

# 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](http://www.samuelfrench.com)

[www.samuelfrench.co.uk](http://www.samuelfrench.co.uk)

*Samuel French Acting Edition*

# A Feminine Ending

*by* Sarah Treem

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

SAMUELFRENCH.COM

SAMUELFRENCH.CO.UK

Copyright © 2008 by Sarah Treem  
All Rights Reserved

*A FEMININE ENDING* 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 978-0-573-65235-6

[www.SamuelFrench.com](http://www.SamuelFrench.com)

[www.SamuelFrench.co.uk](http://www.SamuelFrench.co.uk)

**FOR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES**

**UNITED STATES AND CANADA**

[Info@SamuelFrench.com](mailto:Info@SamuelFrench.com)

1-866-598-8449

**UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE**

[Plays@SamuelFrench.co.uk](mailto:Plays@SamuelFrench.co.uk)

020-7255-4302

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French, depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *A FEMININE ENDING* 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 *A FEMININE ENDING* 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.

In addition the following credit must be given in all programs and publicity information distributed in association with this piece: "Playwrights Horizons, Inc., New York City, produced the World Premiere of *A FEMININE ENDING* Off Broadway in 2007, *A FEMININE ENDING* was originally developed at JAW; A Playwrights Festival, Portland Center Stage, 2006."

A FEMININE ENDING premiered at Playwrights Horizons, Tim Sanford, Artistic Director, Leslie Marcus, Managing Director in October, 2007. The Stage Manager was Robyn Henry with sets by Cameron Anderson, costumes by Michael Krass, lighting by Ben Stanton, and sound by Obadiah Eaves. The production was directed by Blair Brown with the following cast:

**JACK** ..... Alec Beard  
**AMANDA** ..... Gillian Jacobs  
**KIM** ..... Marsha Mason  
**DAVID** ..... Richard Masur  
**BILLY** ..... Joe Paulik

## CHARACTERS

**AMANDA**, Mid 20s, oboist, aspiring composer.

**JACK**, Mid 20s, singer, up-and-coming pop star.

**KIM**, Early 50s, Amanda's mother. Homemaker.

**DAVID**, Early 50s, Amanda's father. Insurance salesman.

**BILLY**, Mid 20s, Postman.

## SETTING

Amanda's house in Brooklyn. Her parents' house in New Hampshire.  
The recesses of her mind.

## TIME

Present.

**A note about Amanda:** She is a character who hasn't quite found her voice. But she is not defeated. The actress playing her should fight against that choice. The internal conflict must be active.

**A note about the scene titles:** They should appear, somehow, on the set, between movements.

**One last note:** These people are not sentimentalists.



## MOVEMENT ONE: MUSIC

*Lights rise on a stage with nothing but a piano and a girl, named AMANDA, down in front.*

**AMANDA.** It is known, by the few that know enough to care and care enough to know, that any piece of music has one of two beginnings. They are gendered. One is female. The other is male. Isn't that strange?

*Lights fade down on AMANDA and then rise again, instantly. Like a blink.*

**AMANDA.** I have become increasingly aware of the tyranny of gender. It's everywhere. We're obsessed with it. Men and women. Women and men. How they differ. How they fit. We don't use gender nouns in English. A door is just a door; it's not a girl or a boy door. That used to make me feel superior to French people. Now I envy them. If I had known, as a child, that EVERYTHING has a sex, I would not have wasted so much time trying to be a famous composer. Le compositeur. It doesn't have a feminine.

*Lights down and up again. AMANDA's mother KIM, appears and hands her an oboe.*

**AMANDA.** But such information was deliberately withheld from me. My mother, who was too stoned to help out much during the feminist revolution, was nevertheless quite proud that it had occurred during the bloom of her youth. She insisted that I reap the benefits. By becoming something totally extraordinary.

**KIM.** Play the oboe. Nobody plays the oboe.

**AMANDA.** An oboist.

*KIM exits. AMANDA wets the reed. The lights go down and come up.*

AMANDA. There's a reason nobody plays the oboe. If played poorly –

AMANDA *blows a pitchless sound.*

AMANDA. – It sounds like a dying duck. But if played well –

AMANDA *plays a perfect A.*

AMANDA. It is the sound that tunes the entire orchestra. Strong and lonely. The instrument whose tonal quality best approximates a human voice. And it can't be tuned. There are no strings to tighten or gears to adjust. It cannot be anything other than it already is. It's like the Hamlet of instruments.

AMANDA *starts to play slowly. She stops herself.*

AMANDA. It is known, by the few that know enough to care and care enough to know, that any piece of music has one of two beginnings. They are gendered. A masculine piece begins with an emphasis or "stress" on the first beat. A feminine piece begins with the "stress" on the second beat. Or sometimes, the third.

This is a feminine beginning.

*Enter JACK. They smile at each other. He takes the oboe and exits.*

AMANDA. Gorgeous, isn't he? That's Jack Handel. If you haven't heard of him yet – you're about to. He's going to be "huge". Everyone says so.

JACK *starts bringing on the furniture of their apartment. He sets it up behind AMANDA as she speaks.*

AMANDA. We met in New York City. We were both getting our graduate degrees in music. I had become a composer. That's a common progression for a career oboist. Because we tune the orchestra we begin to think symphonically very early on.

Jack was a year behind me, majoring in voice.

There's a club in the basement of the university and on Tuesdays they have an open mic night. I used to go sometimes and play my latest compositions. Jack would always be there, singing.

**JACK**, *who has finished setting up the bedroom, takes a spotlight, downstage left, and sings something to the audience.*

**AMANDA.** He has this way of convincing every person in the audience that he is singing directly to them. His manager, Hillary, calls it “star quality”. She says that’s what separates Jack from the people who sing in subways.

Hillary says star quality boils down to whether or not a normal person thinks you would sleep with them. Hillary says the quality manifests itself differently in men and women. Female stars need to be warm and inviting and it helps if they seem a little confused. Or slightly depressed. But the male star must make each woman believe he would choose her from a crowd to seduce. So he can’t be depressed at all. A woman has to see her future in his eyes. Hillary says this is because men want to fuck and run and woman want to submit and be kept. Before Hillary became a manager, she wrote self-help books for single women. And that, according to Jack, is what makes her the best in the business.

**JACK** *stops singing and approaches AMANDA.*

**JACK.** Hey.

**AMANDA.** Hey.

**JACK.** I really enjoyed your piece tonight.

**AMANDA.** Really?

**JACK.** I was thinking - we should collaborate on something.

**AMANDA.** That would be great! I’m working on a woodwind quartet right now but I could totally change the oboe to voice.

**JACK.** Why don’t we start with something a little easier?

**AMANDA.** Like what?

**JACK.** Like this.

(**JACK** *kisses AMANDA*)

**AMANDA.** See, for me, the quartet is easier.

**JACK** *kisses AMANDA again and moves her back upstage. They fall on the bed, kissing. Lights down.*

## MOVEMENT TWO: FAME

*The lights come up again, suddenly. JACK is sleeping. AMANDA is sitting up, with the covers pulled around her.*

**AMANDA.** *(a conspiracy with the audience)* Before I knew it, I was Jack Handel's girlfriend. And suddenly I was the target of unmitigated resentment from every hipless hipster below fourteenth street. Because anybody who was anybody in the know already knew that Jack Handel was about to be huge.

**JACK** *snores loudly and turns over.*

**AMANDA** *sneaks quietly out of bed, wrapped in the bed-sheet, and sits down at her piano. She puts her hands on the keyboard, then turns back to the audience.*

**AMANDA.** In the moments he isn't singing, Jack is a hot mess. But I like that about him. Taking care of him makes me feel strong. Competent. Like a woman. Well, like my mother anyway.

At night, we lie in bed together, hands clasped and talk about how to activate our potential.

Jack sleeps with earplugs because I get all my best ideas in my dreams.

*She turns to the piano. She turns back to the audience.*

**AMANDA.** There's this song I want to write. I've been hearing it my whole life in my head. It goes like this...

*She turns to the piano. Puts her hands on the keyboard. Turns back.*

**AMANDA.** It begins with the sound of snow melting on the roof of the house I grew up in and dripping slowly from the gutter into tin pails...

**AMANDA** *plays some very high, tin-sounding notes.*

**AMANDA.** And then the frogs that live in the tin pails awaken...

AMANDA *plays some low, croaking chords.*

AMANDA. The front door opens with the first burst of sun,  
and then ...

AMANDA's *fingers float over the keyboard.*

AMANDA. And then...

AMANDA *gets lost in the moment of composition. She doesn't know the chord.*

AMANDA. And then...

AMANDA *slowly, softly begins to play Chopin's very recognizable Nocturne No. 2 in E-flat. JACK wakes up. He sits up in bed. Takes the earplugs out of his ears.*

JACK. Did you write that?

AMANDA *shakes her head.*

AMANDA. Chopin.

JACK. Huh. He sounds like you.

AMANDA. Did I wake you? I'm sorry.

JACK. It's okay. I was having a nightmare. I was famous.

AMANDA *nods. She keeps playing.*

JACK. Everyone around me had beaks instead of noses.

AMANDA *keeps playing.*

JACK. Will you still love me when I'm famous?

AMANDA *stops.*

JACK. Why'd you stop?

AMANDA. You make it sound inevitable.

JACK. You just have to trust that life has a road mapped out  
for you.

AMANDA. Is that from your Celebrity Quotes Calendar?

JACK. Yes.

AMANDA. Who said it?

JACK. Orlando Bloom.

*Beat.*

AMANDA smiles. *She turns back to the piano and plays a few measures.*

JACK. I like Chopin.

AMANDA. This stuff is mine.

JACK. How's the symphony coming?

AMANDA. It's coming.

JACK. I can't wait to hear it.

AMANDA. Neither can I.

AMANDA sighs. *Frustrated.*

JACK. It's clearly time for my secret symphony-summoning dance.

AMANDA. Your what?

JACK. Go ahead. Start playing.

AMANDA starts playing the beginning of her symphony.

JACK starts to dance, silly but joyously.

JACK. Keep playing. I think it's working.

AMANDA shakes her head. JACK stops dancing.

AMANDA. You amaze me.

JACK. Come back to bed and I'll really knock your socks off.

AMANDA gets back in the bed.

AMANDA. I have something to tell you

JACK. I have something to tell you. You go first.

AMANDA. I got offered a job. Composing.

JACK. Baby! For which orchestra?

AMANDA. Jingles. For an advertising firm.

JACK. Oh. Hey that's something.

AMANDA. It's money.

JACK. Money is good.

AMANDA. I need to make a living Jack.

JACK. I know.

AMANDA. Not everyone has a trust fund.

JACK. Wow. Okay. Hey, bite me.

*JACK turns his back on her and rolls over. Furious.*

AMANDA. I'm sorry.

JACK. You should be. That money keeps my whole family shackled to my father. He tells my sister who to marry. He tells my mother what medication to take.

AMANDA. I know.

JACK. He tells me that after I get this music thing out of my system, I'm going to business school.

AMANDA. I know. I know.

JACK. No, you don't, because you've got these provincial little parents who think you're a genius.

AMANDA. What was your news?

JACK. What?

AMANDA. You said you had something to tell me.

JACK. Oh. I got a manager. Her name is Hillary. She represents Nick Lachey.\*

AMANDA. Are you serious?

JACK. Yeah.

AMANDA. Jack!

JACK. What?

AMANDA. That's great.

JACK. She thinks I should quit school and concentrate.

AMANDA. Are you going to do it?

JACK. I don't know. I was going to ask you what I should do. Before I got angry at you. Now I don't know who to ask.

AMANDA. I think you should do it.

JACK. You do?

AMANDA. Absolutely.

JACK. My father will disown me.

AMANDA. Who cares?

---

\* If Nick Lachey is no longer relevant, substitute the name of a new B-list popstar.

JACK. He'll stop sending me an allowance.

AMANDA. I have money. I write advertising jingles.

JACK. No –

AMANDA. I can pay the rent for a while.

JACK. No! I didn't mean – I just wanted to know if you thought it was a good idea.

AMANDA. It's a great idea. You have to do it.

JACK. You're not paying my rent –

AMANDA. It will only be for a little while –

JACK. It might take longer.

AMANDA. Jack Handel. You are going to be huge. Everyone says so.

JACK. And then I'll pay for you.

AMANDA. Deal.

*They grin at each other.*

JACK. You and I are going to have an extraordinary life.

AMANDA. Will we be mad with happiness?

JACK. I won't be.

AMANDA. Why not?

JACK. It's not in my nature. I will have a horizon pool, however.

AMANDA. I want to be happy.

JACK. I can't promise you that. I can only promise you a horizon pool and an extraordinary life.

*JACK's phone starts to ring. He picks it up.*

JACK. *(surprised.)* It's Hillary.

*JACK heads off the stage.*

AMANDA. *(to the audience)* I know what you're thinking. You don't have to say it. My mother already did.

*KIM, enters with a phone. AMANDA picks up a phone in her bedroom and holds the receiver directly out towards the audience. The sound echoes through the theatre.*

**KIM.** ARE YOU INSANE?!

**AMANDA.** (*into the receiver*) I don't think so. Why?

**AMANDA** *holds the receiver back out.*

**KIM.** They have organizations for people who want to throw their money away, Amanda. They're called charities.

**AMANDA.** (*into the receiver*) I'm not throwing my money away.

**KIM.** You're not?

**AMANDA.** No. Jack is, like, an investment.

**KIM.** Mutual funds are, like, investments. Aspiring musicians in New York are like garbage disposals.

**JACK.** Baby?

**JACK** *enters, holding something behind his back. He's trying to get AMANDA's attention.*

**AMANDA.** Mom, I gotta go.

**KIM.** What about your music, Amanda? When are you going to work on that?

**AMANDA.** I'm working on it.

**KIM.** When was the last time you finished a piece?

**AMANDA.** I'm working on a symphony. They take a while.

**JACK** *grows impatient.*

**AMANDA.** I'll call you back, okay?

**KIM.** You're throwing your life away – all your god-given talent – on a good-for-nothing –

**AMANDA.** I love you too –

**KIM.** Amanda, I have to talk to you. It's about your father –

**AMANDA.** Give my love to Daddy. Bye.

**AMANDA** *hangs up the phone.*

**JACK.** I got you a Christmas present.

**AMANDA.** It's a little early.

**JACK.** I couldn't wait.

**JACK** *pulls a ring box from behind his back.*

**JACK.** Will you marry me, Amanda Blue?

**AMANDA.** Did you steal that?

**JACK.** I bought it.

**AMANDA.** With what?

**JACK.** Money.

**AMANDA.** Your father's money?

**JACK.** I signed.

**AMANDA.** You what?

**JACK.** I signed. *I signed.* With Virgin records, baby. I'm going to cut an album!

**AMANDA.** You signed?! When?

**JACK.** This afternoon. Hillary sent my demo to Virgin. They called me into their offices and asked me all about myself. I told them about me and a little about you and we signed a contract and then they gave me money to buy you something nice. I was gonna get you a new oboe, but then I thought about this.

*Beat.*

What do you think?

**AMANDA.** I don't know what to say.

**JACK.** Will you wear it?

**AMANDA.** I'll wear it.

**JACK.** You'll wear it? Then you like it?

**AMANDA.** I do.

*They kiss.*

**AMANDA.** I have to call my mother. I have to tell her.

**JACK.** Okay, call your mother. I'm gonna call my manager.

**JACK exits.**

**AMANDA picks up the phone.**

*Lights back up on KIM's phone. It rings. KIM rushes on to answer it.*

**KIM.** Hello?

AMANDA. Mom?

KIM. Oh Amanda, thank god. Your father is in the other room, so I can't talk too loudly –

AMANDA. I'm getting married!

*KIM stops. Holds the phone out. Stares at it.*

AMANDA. Can you hear me? Hello?

*KIM hangs up the phone and walks offstage, out of the light.*

AMANDA. Mom?

*JACK reenters.*

JACK. Hillary said nobody likes a married rock star. She wants to know if we'd consider having a baby out of wedlock instead.

AMANDA. You told her no, right?

*JACK takes out his phone. Presses a number. Smiles at AMANDA.*

JACK. *(Into the phone)* Hi, Hillary, it's Jack. Ah ... she says no.

*JACK hangs up the phone. Off AMANDA's look –*

JACK. I hate saying no to my manager.

*AMANDA takes off her ring.*

JACK. Oh no, don't do that. Why are you doing that? Listen, this is all new to me. I don't know how to behave. There seem to be these rules – but no one tells you what they are – and I don't want to piss anybody off. Not just for me – for you as well. I'm trying to build us a life, an extraordinary life.

*AMANDA puts the ring back on.*

*A mail slot in the door opens up and a thick envelope falls through.*

JACK. How long have we been talking like this?

AMANDA. About four months.

JACK. Shit.

JACK *rushes off stage.*

*Somewhere on set, a projection flashes "Four Months Later" then disappears.*

AMANDA. Last summer, I finished a concerto that I was particularly proud of and submitted it for consideration in the New York Symphonique's Spring New Voices festival. A month ago, I got a letter saying it had been chosen as a finalist. Now the New York Symphonique is not the Philharmonic but it is a New York orchestra and a good one. A concerto at the spring festival would launch my career. The finalists are supposed to submit a personal statement. All I've got down so far is "Please pick me." It was due last week.

JACK *bursts through the door, and picks up the package.*

JACK. Hey.

AMANDA. Hey.

JACK. You got a package.

*He hands AMANDA the package. She looks at the address.*

AMANDA. Who's Katrina?

JACK. What are you doing?

AMANDA. Writing my personal –

JACK. Want to go out to dinner with the President of Virgin?

AMANDA. As in Records? Sure! When?

JACK. Right now. In fact, we're late.

AMANDA. Wait, what?

JACK. I'm sorry – I meant to call you earlier but the day went by so quick.

AMANDA. But I have to write this statement of interest tonight.

JACK. You haven't done that yet?

AMANDA. When was I supposed to do it? I haven't even worked on my symphony in weeks. I'm, like, eight jingles behind. The house is a disaster. I have a wedding to plan –

JACK. I didn't realize planning a wedding would be such a chore –

AMANDA. Of course you didn't. Because you haven't helped with any of it.

*Beat.*

JACK. It is not my fault you're not composing. There's the goddamn piano.

AMANDA *turns away from him. She rips open her package.*

JACK. Amanda, I'm sorry. Can't you just come out to dinner now and hate me later?

*Beat. No response.*

Who is that from?

AMANDA. One of your fans.

JACK. You're opening my fan mail now?

AMANDA. It was addressed to me.

JACK. Give me that!

AMANDA *hands JACK the package. He looks inside and recoils at its contents.*

JACK. What is that?

AMANDA. It's a bloody tampon.

JACK. This – this is sick.

AMANDA. *(handing Jack the letter)* And a death threat.

JACK. *(reading)* Hillary said this might happen if I announced my engagement. It's a good sign. It means I'm developing a loyal fan base. They don't want me to get married. You should probably just stop opening the mail.

AMANDA *looks at JACK like "you've got to be kidding"*

*me”.*

**JACK.** I'll talk to her, okay. I'm sorry. And I'm *tired* of being sorry. Can't you try a little harder to understand what I'm going through? I'm scared, baby. What if my album is terrible? What if nobody buys it? I dropped out of school. I have nothing to fall back on.

*The telephone rings. AMANDA and JACK look at each other.*

**AMANDA.** It's not for me.

**JACK.** Will you get dressed?

**AMANDA.** Fine.

*Amanda heads offstage.*

**JACK** *picks up the phone.*

**JACK.** Hello?

**AMANDA.** (*referencing the letter*) If it's Katrina, tell her "cease" is spelled with one s and "desist" is spelled with two.

**JACK.** It's your mother.

*AMANDA takes the phone from JACK. JACK points to his watch and mouths "five minutes". She nods. He takes the bloody tampon and letter offstage.*

**AMANDA.** Hi Mom.

*Spotlight up on KIM, talking on the phone downstage.*

**KIM.** What are you doing?

**AMANDA.** Right now? I'm talking to you.

**KIM.** Can you come home?

**AMANDA.** To New Hampshire?

**KIM.** Are you free?

**AMANDA.** When?

**KIM.** Now.

**AMANDA.** What's the matter?

**KIM.** I need your help with something.

**AMANDA.** What?

**KIM.** I can't tell you about it over the phone –

**AMANDA.** Is it illegal?

**KIM.** Hold on a second, your father's just leaving –

**AMANDA.** Where's he going?

**KIM.** He has a conference this weekend in Toronto – (*calling offstage*) David, dear, you better go outside – the taxi will be here any moment.

*Amanda's father, DAVID, appears down stage right, with a suitcase in his hand. He looks tired.*

**DAVID.** Aren't you going to kiss me good-bye?

**KIM.** I can't darling, I'm on the phone with your daughter. She's having a breakdown.

**AMANDA.** No I'm not!

**KIM.** (*to DAVID*) I'll blow you a kiss from here.

*KIM blows DAVID a kiss. He watches it fly past his shoulder.*

**DAVID.** I missed.

*DAVID and his suitcase open the door and exit.*

**KIM.** Are you coming or not?

**AMANDA.** Who me?

**KIM.** Yes or no, Mandy. Say yes.

*JACK re-enters. He points to his watch.*

**AMANDA.** You can't give me a clue as to what this is all about?

**KIM.** Amanda, there comes a time in every young woman's life where she must take a giant step forward into the abyss we call maturity and acknowledge the painful, terrifying truth that her mother is a human being.

**AMANDA.** I know you're human, Mom.

**KIM.** Are you coming or not?

**AMANDA.** Of course, if you need me to come, I'll come –

**KIM.** Good. Leave now. I'll start dinner.

*KIM hangs up the phone. Lights down on KIM.*

**JACK.** What's up?

**AMANDA.** That was my mother.

**JACK.** She hates me.

**AMANDA.** She doesn't hate you.

**JACK.** Yes she does. It doesn't matter. In a few years, I'll be financing her retirement, so she'll have to be nice to my face. She wants you to go somewhere?

**AMANDA.** Yes. Home.

**JACK.** When?

**AMANDA.** Tonight.

**JACK.** Why?

**AMANDA.** I think something's wrong.

**JACK.** What?

**AMANDA.** She wouldn't tell me.

**JACK.** You told her you'd come?

**AMANDA.** I said, if she needed me –

**JACK.** What about dinner?

**AMANDA.** I... I'll call her back.

**JACK.** Your mom is fine. She's just lonely. And she knows she can call you up and get you to drop everything because she breastfed you guilt milk. You're a twenty-five year old woman! You're getting married. Call her back and tell her you have a commitment this weekend but you would be happy to visit her sometime next week. Okay?

**AMANDA.** Okay Jack.

**JACK.** The limo will be here in three minutes to pick us up.

*The phone rings again. AMANDA answers it.*

**AMANDA.** Mom?

*Beat.*

It's Hillary.

AMANDA *hands the phone to JACK and goes offstage to change.*

JACK. Hey Hil.

Yeah, I'm all ready to go.

No, I parted it a little off-center, like we talked about.

Yeah, I think it opens up my face too. Amanda's just changing.

Amanda, she's –

Oh, she isn't? But I thought he said I should bring a –  
Oh. *Oh.*

No, that's great.

No, I understand.

Yeah, no problem. See you soon. Bye.

AMANDA *reenters, looking lovely, in a little black dress and heels. She's putting on earrings.*

AMANDA. Is this okay?

JACK. You look amazing.

AMANDA. I'm excited. Oh, I have to call my mom back –

*She reaches for the phone. He stops her.*

JACK. I – I fucked up. Hillary. Invited herself. To go with me. Tonight.

AMANDA. As your date?

JACK. No, it's a business dinner, really. They say bring a "date" but you're supposed to bring your manager. Everyone knows that apparently. Except me.

*The apartment buzzer buzzes.*

JACK. That's her now. I'm sorry.

AMANDA. That's okay.

JACK. I won't stay out late.

AMANDA. Take your time. I have to write my personal statement –

JACK. Please don't go to New Hampshire tonight.

*A slight beat.*

AMANDA. Okay.

JACK. We'll talk about everything when I get home.

AMANDA. Sure.

*The buzzer buzzes again.*

JACK. We are "this" close to an extraordinary life.

AMANDA. Jack, go.

JACK. I love you.

JACK *kisses her and leaves.*

AMANDA *picks up the telephone.*

*Light up on KIM's phone, ringing. KIM enters and picks it up.*

KIM. Hello?

AMANDA. I'm on my way.

*Lights down.*

## MOVEMENT THREE: MARRIAGE

*As JACK and DAVID take off the furniture of the New York apartment and bring on the furniture of the New Hampshire house, Amanda moves back downstage and addresses the audience.*

**AMANDA.** (*direct address*) When I was a girl, around twelve or so – I wanted to write an opera. I knew that Mozart had done it even earlier and he was a boy, so I figured it couldn't be that hard.

Operas are about love but at twelve the only person I truly loved was my mother. I thought she was terrific. So I decided to write an opera about her.

When I was young I heard harmony everywhere. The garbage truck harmonized with the lawn mower. The dishwasher harmonized with the air conditioner. My mother harmonized with my father. Their harmony was the most beautiful. Intricate but effortless. Even when they argued. It's all about balance. One voice, one strand, compliments the other through contradiction. So when my mother hits a series of rapid sliding high notes like:

*KIM enters and speaks to the audience.*

**KIM.** "Davidwhatdoyouthinkyourdoing?/Youcannotinviteyourbossoverfordinnertonightwehavenofoodinthehouseandthere'sablizzardcomingandbesidesdoIlooklikeyourmothertoyou?"

**AMANDA.** My father would interject low, staccato notes at punctuating intervals like:

*DAVID stops whatever he's doing, puts down whatever he's lifting, and faces KIM.*

**KIM.** "Davidwhatdoyouthinkyourdoing?/YoucannotinviteyourbossoverfordinnertonightwehavenofoodinthehouseandtheresablizzardcomingandbesidesdoIlooklikeyourmothertoyou?"

**DAVID.** (*intercutting Kim's diatribe*) "I thought – Alright – I'll call – Kim – Enough!"

**AMANDA.** And they'd be harmonizing.

**DAVID and KIM** glare at each other.

**AMANDA.** And sometimes, when you least expected it, they'd come back together, at the height of the interval, so completely you would think there had been only one simple melody all along. One voice. No partition.

**KIM AND DAVID.** I heard you!

**KIM and DAVID** exit.

*Lights shift. AMANDA turns and suddenly, she's in the house in New Hampshire. The room is lit by candlelight. It's decorated "colonially" with wooden figurines and hand-dipped candles, family pictures on the mantle and a piano in the corner.*

*In the center of the room, by candlelight, KIM is packing a suitcase very carefully, ritualistically, laying tissue paper in layers between the articles of clothing.*

**AMANDA.** (*softly*) Mom?

**KIM** looks up. Gasps.

**KIM.** Why didn't you knock?

**AMANDA.** The lights were out. I didn't think anyone was home.

**KIM.** Good. That's the point, isn't it?

**AMANDA.** What's the point, Mom?

**KIM.** Vacancy. Abandonment. It would be pointless to knock. Or stop in for a chat. We are, so very clearly, not at home.

**AMANDA.** You want people to think you've gone away?

**KIM.** I must be left alone to work in peace. Did anyone see you come in? Does anyone know you're here?

**AMANDA.** Jack knows where I am.

**KIM.** Who?

AMANDA. Jack, Mom, you know Jack. My fiancée.

KIM. Jack. Yes. You're still seeing him, I gather?

AMANDA. We're engaged Mom.

KIM. Oh don't say that.

AMANDA. Why don't you like him? He's a really good guy.

KIM. He's unbearably formal.

AMANDA. You make him nervous!

KIM. I don't make anyone nervous. Not even squirrels.

AMANDA. Squirrels?

KIM. They don't find me intimidating. Not in the least. Everyone else – they're afraid of. Your father looks in their direction and they scatter. But me, I'll be walking down the road, and there, right in the middle of the path, two squirrels will be having an argument –

AMANDA. An argument?

KIM. A discussion. A conversation. *Whatever*. The point is, they don't move. Not even when I'm half a foot away from them. Not even if I step over them. They stay right where they are. As if I wasn't even there. As if I didn't even exist. I have become invisible.

AMANDA. No, Mom, you're just in a rut –

KIM. Do not pity me. I'm not seeking sympathy. It was a deliberate choice. Phase one.

AMANDA. Phase one?

KIM. Are you aware that you're repeating everything I say?

AMANDA. What are you talking about?!

KIM. You just said "phase one", after I did. Earlier you said "Squirrels"? And then "an argument"? You're trying to belittle me. But it won't work. I'm determined to do it.

AMANDA. Determined to do it?

KIM. There you go again –

AMANDA. What are you determined to do?

*Beat.*

KIM. Leave your father, of course.

AMANDA *sits down. She is suddenly very, very tired.*

AMANDA. Of course.

KIM. You just did it again!

AMANDA. When?

KIM. This weekend.

AMANDA. That's why you needed me to come up.

KIM. To help me pack. We need to be gone by the time  
your father comes home.

AMANDA. Which is?

KIM. Tomorrow night.

*Pause.*

KIM. That's plenty of time, Amanda.

*No response.*

KIM. At school, some of my students snort Ritalin when they have to stay up all night to study. They gave me some, in powder form. Ground it right there in front of me.

KIM *takes some white powder out of her purse to show*  
AMANDA.

KIM. Is that what cocaine looks like?

AMANDA. I don't know, Mom. I don't do coke.

KIM. Still, now that Jack's a rockstar, you must be exposed to it.

AMANDA. He's not a rockstar.

KIM. That's not what my students say.

AMANDA. Your students are talking about Jack?

KIM. The ones that snort Ritalin are. They somehow found his webpage and saw he had dedicated some songs to Amanda Blue. They only wanted to know if you and I were related. I gave them your address. They wanted to send him something to sign.

AMANDA. Mom, do you have a student named Katrina?

KIM. Yes, actually.

AMANDA. Don't give my address out anymore, okay?

KIM. Why? Did she send a letter?

AMANDA. It's just not a good idea.

KIM. Are you hungry? I made tuna melts.

AMANDA. Mom, I –

KIM. Thank you so much for coming, Mandy. You can't possibly imagine what it means. It's times like these when I remember why I had a daughter. (*Beat*) That didn't come out right.

AMANDA. Don't thank me. You know I'm leaving.

KIM. You just got here.

AMANDA. And I realize I made a mistake. So I'm leaving.

KIM. I think somebody's a little cranky. I think somebody could use a tuna melt –

AMANDA. I have a wedding to plan Mom. I have a job. I have a life back in New York that I cannot believe I let you coax me away from because Dad is gone for the weekend and you're feeling lonely.

*Beat.*

KIM. I'm leaving your father, Amanda.

AMANDA. Like hell you are.

KIM. Why do you think I've packed this suitcase?

AMANDA. Because you're bored and you're looking for a fantasy to entertain. This isn't the first time you've done this. Remember Nantucket?

KIM. That was different.

AMANDA. How was that different?

KIM. I didn't go through with it then.

AMANDA. And you're not going to go through with it now. We're going race around the house all weekend, in the dark apparently, packing up the silver and the china and the linens –

KIM. I'm leaving the linens. They're hideous. They belonged to his mother –

AMANDA. And you're going to change your mind at the

very last moment, right before Daddy comes back, and shove everything into the closet and we're all going to have dinner tomorrow night as if nothing ever happened.

**KIM.** It's different this time.

**AMANDA.** It took me a year to look Daddy in the eye again after Nantucket.

**KIM.** You always were such a ridiculously sensitive child –

**AMANDA.** You told me he was a bad man –

**KIM.** You were ten. Was I supposed to tell you your father hadn't fucked me in a year?

*Beat.*

**AMANDA.** No!

**KIM.** Well, what should I have done? Left you there? If you hadn't thrown such a temper tantrum we might have made that ferry.

*Beat.*

**AMANDA.** I'll make it easier for you this time. I'll get out of your way now.

*AMANDA gets up and grabs her coat.*

**KIM.** This time I have proof.

*AMANDA stops.*

**AMANDA.** What kind of proof?

**KIM.** Hold on. Just hold on.

*KIM exits into the kitchen and comes back with a small package of tin foil. She hands it to AMANDA.*

**AMANDA.** What is this?

**KIM.** Open it and see.

**AMANDA.** Why is it cold?

**KIM.** It was in the refrigerator.

*AMANDA pulls out a pair of hot pink, lacey women's panties.*

# FINISH READING THIS SCRIPT

---

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

[www.samuelfrench.com](http://www.samuelfrench.com)

[www.samuelfrench.co.uk](http://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.