

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

BEDROOM FARCE

A Comedy

by Alan Ayckbourn

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

samuelfrench.co.uk

Copyright © 1977 by Alan Ayckbourn
All Rights Reserved

BEDROOM FARCE is fully protected under the copyright laws of the British Commonwealth, including Canada, the United States of America, 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 978-0-573-11047-4

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

www.samuelfrench.com

FOR AMATEUR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED KINGDOM AND WORLD
EXCLUDING NORTH AMERICA

plays@samuelfrench.co.uk

020 7255 4302/01

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French,
depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *BEDROOM FARCE* is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

The professional rights in this play are controlled by Casarotto Ramsay Associates, Waverley House, 7-12 Noel Street, London, W1F 8GQ.

No one shall make any changes in this title 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, or part of this title, to any social media websites.

The right of Alan Ayckbourn to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

THINKING ABOUT PERFORMING A SHOW?

There are thousands of plays and musicals available to perform from Samuel French right now, and applying for a licence is easier and more affordable than you might think

From classic plays to brand new musicals, from monologues to epic dramas, there are shows for everyone.

Plays and musicals are protected by copyright law so if you want to perform them, the first thing you'll need is a licence. This simple process helps support the playwright by ensuring they get paid for their work, and means that you'll have the documents you need to stage the show in public.

Not all our shows are available to perform all the time, so it's important to check and apply for a licence before you start rehearsals or commit to doing the show.

LEARN MORE & FIND THOUSANDS OF SHOWS

Browse our full range of plays and musicals and find out more about how to license a show

www.samuelfrench.co.uk/perform

Talk to the friendly experts in our Licensing team for advice on choosing a show, and help with licensing

plays@samuelfrench.co.uk 020 7387 9373

Acting Editions

BORN TO PERFORM

Playscripts designed from the ground up to work the way you do in rehearsal, performance and study

Larger, clearer text for easier reading



Wider margins for notes



Performance features such as character and props lists, sound and lighting cues, and more

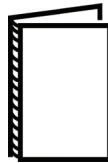


+ CHOOSE A SIZE AND STYLE TO SUIT YOU



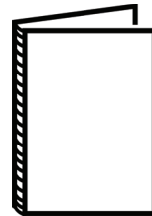
STANDARD EDITION

Our regular paperback book at our regular size



SPIRAL-BOUND EDITION

The same size as the Standard Edition, but with a sturdy, easy-to-fold, easy-to-hold spiral-bound spine



LARGE EDITION

A4 size and spiral bound, with larger text and a blank page for notes opposite every page of text. Perfect for technical and directing use

LEARN MORE

samuelfrench.co.uk/actingeditions

**Other plays by ALAN AYCKBOURN
published and licensed by Samuel French**

Absent Friends

Arrivals and Departures

Awaking Beauty

Body Language

Callisto 5

The Champion of Paribanou

A Chorus of Disapproval

Comic Potential

Communicating Doors

Confusions

A Cut in the Rates

Dreams from a Summer House

Drowning on Dry Land

Ernie's Incredible Illucinations

Family Circles

Farcicals

FlatSpin

GamePlan

Gizmo

Haunting Julia

Henceforward

Hero's Welcome

House & Garden

How the Other Half Loves

If I Were You

Improbable Fiction

Intimate Exchanges, Volume I

Intimate Exchanges, Volume II

It Could Be Any One of Us

Joking Apart

Just Between Ourselves

Life and Beth

Life of Riley

Living Together

Me, Myself and I

Man of the Moment

Mixed Doubles

Mr. A's Amazing Maze Plays

Mr Whatnot

My Very Own Story

My Wonderful Day

Neighbourhood Watch

The Norman Conquests: Table Manners; Living Together;
Round and Round the Garden

Private Fears in Public Places

Relatively Speaking

The Revengers' Comedies

RolePlay

Roundelay

Season's Greetings

Sisterly Feelings

A Small Family Business

Snake in the Grass

Suburban Strains

Sugar Daddies

Taking Steps

Ten Times Table

Things We Do for Love

This Is Where We Came In

Time and Time Again

Time of My Life

Tons of Money (revised)

Way Upstream

Wildest Dreams

Wolf at the Door

Woman in Mind

A Word from Our Sponsor

**Other plays by ALAN AYCKBOURN
licensed by Samuel French**

The Boy Who Fell Into a Book

Invisible Friends

The Jollies

Orvin - Champion of Champions

Surprises

Whenever

**FIND PERFECT PLAYS TO PERFORM AT
www.samuel french.co.uk/perform**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Alan Ayckbourn has worked in theatre as a playwright and director for over fifty years, rarely if ever tempted by television or film, which perhaps explains why he continues to be so prolific. To date he has written more than 79 plays, many one act plays and a large amount of work for the younger audience. His work has been translated into over 35 languages, is performed on stage and television throughout the world and has won countless awards.

Major successes include: *Relatively Speaking*, *How the Other Half Loves*, *Absurd Person Singular*, *Bedroom Farce*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, and *The Norman Conquests*. In recent years, there have been revivals of *Season's Greetings* and *A Small Family Business* at the National theatre, in the West End *Absent Friends*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*, *Relatively Speaking* and *How the Other Half Loves*. In 2015, Chichester mounted a very successful revival of *Way Upstream*.

Artistic Director of the Stephen Joseph theatre from 1972 – 2009 where almost all his plays have been first staged, he continues to direct his latest new work there. In recent years, he has been inducted into American Theatre's Hall of Fame, received the 2010 Critics' Circle Award for Services to the Arts and became the first British playwright to receive both Olivier and Tony Special Lifetime Achievement Awards. He was knighted in 1997 for services to the theatre.

Image credit: Andrew Higgins.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

After a lifetime of playwriting (I first started as an unpublished writer at the age of ten!) my career has moved steadily forward from the status of untried tyro through to establishment figure to ageing experimentalist!

The work has reflected this. From the early tried and tested plays, (*Relatively Speaking*, *How the Other Half Loves*, *The Norman Conquests*, etc.) which thankfully people still seem happy to produce and come to see, through the middle period, larger scale so called “social” pieces (*Man of the Moment*, *A Chorus of Disapproval*) to the more recent smaller scale departures such as *Private Fears in Public Places*, *Snake in the Grass* and *Haunting Julia*, I have continued to experiment with shape and form, whilst I hope continuing to deepen my characters.

Throughout this, though, I have always needed to remind myself of the over riding prime directive drummed into me at an early age by my mentor, Stephen Joseph, that above all else a playwright is a story teller.

To keep an audience in their seats you need to involve them in a constantly unfolding series of unexpected twists and turns. These can, of course, be the narrative of the story itself as in *Relatively Speaking* or, as with *Woman in Mind* say, through the psychological development of the characters.

One of the nicest things people can ever say to me, coming out of a new play for the first time of seeing it, is “Well, I never saw THAT coming!”

Alan Ayckbourn

BEDROOM FARCE

First produced at the Library Theatre, Scarborough in June, 1975 and subsequently at the National Theatre, London in March 1977 with the following cast of characters:

ERNEST	Michael Gough
DELIA	Joan Hickson
NICK	Michael Kitchen
JAN	Polly Adams
MALCOLM	Derek Newark
KATE	Susan Littler
TREVOR	Stephen Moore
SUSANNAH	Maria Atken

The play directed by Alan Ayckbourn and Peter Hall
Setting by Timothy O'Brien and Tazeena Firth

The action takes place in three bedrooms

Act I Saturday evening, 7 pm
Act II A few moments later

Time—the present

ACT I

Three bedrooms. Saturday evening, 7 p.m.

The first bedroom is ERNEST and DELIA's. It is large and Victorian, in need of re-decoration. The furniture, including a double bed, bedside tables, dressing-table, etc., are all sturdy, unremarkable family pieces. There is a phone by the bed. A door leads to the landing and the rest of the house, another to a bathroom.

The second bedroom is MALCOLM and KATE's. This is smaller, probably a front bedroom in a terrace house which they are in the process of converting. It is sparsely furnished, a brand new bed, unmade, being the centrepiece. There is in addition a small stepladder. One of the walls has been re-papered, the rest are stripped. In one corner is a cardboard package, unopened. There is a phone by the bed. One door leads to the landing, and the rest of the house.

The third bedroom is NICK and JAN's. This is furnished in a more trendy style, with a brass bedstead and some interesting antique stuff. There are rugs on the floor and a phone by the bed. A single door leads off to the bathroom and everywhere else.

When the curtain rises, NICK is already in bed, lying looking sorry for himself.

MALCOLM and KATE's room is empty.

DELIA is sitting in her bedroom at her dressing-table mirror. She is going out. She is in her slip and finishing

her make-up: an elaborate operation. ERNEST wanders in. He is bird-like, bumbling, nearly sixty. He is in evening dress. He stares at DELIA. They are obviously going to be late, but ERNEST has learnt that impatience gets him nowhere.

ERNEST Have you got much further to go?

DELIA (*without turning*) Not long now.

ERNEST Good. Good show. (*He walks about humming restlessly*)
No, that is definitely a damp patch, you know.

DELIA Mmm?

ERNEST A damp patch. Definitely. It's getting in from somewhere. I've just been standing on the spare bed in there feeling the ceiling. The verdict is, very, very damp. (*He goes to the window*)

DELIA Oh dear.

ERNEST (*opening the window*) Yes. Which only goes to confirm my suspicion that those chaps we had crawling about the roof for six months didn't know their job. (*He leans out of the window backwards*)

DELIA What are you doing?

ERNEST I'm trying to catch a glimpse of the re-pointing. It's seeping in from somewhere.

DELIA You'll fall out in a minute.

ERNEST No. You can't see a thing. That gutterwork's obscuring the whole... Good Lord. That needs a spot of attention. It's hanging off at one end. Good Lord.

DELIA Darling, you're in my light.

ERNEST (*moving back inside*) There's a whole chunk of guttering here hanging on by a screw. Hadn't noticed that before. (*He shuts the window*)

DELIA Oh, did I tell you. Susannah phoned this afternoon.

ERNEST (*thoughtfully*) Did he? Did he indeed.

DELIA No, not he. Susannah.

ERNEST *Who?*

DELIA Susannah.

ERNEST Oh, Susannah. Jolly good. Very worrying that guttering, you know. One light to medium monsoon, we'll have a water-fall in the dining-room.

DELIA She sounded very agitated.

ERNEST Oh yes.

DELIA Things are not good between her and Trevor.

ERNEST Ah. (*He looks at his watch*) It's twenty past, you know.

DELIA All right, all right.

ERNEST We're booked for eight o'clock.

DELIA They'll hold the table.

ERNEST They might not.

DELIA Of course they will.

ERNEST You never know. Not these days.

DELIA They'll hold the table for us. We're regulars. We go there every year.

ERNEST Oh, well. It's your anniversary.

DELIA And yours.

ERNEST True, true. I think I should have given these shoes another polish.

DELIA Well, go and do it.

ERNEST No, it doesn't matter. Nobody'll notice.

DELIA It would appear that things between Susannah and Trevor are coming to a head.

ERNEST Ah.

DELIA He was always a difficult boy. I sometimes think if you hadn't ignored him quite as much...

ERNEST I did?

DELIA Of course you did. You hardly said a word to him all the time he was growing up.

ERNEST I seem to remember chatting away to him for hours.

DELIA Well. Chatting. I meant conversation. Conversation about important things. A father should converse with his son. About things that matter deeply.

ERNEST Doesn't really leave them much to talk about then, does it?

DELIA And that if I may say so is typical. No. Let's admit it. We weren't good parents. You did nothing and I tried to make up for it, and that's why he's like he is today. I mean if he'd had a stable childhood, he'd never have completely lost his sense of proportion and married Susannah. I mean, I sometimes feel on the rare occasions one does see them together that she's not really—awful thing to say but—not really resilient enough for Trevor. He wants somebody more phlegmatic. That Jan girl for instance would have been ideal. Do you remember her?

ERNEST Jan? Jan? Jan?

DELIA Nice little thing. Beautifully normal. She came to tea, do you remember? You got on very well with her.

ERNEST Oh yes. She was very jolly, wasn't she? She was very interested in my stamps. What happened to her?

DELIA Oh, she married—someone else, I think. She still writes occasionally.

ERNEST I must say I preferred her to Susannah. Never really hit it off with her, I'm afraid.

DELIA Well, she's a very complex sort of girl, isn't she? Hasn't really made up her mind. About herself. I mean, I think a

woman sooner or later has simply got to make up her mind about herself. I mean, even if she's someone like Carolyn—you know, Mrs. Brightman's Carolyn—who looks at herself and says, right, I'm a lump I'm going to be a lump but then at least everyone can accept her as a lump. So much simpler.

ERNEST I think he should have married this other one.

DELIA Jan? I don't think she was that keen.

ERNEST She was altogether much jollier.

DELIA Well, we're saddled with Susannah as a daughter-in-law—at least temporarily. We'd better make the best of it—I think I've put these eyes on crooked—we'd better make the best of it.

ERNEST It's their bed. They can lie on it.

DELIA Yes. I think that's one of the problems.

ERNEST Eh?

DELIA B-E-D.

ERNEST B-E-D? Bed?

DELIA Enough said.

ERNEST Good Lord. How do you know?

DELIA One reads between the lines, darling. I've had a little look around their house. You can tell a great deal from people's bedrooms.

ERNEST Can you? Good heavens. (*He looks about*)

DELIA If you know what to look for. Now then. (*She rises*) Do I wear what I wore when I went to the Reynolds or shall I wear the stripe thing that you loathe.

ERNEST I'd wear the Reynolds thing.

DELIA Or there's the little grey.

ERNEST Oh.

DELIA Or the blue.

ERNEST Ah.

DELIA No, that isn't pressed. You decide, darling. Stripy or the other one.

ERNEST Er...

DELIA Or the grey.

ERNEST Er...

DELIA Right I've decided, it's the other one. Good. Now, in the spare wardrobe in Trevor's old room on the top shelf, there's a little black handbag. Could you fetch me that?

DELIA goes into the bathroom.

ERNEST Little black handbag, right. (*Looking round*) I don't think you can tell very much from this bedroom. Except the roof's leaking from somewhere.

ERNEST goes out.

Cross-fade to NICK and JAN's room. JAN comes in in her coat. As soon as NICK, lying in bed, sees her, he groans.

JAN Are you all right? (*She kisses him*)

NICK *moans.*

Is it painful?

NICK Amazingly enough, yes.

JAN Are you comfy? (*She picks up a hook from the floor and puts it on the bed*)

NICK Not really.

JAN Shall I prop you up a bit? (*She bends him forward roughly, puts a pillow behind him and pushes him back*)

NICK No, no. I'll just—aaaah!

JAN You might want to read.

NICK How can I read? I can't do anything.

JAN Well, your book's there. (*She sits at the dressing-table and brushes her hair*)

NICK Oh, it's maddening. A maddening thing to happen. Why this month. I mean. I'm simply bending down pulling on my socks and bang. It's totally unfair. Why me? I mean. I'm the last person in the world who should be stuck in bed.

JAN Yes...

NICK I'm a naturally active person, aren't I? Aren't I? I have to be on the go. I need to be on the go. I'm going to go mad lying here, you know. I'm going to go off my head, I know it. I've only been here since this morning and I'm dying of boredom. How long did that man say?

JAN Well, a few days. (*She puts on a necklace and earrings*)

NICK We know what that means. I'll be here for Christmas.

JAN Don't be stupid.

NICK That doctor obviously didn't know what he was talking about. Bad luck old chap—a bottle of pills and he's off.

JAN They're supposed to relax you.

NICK All they've done is to give me double vision. Why me? I've got so many things I should be—aaah—should be doing. Did you get hold of the office and tell them about the meeting?

JAN Yes, it's cancelled.

NICK And you sent the telegram to Glasgow?

JAN Yes and I spoke to someone at Shelgrove and told them not to expect you. And I cabled America and asked them to ring this number when convenient. OK?

NICK Right.

JAN (*looking at her watch*) I don't know why you pay a secretary. I won't be long. (*She rises*)

NICK Where are you going?

JAN I told you. Malcolm and Kate's housewarming.

NICK Tonight?

JAN They did invite us both. I phoned and told them what had happened. I said I'd just look in for ten minutes.

NICK What about me?

JAN I won't be long.

NICK You don't want to go to Malcolm and Kate's do you?

JAN I said I would.

NICK What? And sit and look at love's young dream all evening.

JAN There'll be lots of others.

NICK Then they won't miss you, will they?

JAN I said I would.

NICK Well, phone them up.

JAN No, I want to.

NICK Why?

JAN Well.

NICK What on earth for?

JAN Well. If you must know—it's simply that—well. Simply. Susannah is going to be there.

NICK Susannah.

JAN Yes. I wanted to see her. It's a good opportunity and I thought I might...

NICK And Trevor.

JAN Yes. Possibly. (*She takes a jacket from the cupboard*)

NICK I should think it's highly probable. Seeing as they're married. Unless he's crippled as well.

JAN Anyway. That's why.

NICK And if it's a choice between Trevor and me, it's going to be Trevor.

JAN No.

NICK Yes.

JAN Not at all.

NICK Yes.

JAN It's just I heard that—well—there's some awful trouble between them. I mean that silly bitch Susannah, she's got no idea at all. She hasn't a clue about Trevor. I know Trevor's impossible sometimes but I think I do know him probably better than anyone...

NICK Oh yes, yes.

JAN I think if I talk to them before they do something they'll regret...

NICK Like her shooting him.

JAN Don't be silly.

NICK Look, he's a very selfish, very spoilt, self-pitying, self-obsessed...

JAN I know, I know.

NICK All right.

JAN Just for ten minutes. I promise. Your book's there. *(She moves to the door)*

NICK Oy!

JAN Mm?

NICK I take it you still prefer me?

JAN I think so. Mostly. *(She kisses him)*

NICK *(wriggling)* Oh.

JAN What is it?

NICK Ah.

JAN What?

NICK This damn bed is full of crumbs.

JAN Crumbs?

NICK From those biscuits. I told you not to give me biscuits.

JAN (*pulling back the side covers and attempting to brush the under sheet beneath him*) OK just a minute, just a minute.

NICK Careful! Careful! CAREFUL!

JAN All right, all right, ALL RIGHT! God, how do they do it? How do these nurses do it? They are saints. I'd go stark raving mad and strangle all the patients. I know I would.

NICK Aaaaah! (*He rolls back*)

JAN Nick, will you kindly lie still.

NICK Ah!

JAN There we are. Is that better?

NICK Aah!

JAN And stop that din. It's not that serious.

NICK Hah!

JAN It is not a disc. Nothing is broken. It is just a little tiny muscle.

NICK It is not a little tiny muscle. It is the main motor muscle that runs right up the spinal cord...

JAN All right. Too bad. Sorry and all that. Won't be long. See you later.

} *Speaking together.*

NICK Thanks for the sympathy.

JAN Well, I'm afraid I have the misfortune to be born with only that much sympathy and that's your lot. You've had it all. 'Bye-bye.

JAN *exits.*

NICK Give my love to Trevor...

JAN (*offstage*) Oh God.

NICK (*shouting after her, propping himself up on one elbow*)
Tell him with me ill in bed, the field's clear for him to... (*He bumps his head on the bedhead*) Aaah! Oh blimey O'Riley.
Why me? Why me?

Cross-fade to MALCOLM and KATE's. MALCOLM comes in with one of KATE's shoes. He looks for somewhere to hide it. He tucks it down the bottom of the unmade bed. MALCOLM sits in the chair innocently. KATE calls off, then enters, holding the other shoe.

KATE Malcolm! Malcolm... I know you're up here, Malcolm.
Come on, Malcolm, what have you done with it?

MALCOLM What?

KATE My other shoe. What have you done with it?

MALCOLM I don't know.

KATE Oh really... (*Seeing the cardboard package*) What's all this?

MALCOLM Ah-ha.

KATE Where did it come from?

MALCOLM I got it today.

KATE I didn't see you.

MALCOLM You don't see everything.

KATE What is it?

MALCOLM A little surprise. Nothing much. A little housewarming
present from me to you.

KATE Whatever is it?

MALCOLM Later, later. When they've all gone.

KATE Whatever is it? It's an ironing board.

MALCOLM An ironing board...

KATE What have you done with my shoe?

MALCOLM Shoe? Shoe?

KATE (*giving up*) Oh...

MALCOLM (*taking off his shoes*) It's going to be a really good party tonight, I can feel it.

KATE I hope so. Oooh. Something to confess.

MALCOLM What?

KATE You know that shelf you put up in the kitchen.

MALCOLM Yes.

KATE It's fallen down again.

MALCOLM Again...

KATE I was ever so careful.

MALCOLM I told you it wasn't designed for great heavy weights.

KATE I only stood the cruet on it. I deliberately didn't go near it in case it fell down. Oh, I'm terribly hot. Have I got time for a bath?

MALCOLM Just about.

KATE Now, the food's all going on the big table. Then I've cleared the sideboard for the drinks. And they can put their coats here on the bed—oh look, I haven't made the bed. Where is it then? (*She starts to make the bed*)

MALCOLM What?

KATE You know what. My blooming shoe.

MALCOLM *whistles to himself and starts to take off his sweater.*

You going to wear your nice shirt?

MALCOLM Which one?

KATE Your nice one.

MALCOLM All right.

KATE You look nice in that.

MALCOLM Yes, it's going to be a really good party. Who've we got coming then?

KATE Oh—everyone—I asked everyone. Except Nick, he can't come.

MALCOLM Nick?

KATE Yes, he hurt his back, poor thing.

MALCOLM Ah.

KATE Jan phoned me. He hurt it this morning. She's coming though.

MALCOLM Good. Good.

KATE And who else is there. Ken and Margaret, of course. And John and Dorothy and Wilfrid and Gareth and Gwen and Mike and Dave and Carole and Dick and Lottie. Gordon and Marge, of course and—er—Susannah and Trevor...

MALCOLM Trevor?

KATE Yes.

MALCOLM And Susannah?

KATE Yes.

MALCOLM Oh dear, oh dear.

KATE Well, I had to. They've had us round twice.

MALCOLM I see. Well, that's that isn't it?

KATE Well.

MALCOLM That's that. Where is it then?

KATE What?

MALCOLM The shirt.

KATE Oh, it's in the airing cupboard. I washed it.

MALCOLM Right.

MALCOLM *goes.*

KATE Could you turn my bath on?

MALCOLM (*offstage*) Right.

KATE *finds her shoe in the bed.*

KATE Oh really. (*She eyes the present. She sees MALCOLM's shoes. She snatches them up and stuffs them into one of the pillow cases*)

MALCOLM *returns with the shirt.*

Very funny.

MALCOLM Eh?

KATE My shoe. Very funny.

MALCOLM Ah.

KATE And I don't want any more foreign bodies in my side of the bed tonight, thank you very much.

MALCOLM Foreign bodies?

KATE You know. Hair brushes and all my bottles and jars—you know.

MALCOLM Wasn't me.

KATE You and your jokes. Is my bath running?

MALCOLM Yes. Now look, you say Jan's coming and Susannah's coming and Trevor's coming?

KATE Yes.

MALCOLM (*putting on his shirt*) That's marvellous. If Trevor and Susannah don't have a fight, then it's ten to one Jan and Susannah will have a fight...

KATE I hope not.

MALCOLM Well, the first sign of any trouble they're all out. I'm telling you. This is going to be a good party, I'm not having any of that. *(He has put on his shirt)*

KATE Has that shrunk?

MALCOLM I don't know, has it?

KATE It looks as if it's shrunk. Or else you're getting fat.

KATE goes off.

MALCOLM Fat? You cheeky thing. *(Calling)* Hey, Blodge. Blodge. *(He takes off the shirt)*

KATE *(offstage)* What?

MALCOLM What have you done with my shoes?

KATE *(offstage)* Ah-ha.

MALCOLM What have you done with them? What's she done with them? *(He sees her shoes. He hides them in the bed)*

KATE *(offstage)* Ooooh!

MALCOLM What?

KATE returns, partially undressed.

KATE Did you put that brush in my bath?

MALCOLM Brush? What brush?

KATE Well, you shouldn't do that. It's very unhygienic. Honestly.

KATE goes. MALCOLM, laughing, follows her.

Cross-fade to ERNEST and DELIA's. DELIA comes in dressed to go. She looks about her.

DELIA *(calling)* Ernest! Ernest!

ERNEST *(offstage)* Coming.

DELIA Where have you got to?

ERNEST enters, dusting himself down.

ERNEST All ready to go, are you?

DELIA Where on earth have you been?

ERNEST I was just having a quick squint into the loft. Seeing if I could see any signs. Water's getting in from somewhere.

DELIA You're filthy dirty.

ERNEST Oh, that's all right. No-one'll notice.

DELIA I have. *(She brushes him down)* Now, don't go and overtip tonight, will you.

ERNEST Overtip?

DELIA You did last year. *(Taking off his jacket and brushing it)* These waiters don't like it.

ERNEST I've never heard them object.

DELIA I read somewhere it was just as bad form to overtip as it was to undertip. If not worse.

ERNEST The bloke last year was pleased enough to take it.

DELIA *(putting the jacket on the bed)* The Spanish one. *(She picks up her hand-bag)*

ERNEST Was he Spanish? Smiling all over his face.

DELIA You obviously don't know the Spanish. That expression was little short of scornful. Desperately embarrassing. Right, we're off.

DELIA *goes.*

ERNEST *(following)* I thought he was an Italian, anyway.

ERNEST, *about to go, stops, returns for his jacket, and exits after DELIA.*

Cross fade to NICK and JAN's. NICK lying in bed has evidently been reading. He had lain down his book on the eiderdown to rest. He now pulls up the eiderdown

round him a little and in doing so, causes his book to fall off the end of the bed.

NICK Oh, no, oh no, oh no...

Cross fade to MALCOLM and KATE's. The room is empty. From off a scream from KATE. She rushes in with just a towel round her pursued by MALCOLM now shirt less again and brandishing an aerosol can of shaving soap.

KATE Now, Malcolm, stop it, do you hear, stop it.

MALCOLM You started it.

KATE I did not start it.

MALCOLM You splashed me.

KATE All right, I'm sorry.

MALCOLM Are you sorry?

KATE Yes, I said I'm sorry.

MALCOLM Very sorry?

KATE Yes, very sorry. Now, let me get dressed, Malcolm, please.

MALCOLM All right. Splash me again, you're in trouble.

KATE I'm getting dressed in the bathroom, I don't trust you.
(She picks up some clothes and the aerosol can)

MALCOLM Where have you hidden my shoes? *(He looks under the bed)*

KATE sprays his back with the shaving soap, and darts off with a shriek.

Right, Blodge, you're going to get it Blodge.

KATE *(offstage)* I've locked the door. You can't come in.

MALCOLM I can wait, Blodge, I can wait. I'll get you. I'll get you.

The doorbell rings.

Somebody's arrived.

KATE (*offstage*) What?

MALCOLM (*grabbing a petticoat of KATE's from a drawer and wiping off the foam*) Somebody's here. That was the doorbell. (*He slips on his shirt*)

KATE (*offstage*) Oh no, it wasn't.

MALCOLM (*putting on some other shoes*) Want a bet? It was the doorbell.

KATE (*offstage*) Really? Well, you answer it then.

MALCOLM I will.

KATE (*offstage*) I don't believe you, Malcolm Newton.

MALCOLM *goes off downstairs.*

(*offstage*) I don't believe you.

KATE *comes in still with the towel round her, the soap spray in her hand.*

Where are you hiding? Malcolm? Malcolm? I can see you, Malcolm. Malcolm, I don't believe you...

Voices are heard coming upstairs.

Oh, my God. (*She runs to the door. She looks round for somewhere. As a last resort, she pulls back the covers and slides into bed*) Ooh! (*She pulls out her shoes from the bed, holds them up then tucks them back under*)

TREVOR *enters.*

MALCOLM (*offstage*) Coats just on the bed, Trevor. I'll fix you a drink.

TREVOR Right, thanks. (*Seeing KATE*) Ah.

KATE Hallo, Trevor.

TREVOR Oh, hallo there. (*He takes off his coat*)

KATE Hallo.

TREVOR Are you ill?

KATE No.

TREVOR Ah.

KATE I'm just getting changed.

TREVOR Ah. Er—Malcolm said it would be all right to put my coat on the bed. Is that OK with you?

KATE Fine.

TREVOR (*putting his coat across KATE*) Won't make you too hot, will it?

KATE Uh?

TREVOR I mean with all the coats on top of you. Could get a bit hot by the middle of the evening.

KATE Oh no. I'm not staying here. I'm just resting.

TREVOR Oh, great.

KATE How are you?

TREVOR Fine.

KATE Good. Susannah?

TREVOR She's all right. I think.

KATE She downstairs, is she?

TREVOR Not that I noticed.

KATE Oh. You didn't come with her then?

TREVOR No. We were travelling separately.

KATE Oh. Well...

TREVOR Yes. (*He laughs to himself somewhat bitterly*)

MALCOLM *enters, with two drinks.*

MALCOLM Are you coming down for this drink, Trevor, or are you... (*Seeing KATE*) Oh.

KATE Hallo.

MALCOLM What are you doing?

KATE Nothing.

MALCOLM Oh. Right. (*Handing TREVOR his drink*) Here you are then.

TREVOR Thanks.

MALCOLM Cheers then.

TREVOR Cheers. (*He drinks*)

MALCOLM (*to KATE*) You all right?

KATE Fine.

MALCOLM Well, what do you think of our place then, Trevor?
Our new little love-nest. What's the verdict? Not bad is it?
Not bad. Quite nice.

TREVOR Yes.

MALCOLM Mind you, we've got a lot to do. Masses. This room for one. I mean, it's not properly furnished or anything. Still, we'll get it together. Give us time. Not bad though, is it?

TREVOR No.

MALCOLM And how are you and—er—well dare I ask—how are you and Susannah these days?

TREVOR *laughs.*

Oh, all right. I've said enough. Said enough.

TREVOR We're still trying to—work something—out. You know.

MALCOLM Good.

KATE Good.

MALCOLM Good.

TREVOR I don't know how successful we're being but we're trying. You know...

MALCOLM Yes—well...

TREVOR It's a totally draining experience though. Once you get yourself committed to a—commitment—like Susannah and I have committed ourselves to, you get a situation of a totally outgoing-non-egotistical-giving-ness—a total submerging, you know.

MALCOLM Yes, yes.

KATE Yes.

TREVOR You feel yourself—being pushed under...

MALCOLM Yes.

TREVOR As if on top of you were a great—a great... (*He tails off*)

KATE Yes.

MALCOLM Yes.

KATE Yes.

A long pause. MALCOLM and KATE wait for TREVOR.

TREVOR (*at length*) Heavy weight. God. (*He turns to face the wall*)

A silence.

KATE (*very quietly*) Malcolm, I wonder if you could possibly get my things out of the bathroom.

MALCOLM Your what?

KATE My things.

MALCOLM Your...? Oh, I see. That's what you're up to. Have you got nothing on under there?

KATE (*embarrassed*) No.

MALCOLM (*laughing*) Do you hear that, Trevor?

TREVOR (*turning*) Eh?

MALCOLM She's got nothing on under there.

TREVOR No, no.

MALCOLM Hey hey! Wait there, I'll...

The doorbell rings.

Ah, somebody else. Hang on.

MALCOLM *darts out.*

KATE (*calling after him vainly*) Could you fetch my clothes before you... Trevor, I'm going to have to ask you in a minute if you'd mind... Trevor.

TREVOR Sorry, Kath. I was miles away. I'm sorry. Kath, listen.

KATE Kate, yes.

TREVOR I was just thinking, what is the point of it all really. You and I. Take you and me. We start out in this world with the innocence of children.

We start our lives like little children.

KATE Well, we are.

TREVOR Have you ever studied children at close range?

KATE Oh yes. I like children.

TREVOR I have. You have a close look at them sometime.

KATE I have.

TREVOR Really closely. And then look at yourself. You'll be appalled at what's happened to you, Kath. And this—this is the test. You try and think of three—I'm only asking for three—three good reasons why you shouldn't throw yourself out of that window here and now.

KATE I haven't got any clothes on.

TREVOR Three good reasons, eh.

KATE Yes.

TREVOR See what I mean?

KATE Yes, I follow your reasoning.

TREVOR You do?

KATE Yes. I don't agree with it but I think I can follow it.

TREVOR You either don't think things out at all or you're lucky, Kath. I'll give you the benefit of the doubt.

MALCOLM enters with a pile of coats. He also has KATE's clothes.

MALCOLM Whole load of people. Mike, Dave, Graham and Anna, Gareth and Gwen, Bob and Terry... Oh, Trevor.

TREVOR Mm?

MALCOLM Now listen, Susannah's arrived.

TREVOR Oh.

MALCOLM Now, there's a house rule tonight. No arguments with your own wife. Anybody else's wife but not your own, all right?

TREVOR I should tell her—not me.

MALCOLM Now, Trevor, one word you're out.

TREVOR I'll try, Malcolm I'll try.

TREVOR goes.

MALCOLM I must say Susannah seems in good form. I opened the door to her, she burst into tears and ran straight into the bathroom. Oh well, press on... Hurry up and come down. They're all arriving.

KATE I will. Are those my clothes?

MALCOLM Oh yes—here. *(He throws them to her)*

KATE At last. *(She snatches them gratefully)*

MALCOLM goes out to the hall.

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