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SF PERUSALS

Large Animal Games

by Steve Yockey

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH

FOUNDED 1830

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LARGE ANIMAL GAMES opened on Nov 6, 2009 as a co-world premiere at the Dad's Garage Top Shelf Theatre in Atlanta, Georgia. Produced by Dad's Garage Theatre Company (Scott Warren, Artistic Producer; Lena Carstens, Managing Director). Directed by Melissa Foulger. The cast was as follows:

JIMMY . . . . . Joe Sykes
ALICIA . . . . . Whittney Millsap
STAN . . . . . Clint Sowell
ROSE . . . . . Erin Burnett
NICOLE . . . . . Alison Hastings
MIGUEL . . . . . Louis Gregory
VALERIE . . . . . Shannon Byrd

Scenic Design . . . . . Oz Dillman
Lighting . . . . . Ben Tilley
Sound . . . . . Rene Delefont
Costumes . . . . . Liz Faughnan

LARGE ANIMAL GAMES opened on Nov 7, 2009 as a co-world premiere at LaVal's Subterranean Theatre in Berkeley, California. Produced by Impact Theatre with (Melissa Hillman, Artistic Director; Cheshire Isaacs, Managing Director). Directed by Melissa Hillman. The cast was as follows:

JIMMY . . . . . Jai Sahai
ALICIA . . . . . Marissa Keltie
STAN . . . . . Timothy Redmond
ROSE . . . . . Elisa Dunn
NICOLE . . . . . Cindy Im
MIGUEL . . . . . Roy Landaverde
VALERIE . . . . . Leontyne Mbele-Mbong

Scenic Design . . . . . Sarah Coykendall
Lighting . . . . . Jacqueline Steager
Sound . . . . . Colin Trevor
Costumes . . . . . Virginia Thorne

CHARACTERS

ROSE – A woman, twenties; lots of hope, lots of plans, lots to say about everything. A total fan of anything she can pair with a smart skirt. Not a good listener.

NICOLE – A woman, twenties; far too analytical for her surroundings. Hipster stylish, but not as cool as she thinks. Poor timing. And probably not a good judge of men.

MIGUEL – A man from Spain, early twenties; sexy, along for the ride. Sweetly, innocently unkempt, jeans, shirt, but everything is appropriately tight, he is basically a fantasy.

ALICIA – A woman, late twenties; attractive, self-assured, appearance, appearance & more appearance. Not in a bad way, just a fact. Every little detail is in place. Every one.

STAN – A man, late twenties; attractive, an everyman, almost perfect. Almost. Button up shirt and slacks. Probably glasses, but they look good. Confident.

VALERIE – An African-American woman, thirties; "othered" in her own life, no nonsense and looking for answers abroad. Dressed for travel, maybe a hat.

JIMMY – A man, ageless but still young; dry, unexpected, wise but casual. White V-neck T-shirt, jeans, maybe some colored tennis shoes, a measuring tape around his neck and a pencil behind his ear. Magical, but nothing overt.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

[ ] indicate overlapping dialogue.

The style and tone of the piece are definitely "heightened."

Except for the props and pieces that the cast members manipulate, the stage is relatively bare. Lights and sound go a long way towards shaping the space. Scenes should flow together quickly, seamlessly.

"Beauty depends on size as well as symmetry. No very small animal can be beautiful; for looking at it takes so small a portion of time that the impression of it will be confused. Nor can any very large one, for a whole view of it cannot be had at once."

– Aristotle

1

*(***JIMMY** *enters the bare stage in dim light. He pulls a single rack of colorful lingerie behind him. Once he gets it set in just the right place, he turns and takes in the audience.)*

JIMMY. I'm sure I've got something that will fit you just right. Make you feel beautiful. Special. Make someone else get a little "hot and bothered" or whatever colorful colloquial euphemism you prefer. So what do you think? Quite a collection, every single one hand made. I know because I make them. Okay, and also these two near-sighted elderly women that sew really well, but mostly I make them, for our purposes, just think of me as the guy who makes them.

We specialize in the custom fit, just like a second skin, something to make you feel special. Measurements, measurements, every single piece stitched precisely to your need. Because sometimes the small things become big things and the big things become small things and everything in between, you know?

Of course, it only works when you know what you need. You'd be amazed at how many people come in here with no idea what they're looking for at all. Amazed. No idea. None.

*(***JIMMY** *takes in the audience and then gestures into the air. Suddenly music fills the space, something poppy and danceable and entirely fun like Kylie Minogue's "WOW"* as the lights shift and wash over the stage. Maybe there's even a disco ball. It is loud and fun.)*

(All of the characters begin entering in a line from one

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*Please See Music Use Note on Page 3.

side of the space carrying a chair, prop, or item of clothing that will be used in the play. They cross the stage delivering the item to its location and continuing off the opposite side. But it's more energetic than it sounds, frenetic even. They're enjoying this. Like a never-ending parade, equally spaced, no gaps, building the playing areas. Spare, easy, but clear.)

(The first two areas are apartments, one belonging to Rose and the other to Stan. Rose's apartment is a few chairs and a large amount of luggage. Stan's apartment is a small couch and a table.)

(The third area is a lingerie shop indicated by a stool next to a counter with the single rack of colorful lingerie behind it.)

(Near the counter is some type of pole, about 7 feet high or so, with a little extension arm on it. Like an upside down 'L.' At the end of the arm hangs a small bell, like the kind that might hang on a store door to let the shopkeeper know someone had entered. Jimmy exists in the space for most of the play, observing the action in the different areas as it unfolds. Use discretion in deciding when he should be absent.)

(The final area built is a row of chairs just on stage, equal to the number of actors, a staging area of sorts with most of the things that will be needed for the play. If playing space is an issue, the actors can simply enter and exit form off stage.)

(As the set takes shape, the music fades as the characters each into their chair, except Alicia. **JIMMY** *hangs on the edge of the stage and motions towards the opposite side.)*

*(***ALICIA** *enters carrying a shopping bag from some department store. She sets the bag down next to her feet, removes her sunglasses and lets her purse fall from her shoulder into her hand, hooking the sunglasses over the strap. It's a practiced thing, no thought.* **JIMMY** *vanishes.)*

*(**ALICIA** smiles. She is poised and it is effortless, casual and warm.)*

ALICIA. Shopping can take a lot out of you, right? Not like it's saving the world or anything, I'm not making any lofty comparisons; I'm not contrasting a credit card swipe to joining Médecins Sans Frontières or anything. Just, it can be actually exhausting trying to find just the right thing. Especially when it's important. Like… when you're getting married, for instance. And I am. So it's not even a hypothetical, which is so crazy.

*(She laughs and shows off her engagement ring as **JIMMY** approaches with two additional shopping bags. He drops the bags off next to her single bag, takes a brief look at the ring and offers this quick exchange while moving through and disappearing again.)*

JIMMY. Nice.

ALICIA. Isn't it?

JIMMY. Perfect.

(And he's gone.)

ALICIA. Stan, my fiancé, picked out a ring that was so beautiful; he has excellent taste. But of course he knew better than to buy it on his own. We went and looked at it and then we decided this one was just a bit more, well, I don't want to say 'appropriate' because that sounds so officious, but this one is more, something like, indicative of our love. And the diamond is bigger. Because you don't want a ring you have to explain. You want a ring that answers all those questions on its own. You want a ring that doesn't evoke questioning at all. Some people would say it's superficial.

JIMMY. *(dropping off two more shopping bags next to her…)* Mm hm.

ALICIA. It's not. It's not, but it sounds so abstract, right? Or at least not very important, but it's not unimportant, it's very important. It just sounds very, oh, no, like this, this is more concrete: I sit down to lunch with a friend, whoever, it doesn't matter. And she notices my Hermès bag. And why wouldn't she, it's gorgeous.

JIMMY. *(dropping off two more bags next to her…)* Gorgeous.

ALICIA. Yes. But I can tell she's thinking, "That can't be a real Hermès bag." And I just want to say, "Shut your fucking mouth!" But of course I can't because she didn't actually say anything. But she knows I know what she thinks. We know. That's what I'm talking about. And it would be so much easier and a lot less energy expended if I didn't care and isn't that just what everyone says and blah, blah, blah.

*(***JIMMY** *laughs along with her, or maybe at her a bit, while dropping off two more bags…)*

JIMMY. See you later.

ALICIA. Oh, um, okay.

(As **JIMMY** *exits, she whispers conspiratorially:)*

It is so awkward when retail people make chitchat isn't it? Well not, you know what I mean.

(back at full voice)

Anyway, about my bag, now it would be another thing all together if she thought it was a fake bag and it was a fake bag and I knew it, she knew it and oh my god, I can't even imagine how embarrassing. But it's not a fake bag so I'm right, she's wrong and she can go choke on all of her unspoken aspersions.

(No, she's calm; it's okay.)

And then we have a nice lunch. Because I'm better at that game, my choices are unassailable. Whatever she might whisper about me, it's not true.

(She puts on her sunglasses, shoulders her purse and collects all of the shopping bags.)

So that's how I win.

(She exits.)

End Scene

2

*(***NICOLE** *stands in Rose's apartment as* **ROSE** *pours two Jameson's on ice. There are two chairs, a small table and a large pile of luggage. It's really more like an impossibly huge pile of luggage.)*

ROSE. It was thrilling. And he had this red, I don't know, cape, but not around his neck. It was over his arm and he used it to steer the bull around, or really just to make the bull angry. Kind of taunting it?

NICOLE. Where is that sound coming from?

ROSE. I'm trying to tell you about this bullfight.

NICOLE. Is someone in your shower?

ROSE. What? No, it's the pipes. We have noisy pipes.

NICOLE. Noisy pipes?

ROSE. Valerie complains about it all the time, but to be fair, she complains about everything.

NICOLE. And where is she again?

ROSE. Who cares, not here. I will never get a roommate from the paper again. Go away newspaper ad roommate, go away.

NICOLE. You have to get them from [somewhere.]

ROSE. [Well, when] she gets back, I'm having a talk with her about maybe finding a new place. About her finding a new place.

NICOLE. Oh.

ROSE. Now, can I finish my story?

NICOLE. I don't understand, where did she go?

ROSE. Ugh.

(She drinks the glass of Jameson's down.)

She went to Africa. Don't ask me. I tried to talk to her about it but she's so angry all the time. I think it's like a quest to find her roots or something; to find her "home," I don't know.

NICOLE. She said that?

ROSE. Not exactly. She said she needed to get away.

NICOLE. And, let me follow you on this, because she's black you infer that she's going to Africa to experience a transformative homecoming? Is that right?

ROSE. What?

NICOLE. Casual racism.

ROSE. Shut-up.

NICOLE. I'm just saying that [it's not…]

ROSE. [No, I'm] just saying, who "gets away" to Africa? You know what I mean. Ah ah, you know what I mean. She's been so depressed and moody, breakfast around here is like a funeral march. So a vacation, whatever kind of vacation, will do her good. Mine sure did.

NICOLE. You do look sunny.

*(***ROSE** *pours another glass with a big smile.)*

ROSE. I do, I know. So okay, there's dust everywhere, dirt from the arena or whatever, and this guy was just stunningly graceful as he led the bull around the ring, charge after charge. I felt myself get, well, I was afraid for him, but it all seemed so effortless [really.]

NICOLE. [Most] difficult things do when an expert's [doing them.]

ROSE. [Stop] interrupting. And then at the end of it all, he kind of did this one last flourish of red through the air as the bull passed, and he took this long blade and just…

(She mimes skewering something.)

NICOLE. That sounds horrifying.

ROSE. Horrifying?

NICOLE. He, like, killed the bull?

ROSE. It wasn't horrifying, or I don't know, it was something like that but also this other thing. Almost heroic.

NICOLE. Huh.

ROSE. And Miguel, the guy, the man who took me to the fight…

NICOLE. The guy you mooned about in that postcard.

ROSE. Yes. Miguel. He held my hand during that part. I was breathing heavy in that moment before it happened and he took my hand and whispered something.

NICOLE. What did he whisper?

ROSE. I couldn't really hear him, everyone was shouting, it doesn't matter. Just feeling his breath on my ear made my heart go so fast and then the bullfighter killed the bull and there was this jolt through me and, and…and it was over. You'll never believe, I did the most impetuous thing. I still can't believe it myself, it's so out of character, really, [and I…]

NICOLE. [You slept] with him!

ROSE. No! No, don't be so crass Nicole. I wouldn't just sleep with him; I mean I wanted to, oh my god I wanted to, but not like that. This was something really special.

NICOLE. And sex isn't special?

ROSE. Ugh, that's not what I meant. Obviously sex is, see, this is what you do, you over-analyze every little thing. You can't ever just let something wash over you.

NICOLE. Oh now what's that [supposed to mean?]

ROSE. [I'm sitting here] telling you this story, this romantic, this kind of epic love story.

NICOLE. Epic?

ROSE. And you pick apart every little detail. You don't know how to just enjoy things [Nicole.]

NICOLE. [Okay, that's] sort of an exaggeration and not exactly fair.

ROSE. Ha!

NICOLE. That's not what I do. Or maybe it is, but your story has a lot of hazy "romantic" detail in it that, you know, kind of screams for clarification.

ROSE. Fine. I'm not talking to you anymore about this. Clearly you can't understand what I'm trying to explain.

NICOLE. That's not true.

(pause)

Rose, don't be mad at me. Come on, I want to hear the story. What did you do? After the bullfight what did you do?

ROSE. It's not a joke.

NICOLE. No, I know. I'll be good.

ROSE. All right. So at the end of the trip, I was getting ready to leave and I think he, I mean he had mentioned how much he'd love to visit New York City, how he'd heard about it, so I invited him to [come and…]

NICOLE. [You did] not.

ROSE. I did. I invited him to come stay here, with me, whenever he wants to, so I can show him around.

NICOLE. Uh huh.

ROSE. He's so amazing. I think he couldn't really afford to make the trip, so I told him if he ever wanted to come I would buy him a plane ticket [because I…]

NICOLE. [Okay, see,] this, this moment, this is where, as your friend, I really have to say something.

ROSE. I really wish you wouldn't.

NICOLE. You offered to buy a plane ticket for some guy you knew for, what? Two minutes? Some guy from Spain, some Spaniard?

ROSE. Now who's discriminating?

NICOLE. Oh, I don't care if he's the prince of Sweden, that's not the, ugh, my point is you don't just go offering to fly strange men, even strange, romantic, attractive bullfighters around the world because of a schoolgirl crush.

ROSE. He's not a bullfighter. And it's not a crush. You don't know, I told you that you wouldn't understand, you can't understand. It was love at first sight. Some people are capable of that. And some people…aren't.

NICOLE. Oh, stop it. Listen, I just came to welcome you home. I just came to drink some Jameson's and hear fun stories about Spain while I help you unpack. I didn't…

(She notices the suitcases.)

Are there, like, a lot of extra suitcases. This is way more [than you…]

ROSE. [No, I don't know,] what do you mean, no, don't be silly.

(pause)

NICOLE. Who's in the shower? That was the shower and Valerie's gone, noisy pipes, who's in the shower?

ROSE. Now be nice.

NICOLE. He's here, the bullfighter's here [now?]

ROSE. [He's not] a bullfighter; he took me to a bullfight.

NICOLE. I can't believe you.

ROSE. You better be nice.

NICOLE. What am I supposed to…?

*(***NICOLE** *is interrupted as* **MIGUEL** *enters in a red towel. He stops.)*

MIGUEL. Perdòname.

ROSE. Nicole, this is Miguel. Miguel, this is my best friend Nicole.

*(***NICOLE** *waves self-consciously.* **MIGUEL** *waves back.)*

MIGUEL. Necesito recoger algunas cosas.

(He grabs a small bag and begins to leave; turns to **NICOLE**.*)*

Eh…Me entiendes o eres como ella?

(Pause. The women simply look at him. He smiles.)

Eres tan bella. Tus ojos brillantes, tus labios, tu tez suave.

(He crosses to **NICOLE**, *takes her hand and kisses it.)*

ROSE. Well, that's "friendly."

NICOLE. I don't, [uh…]

MIGUEL. [Sí,] amor. Lo creo.

(He disappears again. **NICOLE** *doesn't move.)*

ROSE. Isn't he gorgeous?

NICOLE. What'd he say?

ROSE. I have no idea. I only learned about four things out of that phrase book.

NICOLE. Doesn't he speak English?

ROSE. Nope.

*(***NICOLE** *snaps out of it.)*

NICOLE. He doesn't speak English?!

ROSE. Isn't it amazing? It's almost like magic that we've found each other, the two of us in this big, crowded world. We just have this, I don't know, this connection.

NICOLE. Rose, this doesn't seem like a very [good idea.]

ROSE. [We have a magical] connection and I don't want to hear another goddamn word about it.

NICOLE. But [you…]

ROSE. [Not] another word.

(Standoff. **NICOLE** *shrugs, conceding.)*

Good. Now, let's have another drink. He takes forever to get ready.

End Scene

3

*(***VALERIE** *stands alone.)*

VALERIE. Listen, I'm not going to Africa on a spiritual journey. I'm not going to Africa to find my history. Nice to meet you. I traced my family tree once, all the way back to a bill of sale at an auction in Charleston. And before that? Nothing. How could there be really? Africa's a big place with a lot of people. A friend of mine took 15 years to track down some of his remote relatives in Nigeria, and he's still not sure that it's a legit connection. He just wants it to be. You know, one of those things. Besides, I grew up in Costa Mesa. That's who I am. So it's not like I'm going to show up in Kenya and fall to my knees crying. That's not my "home" and when people assume things about me because of, well, because of any kind of "external qualities," then that's all about them. I'm gonna' show up in Kenya the way mid-western people on vacation show up at Disneyland: ready to enjoy myself.

And the best part, oh, the best part: I'm going there to kill something. Believe it. I'm going on safari. Not just safari, a safari where they guarantee the opportunity to shoot some big game, large animals. I've been planning it for a few months and now that it's almost here, well, I can't believe it's almost here. It's been a lot of work too, all of these details, all of the negotiating: time off, airline tickets, the actual safari, my travel visa, the shots, you wouldn't believe the number of shots you have to get. But you wanna' know the hardest part? Choosing the gun.

That's a big deal. A gun to shoot at something large I mean, not like a handgun, a pistol, some little thing. I'm talking about a big gun. There's a lot of time and energy that goes into that kind of decision. I did my homework and ultimately landed on a Bolt Action Weatherby Mark V Safari Custom; French walnut and ebony with a satin oil finish. I was going to go with an

adjustable trigger, really personalize it, but the standard has a pull weight of about three pounds, which feels good. And doesn't mess with my aim. That's important. I mean, it can be the prettiest gun I've ever seen, but if I can't aim it then what's the point?

I'm…I'm embarrassed to admit this, but I spent a huge chunk of my savings on it. Between the gun and the trip, about $7,000. And let's be frank, that's no small amount for me. That's not a small amount of money for anyone nowadays. But my attitude is this: if you're going to take the time to really kill something, you want to do it right.

End Scene

4

*(**STAN** is reading the newspaper, shoes off, on the couch in his apartment. **ALICIA** enters with even more shopping bags, full to bursting; a lot more bags. It is clear that a ridiculous amount of shopping has occurred.)*

ALICIA. I'm back.

STAN. How did it–oh my god what did you do?

ALICIA. Nothing. Shopping. Nothing.

(She tries to hide the bags behind her. He puts down the paper.)

STAN. I've already seen the bags, Alicia.

ALICIA. Okay, but these were all things we really needed. Really. No, really.

STAN. This is what happens when you go shopping with your Mom.

ALICIA. Okay, well the next round of wedding shopping, you're up to bat.

STAN. "Wedding shopping." What does that even mean?

ALICIA. It means shopping for the wedding.

STAN. But specifically, what does [it mean?]

ALICIA. [Specifically] come with me and find out.

(She leans in. He kisses her.)

STAN. No thank you.

ALICIA. Boooo to that. You're no fun.

STAN. How much of that did I pay for?

ALICIA. Okay, you're a little fun. A very little.

STAN. Thanks.

ALICIA. It's not as much as it looks like. You wanna' see?

STAN. Rose called for you; she's back from her trip to Spain.

ALICIA. Okay, I'll call her later. Now, [look at…]

STAN. [She wants] you to call her as soon as you can.

ALICIA. I'll do it later, you wanna' see what I bought?

STAN. It sounded important.

ALICIA. *(flatly and with purpose)* Do you want to see what I bought?

STAN. *(surrendering)* Yes.

ALICIA. Excellent!

(She begins sorting through the shopping bags. Pulling out boxes, other bags, a white teddy bear. As she continues, **STAN** *picks up the teddy bear and examines it quizzically.)*

I got the most beautiful hair clips. They are perfect, you know, because the dress has the silver stitching? I just have to find them. They're polished metal, but they read perfectly in the light, oh god, they called out to me from across the store, it was serendipitous, it was fate. Okay, I can't find them, but you'll see. And I got something special, but I'm getting ahead of myself. Ah! Here…

(She produces a clothing box with a blue bow tied around it. She presents it to him. He's holding the teddy bear. She grabs it away and then re-presents the box to him.)

I got this, this fantastic package, this box of wonder, for you Stan.

STAN. Oh no.

ALICIA. Oh yes!

STAN. Is it new golf clubs?

ALICIA. Fuck you.

STAN. Nice mouth.

ALICIA. Open it.

STAN. I like it when you talk dirty.

ALICIA. Fucking open it.

(He opens the box and pulls out a dark blue polo shirt. He holds it up and looks at it. After a moment…)

It's a shirt!

STAN. A polo shirt.

ALICIA. A polo shirt!

STAN. Okay.

ALICIA. Because when you meet Daddy at the club, you need to wear a collared shirt, but it's going to be hot outside so long sleeves won't [be the…]

STAN. [I have] shirts.

ALICIA. This is a nice shirt. You'll look better. And all of the men there wear this kind of thing.

STAN. I told you I'm not going. The public course is fine.

ALICIA. I hate golf and even I know the public course is a wasteland.

STAN. Baby, you know I know how important it is to you that I fit in with your Dad. But that place is just not me. And it feels so odd and clunky to try and be some other guy, ya' know? At a restaurant, at your folks' house, when they come here, I can do that; I'm all over it. That should really be enough for him. I mean, I'm not a hanging out with guys kinda' guy. He never even invites me to that club; you invite me because you want me to fit there. He gets it. He's fine. I'm not that guy.

*(***ALICIA** *inhales deeply, preps and then launches in…)*

ALICIA. Okay. I don't want you to feel like something you're not. And I know what you think, but it would make him happy, even if you don't think so, and making him happy would make me happy. And then I'll make you happy.

STAN. Happy how?

ALICIA. Fucking happy.

STAN. Oh really?

ALICIA. Mm hmm, let me see you in the new shirt. Just get this one [off and…]

(She begins to unbutton his shirt. He suddenly jerks away.)

STAN. [No, it's] okay, I like it, I'll wear it. I'll go.

ALICIA. What's wrong?

STAN. Nothing, I should go, you're right.

ALICIA. But I want to see you try it on.

STAN. I will, here give it to me and I'll go put it on. I'll be [right back.]

ALICIA. [Just put] it on here, what's the big deal?

STAN. Nothing. Just, here, give it to me. What?

ALICIA. Okay, you're acting kind of bizarre.

STAN. No.

ALICIA. Yes.

STAN. No.

ALICIA. Yes you are.

STAN. Let's not make this [into a…]

ALICIA. [Wait, oh] god, is this one of those cold feet things that totally snowballs? Is this one of those things that comes out of nowhere: you won't put on the shirt I bought you, and it unlocks some kind of, I don't know, deep thing, and then you just, just leave me at the altar?

STAN. Because of a polo shirt?

ALICIA. That's how it happens.

STAN. That's how it happens where?

ALICIA. I know something's wrong, I can tell.

STAN. I don't have cold feet; I love you more than anything. I just, sometimes I worry about what you would, listen, if you give me the shirt, I'll go and put it on. It's not a big deal; it's that simple.

(He takes the shirt from her.)

ALICIA. Something's wrong. I'm saying it again. To you.

STAN. If I tell you, you wouldn't…Listen, there's, there are things, okay, we don't have to know every single thing about each other in order to be together, right?

ALICIA. I don't like that at all.

STAN. No, now, you're just reacting, take a minute to actually think about it. Do I know every single thing about you, about what's going on in your head?

ALICIA. I guess not.

STAN. And we're still okay.

ALICIA. I'll be okay regardless. I know how to know what to feel about what other people are thinking; you know that.

STAN. What?

ALICIA. Whatever you have to [tell me…]

STAN. [I don't have] anything [to…]

ALICIA. [I want to] know, you're talking about something. I promise, whatever it is, I won't freak out. As long as the wedding's still on, I won't freak out. If the wedding's off, I'll set you on fire and bury you in the yard, but otherwise…

(pause)

STAN. Do you love me?

ALICIA. You know I do.

STAN. I can't believe I'm gonna' just, ugh, give me a minute.

(He exits with the polo shirt. She shakes off the moment.)

ALICIA. I don't understand what this has to do with the shirt, I don't understand any of this and whether you acknowledge it or not you're acting strange. I've seen you with your shirt off, I've seen all of you, I mean, it's not like you have to be shy or anything. Especially around me, it's not like it would be the first time….

*(***ALICIA** *is interrupted, her words stuck in her throat, as* **STAN** *enters in women's lingerie, some kind of bustier top and panties.)*

STAN. So, um…

(pause)

ALICIA. Are you joking? You're joking.

STAN. Sometimes I dress like this. Under my clothes.

ALICIA. You're joking.

STAN. I like it. It makes me feel, look, I know it's not easy but this is the thing.

ALICIA. You're joking!!!

STAN. You said you wouldn't freak out. I know it's a lot, but you promised.

*(***ALICIA** *begins to hyperventilate and tear up.)*

ALICIA. How was I supposed to know that you, I thought you were trying on the, where's the polo shirt?

STAN. In the, who cares about the polo shirt. Oh no, don't cry. It's [not so bad.]

ALICIA. [Oh my god, what] will people say? What if someone finds out? Fuck. How can [I even…]

STAN. [No one's] gonna' find out.

ALICIA. I found out.

STAN. I told you, you're the only person I've ever told.

ALICIA. That's…nice. I can't believe I'm just finding this out. I can't believe I own that same outfit.

STAN. Look, I know, it's "odd." Or whatever. I just…thought it looked good so I got my own, or had it made. I can't fit into your size obviously, but you should think of [it as a…]

ALICIA. [I have to get] out of here.

STAN. It doesn't have to be a big, no I know how that sounds, but it's not necessarily a big deal.

ALICIA. *(Laughing through her tears, a confused thing, she collects her purse and sunglasses.)* Of course not. Of course not!

STAN. Please don't…

(She exits.)

Go.

End Scene

5

*(***VALERIE** *stands alone.)*

VALERIE. Part of preparing, and in case you can't tell I'm one for preparation, but part of that is practice. They just love me down at the firing range, the staff, everyone, even the people who just come in because of some curiosity and then walk right back out the door.

(She laughs at those people.)

But they all love me, especially the regulars. And there are regulars, regular shooters. I'm a regular. I think it's because I smile more than most of the people on the way in. Which, in my everyday life, is not the case. But at the range, in that drab concrete building, I feel good. Drab is generous too, huh, believe me drab is a compliment. Point of fact: I've never seen another black woman there. Ever. Really, I don't think I've ever seen another black person there. That's all right though, I'm used to mostly being around white people. I really don't even notice anymore. But it wouldn't matter if it were all blue people, because every step I take is one step farther away from phone messages from my mother, that tiny apartment, my ridiculous roommate, my uninspired life. Do you have any idea what it's like to work in the Accounts Payable department? All of it just falls away. Click.

The first time I fired a gun was at the range. If you can believe it, I went with my boyfriend at the time. He insisted it was the perfect date, which was informative about that ill-fated relationship on a lot of levels really. He's gone; the gun's still here. I didn't start with rifles of course, although they're my favorites now, started out with a little thing, don't even remember the name. But that first shot, the recoil through my arms, everything getting tight and the tremor down my spine. Amazing. Have you ever had one of those moments where everything tilts just ever so slightly and one thing suddenly

makes all the other things somehow feel better? For me, it's pulling the trigger. Click. And then the guns get bigger and the kick gets stronger and I start to feel flush from the excitement of the metal and the purpose and the force and the strength and I want more, you always want more, and I'm, before I know it, I'm there every day. You think you know yourself and then, just, smiling. Because it's different than all the rest of it, I'm different, powerful, in charge. And to shoot at something alive, not just a paper target, I can't even imagine. Making decisions, more important decisions, life and death decisions. How must that feel?

End Scene

6

*(**ALICIA**, disheveled, cautiously enters the lingerie shop under the bell.* **JIMMY** *sits on his stool drinking tea out of an oversized mug.)*

*(**ALICIA** reaches up and flips her fingers across the bell as she passes under it. It is not a conscious thing, as if the door had simply caused the bell to ring.)*

(At the sound of the bell, **JIMMY** *stirs…)*

JIMMY. Come in. Don't be shy. I know it seems small but we've got more in here than you could possibly imagine.

*(**ALICIA** takes a few more steps, trying to put herself in order.)*

ALICIA. Hello.

JIMMY. Lovely morning.

ALICIA. What?

JIMMY. It's a lovely morning outside.

ALICIA. Is it?

JIMMY. How can I help you?

ALICIA. I don't know.

JIMMY. Well, what are you looking for?

ALICIA. I don't know.

*(**JIMMY** drinks from his mug.)*

JIMMY. Hm. Well it's not the first time I've been in this situation. Perhaps you can tell me what you hope to achieve with the lingerie and I can better assist you?

ALICIA. I don't even know what I'm doing here.

JIMMY. I get that a lot. But it doesn't matter what apprehension you come in with, as soon as you put something on, the right something, you feel completely different. I know it sounds a little pie in the sky, but I see it happen every day. Well, everyday except Monday. We're closed on Monday.

ALICIA. I was wandering around the city all night and I just…

JIMMY. Ended up here?

ALICIA. Yes.

JIMMY. I've seen you before though, haven't I? You've bought from me, I'm sure. I never forget a face. A few times right? And one of them was, uh, leopard print. Oh, don't cry.

ALICIA. No, I'm not. That's right, you're right. I have been in before. And…I think my fiancé shops here too.

JIMMY. Something beautiful for you?

ALICIA. No.

JIMMY. Actually, we don't carry men's apparel.

ALICIA. No. I think my fiancé "shops" here.

JIMMY. Oh.

ALICIA. Custom made, he said. Just like mine. Just like mine. And I know I bought mine…here.

JIMMY. Well…we do our best to satisfy all needs. Did it look all right? Men's bodies are just totally different animals, you know? I always worry even though it always turns out well.

ALICIA. He was wearing women's lingerie.

JIMMY. But other than that, did it look all right?

ALICIA. He shouldn't be wearing it.

JIMMY. Why not?

ALICIA. Because that's not what men do!

JIMMY. Okay. I'm not sure yelling at me is going to help you very much with your current situation.

*(***ROSE** *enters in a silk robe.)*

ROSE. You know, you're right, I think this one is perfect.

(She stops when she sees **ALICIA**. *Pause.* **ROSE** *self-consciously adjusts the robe, pulling it tight around her.)*

Hi. Hi, I was just, hi. This is so embarrassing, what are you doing here?

ALICIA. It looks nice, Rose.

JIMMY. It does, doesn't it?

ROSE. Oh no, I feel so silly. I was just heading home and I thought, "What the hey?!" I have so much to tell you about my trip, you won't believe it. I called last night, did Stan give you my, are you, is something wrong?

ALICIA. I didn't know you shopped here, too.

ROSE. Well you spoke so highly about the shop and I finally have a reason to actually buy something sexy so…

*(***ALICIA** *bursts into tears.* **ROSE** *crosses to embrace her.)*

Oh god. Oh god, what's wrong?

ALICIA. Everyone shops here!

JIMMY. Please don't get the silk wet.

ROSE. Oh god.

*(***ROSE** *jerks away from* **ALICIA**.*)*

ALICIA. Stan wears women's underwear. He wears it all the time.

ROSE. Oh god.

ALICIA. He just decided to show me.

ROSE. Oh god.

JIMMY. It's only lingerie.

ALICIA. Thank you!!

ROSE. Alicia, don't yell.

JIMMY. You're going to disturb the other customers.

ALICIA. What other customers?!

ROSE. Come here for a minute honey, just calm down and try to take a breath.

(They step away from **JIMMY**. *He picks up his mug again, but is clearly listening in on the women.)*

Now, breathe. Are you breathing? You're turning red; breathe.

*(***ALICIA** *exhales and then inhales deeply.)*

ALICIA. I'm sorry.

ROSE. It's okay. What, exactly, did Stan say?

ALICIA. We were talking about the wedding and about knowing each other and then, just…bam!

ROSE. Okay. Okay. Okay, well…that sucks. But, okay, he still wants to get married, right?

ALICIA. *(examining her engagement ring, in her own little world…)* I don't know.

ROSE. Did he say he didn't?

ALICIA. Look at this ring.

ROSE. Did he say he didn't want to get married?

ALICIA. No.

ROSE. Just that he…has some unusual fashion tastes.

ALICIA. What would people say? If people found out?

ROSE. What people?

*(***ALICIA** *snaps back into the moment.)*

ALICIA. Oh fuck! I told you, I shouldn't have told you, you can't tell anyone.

ROSE. Who am I gonna' tell?

ALICIA. You can't tell anyone.

ROSE. I won't.

ALICIA. You either.

JIMMY. We pride ourselves on our discretion.

ROSE. See, so your secret won't leave this shop.

ALICIA. He acted like it was no big deal, but I could tell he was afraid.

ROSE. Well, that's quite a secret, I don't want to minimize it or anything, but…

ALICIA. But what?

ROSE. I mean, he's a good guy, Alicia. I've finally got a good guy, maybe, and so now I know Stan is one of the good ones. And he's not a jerk or abusive or anything.

ALICIA. It's freakish, isn't it?

ROSE. Actually, the more I think about it, the more it doesn't really seem like a big deal.

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