…straighter.

ALEX. You don't think I'm straight?

ALISON. *(laughing)* No, I mean…Well, you know Hubert – who was going to be playing the part…he's very… masculine – and –

ALEX. I'm not masculine.

ALISON. No, I mean – this is not coming out right – but – like – when you called the other day about having dinner after rehearsal.

ALEX. Un huh.

ALISON. Which I really enjoyed by the way. I mean for a minute I thought – when I picked up the phone – and this is not a criticism – I thought it was a woman on the other end.

ALEX. Huh.

ALISON. I mean, has anyone ever –

ALEX. Because I have a high voice?

ALISON. Yea, I mean, you know, I think you're – I could see like…I'm losing language. I once saw a production of this play?

ALEX. *This* play.

ALISON. The one we're doing, right. And there were two guys – one was playing Rosalind – but he didn't do it in drag – just a suggestion of something. It was wonderful – a wonderful production. Most of the audience walked out. And both the guys were good-looking guys, but the Orlando was particularly…he wasn't beefy, but he seemed like a straight guy who maybe wasn't or maybe he was. With you…it's like – like when they did it, I knew who the man was and who the man wasn't, who the woman was – even though they were both men.

FINISH READING THIS SCRIPT

Visit our website to purchase the full script or to explore other titles.

www.samuelfrench.com
www.samuelfrench.co.uk

To stay up to date on all that we are doing, follow us on social media:



*Titles for licensing are subject to availability depending on your territory.

SF PERUSALS