SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

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SF PERUSALS



BY
KATY BRAND

SAMUEL FRENCH

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3WOMEN

Premiered at the Trafalgar Studios on 18 May 2018

CAST

In order of appearance

SUZANNE	Debbie Chazen
WAITER	Oliver Greenall
ELEANOR	Anita Dobson
LAURIE	Maisie Richardson-Sellers

CREATIVES

Director	Michael Yale
Producer / Creative Director	Eilene Davidson
Marketing and PR Director	Susanna Gulliford
Assistant Producer	Sarah Reed
Set and Costume Designer	Zahra Mansouri
Lighting Designer	Nic Farman
Casting Director	Ellie Collyer-Bristow CDG



'A new venue that's changing the shape of the West End.' *The Times*

Trafalgar Studios opened on 26th May 2004 and, with two auditoria under a single roof, was the first theatre of its kind in the heart of London's West End.

In 2017, theatre entrepreneurs Sir Howard Panter and Dame Rosemary Squire acquired Trafalgar Studios as the flagship for a new venture that combines live entertainment with distinctive cultural buildings, original content and live-streaming. They will continue to build on the Trafalgar Studios' reputation for fresh and challenging work which has included Lee Evans and Jason Isaacs in the 50th Anniversary production of Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*; the hit comedy *Elling*, starring John Simm and Adrian Bower; *Riflemind* directed by Philip Seymour Hoffman; *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, starring Imelda Staunton and Mathew Horne; *The Mountaintop* and *Othello* starring Lenny Henry, and James McAvoy in Jamie Lloyd's ground breaking production of *Macbeth*, which launched the much anticipated Trafalgar Transformed seasons. These featured Simon Russell Beale and John Simm in *The Hothouse*; *The Pride* starring Hayley Atwell; Martin Freeman as *Richard III*; *East is East*, with Jane Horrocks, and T*he Ruling Class*. The critically acclaimed Golem and Robert Icke's stunning production of *Oresteia* followed. In 2016 Studio 1 was home to the hugely successful razor-sharp comedy *The Spoils*, written by and starring Jesse Eisenberg, and Sam Shepard's American classic *Buried Child*, starring Ed Harris. In 2017, Studio 1 welcomed Emmy Award winner Stockard Channing in Alexi Kaye Campbell's *Apologia*, the critically acclaimed new British musical *The Grinning Man* and Orlando Bloom in Tracy Letts' *Killer Joe*.

Trafalgar Studios' second space, Studio 2 presents inspiring, thoughul and adventurous new work from the best national and international companies. Offering a uniquely intimate theatre experience in the heart of the West End, this 100 seat studio promotes new writing and celebrates fresh talent.

Cyprus, a political thriller by Peter Arnott from Mull Theatre launched the first season of work. Other highlights have included Horla's new adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*; Michael Morpurgo's *Private*

Peaceful; Neil LaBute's *Bash*; *Lifecoach*, starring Phil Jupitus; *The Quiz*, performed by David Bradley; *Touched*, performed by Sadie Frost; and *New Boy*, starring Nicholas Hoult.

In 2013 the Donmar Warehouse produced a season of plays at Trafalgar Studios, *The Promise*, *The Dance of Death* and *The Silence of the Sea*, *Left Hand* with Imogen Stubbs and the smash-hit comedy *The Play That Goes Wrong* which went on to take the West End by storm. Since then, productions have included *Dessa Rose*, with Cynthia Erivo; *Boa*, with Harriet Walter; *Bomber's Moon*, with James Bolam; *As Is*; *Rotterdam*; *BU21*; *Speech and Debate*; *Disco Pigs*; *Le Grand Mort*, with Julian Clary; a season from the King's Head Theatre, which included the Olivier-nominated opera *La Bohème* and *Rasheeda Speaking*, with Elizabeth Berrington and Tanya Moodie.

Trafalgar Studio 2 has been made possible by a generous donation from Christina Smith.

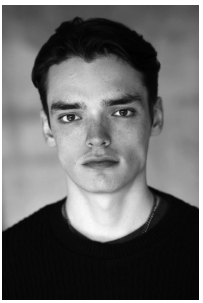
CAST



DEBBIE CHAZEN
Suzanne

Debbie Chazen's numerous theatre credits include: *The Girls* (Phoenix Theatre/UK Tour), for which the female cast were Olivier Award-nominated as a collective, for Best Actress in a Musical; *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur* (Coronet Print Room); *Listen, We're Family* (Wilton's Music Hall); *The Duck House* (Vaudeville Theatre); *A Little Hotel on the Side* (Theatre Royal, Bath); *Open Court: The President Has Come to See You*, *Mint*, *Untitled Matriarch Play* and *In Basildon* (Royal Court); *Calendar Girls* (Noël Coward Theatre/UK Tour); *The Girlfriend Experience* (Royal Court/Young Vic/Plymouth); *Cinderella* (Old Vic); *The Cherry Orchard* (Sheffield Crucible); *Dick Whittington* (Barbican); *Crooked* (Bush Theatre); *A Prayer for Owen Meaney* and *Mother Clap's Molly House* (National Theatre & West End); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Noël Coward Theatre); and *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* (Salisbury Playhouse).

Her work for television includes: *Holby City*, *The Last Kingdom*, *Dead Pixels*, *Agatha Raisin*, *You, Me and the Apocalypse*, *Ambassadors*, *Asylum*, *Sherlock*, *Trollied*, *The Spa*, *Coronation Street*, *Doctor Who*, *Tittybangbang*, *This Is Jinsy*, *White Van Man*, *Doctors* (nominated for Villain of the Year – Soap Awards 2010 for twelve episodes as Sissy Juggins), *We Are Klang*, *Psychoville*, *The Smoking Room*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Mine All Mine*, *Murder in Suburbia*, *Doc Martin*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Gimme Gimme Gimme*, *Lucy Sullivan Is Getting Married*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Lakes*. Film credits include: Mike Leigh's *Topsy Turvy*, *Suzie Gold*, *Tooth*, Anton Chekhov's *The Duel* and most recently *Red Joan*, directed by Trevor Nunn.



OLIVER GREENALL
Waiter

Oliver Greenall is an actor, writer and director. He was born in Scotland and trained at PACE Youth Theatre. During his final year of school, he was scouted by the model agency Models 1 and worked on various international campaigns for some of the largest fashion houses in the world. He went on to study at Glasgow University and received a BA in film-making and screenwriting at UWS. In 2015, he wrote and directed his first short film, *Directions*, which was screened at festivals all around the world, including the London Short Film Festival in 2017. Television credits include: series regular Jordan Whitehead in ITV's *The Loch*, and *Armchair Detectives* for BBC Television. Oliver will be making his West End debut at the Trafalgar Studios in *3Women*.



ANITA DOBSON
Eleanor

Anita Dobson is an Olivier Award nominated and well-loved television, theatre and fi lm actress. Anita's many stage appearances include *Budgie* (Cambridge Theatre); *Three Sisters* (Royal Court); *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (National Theatre); *Kvetch* (Garrick Theatre); *My Lovely... Shayna Maidel* (The Ambassadors Theatre); *Charley's Aunt* (Aldwych Theatre); *The Pajama Game* (Victoria Palace Theatre); *The Vagina Monologues* (Arts Theatre/UK Tour); *The Island of Slaves* (Lyric, Hammersmith); *Frozen* (National Theatre), for which she was nominated for an Olivier Award, Evening Standard,

and London Critics' Circle Theatre Award; *Chicago* (Adelphi Theatre); *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Shaftesbury Theatre); *Hamlet* (New Ambassadors Theatre/UK Tour); *Hello Dolly* (Theatre Royal Lincoln/ UK Tour); Kurt Weill's opera *The Silver Lake* (Wexford Festival); *Calendar Girls* (Noël Coward Theatre); *Two Sisters* (Eastbourne and Brighton); *Sleeping Beauty* (Richmond Theatre); *Strictly Come Dancing Live!*; *Bette and Joan* (Arts Theatre); *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (RSC), Steven Berkoff's production of *Oedipus* (Edinburgh Festival at the Pleasance Grand.); *Carnival of the Animals*; *Crush – A Girl's Own Musical*; *Follies* (Royal Albert Hall); *She Stoops to Conquer* (Theatre Royal, Bath); *Wicked* (Apollo Victoria Theatre) and most recently *The Shadow Factory* (Nuffield, Southampton). As Angie Watts in *EastEnders*, Anita Dobson was one of the most popular characters on television, winning her the PYE award for Television Personality of the Year, The Daily Mirror's Actress of the Year and the TV Times Actress of the Year Award, voted by the readers.

Other television includes: *Leave Him to Heaven*, *Nanny*, *The House of Lurking Death*, *Up the Elephant and Round the Castle*, *Split Ends*, *The World of Eddie Weary*, *Red Dwarf*, *Rab C. Nesbitt*, *Smokescreen*, *I'll Be Watching You*, *Dangerfield*, *The Famous Five*, *Highlander*, *Get Well Soon*, *Junk*, *Sunburn*, *The Stretch*, *Hearts and Bones*, *Urban Gothic*, *NCS Manhunt*, *Fun at the Funeral Parlour*, *The Last Detective*, *Doctors*, *New Tricks*, *The Bill*, *Hotel Babylon*, *Casualty*, *Katy Brand's Big Ass Show*, *12 O'clock Girls*, *Green Santa*, *Little Crackers: My First Nativity*, *Coming Up (Hooked)*, *Sadie J*, *Moving On*, *Pompidou*, *Holby City*, *Armada*, *Call The Midwife*, *The Worst Witch* and two series of *The Rebel*.

Film credits include: *Seaview Knights*, *Beyond Bedlam*, *The Tichborne Claimant*, *The Revengers' Comedies*, *Darkness Falls*, *Charlie*, *Solitary*, *The Rise of the Krays*, *The Fall of the Krays*, *London Road* taken from the acclaimed National Theatre production directed by Rufus Norris, and *The Fight*.



MAISIE RICHARDSON-SELLERS
Laurie

Maisie Richardson-Sellers studied Anthropology and Archaeology at Oxford University. Whilst there she was an avid member of the theatre community, both directing and performing, and appeared in a number of plays including *Mephisto* (Oxford Playhouse), *They Will Be Red* (Burton Taylor Studio) and *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide* (Oxford Union). Upon graduating she landed the role of Korr Sella in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. Since then she has been based in the United States and has performed the roles of Rebekah Mikaelson and Eva Sinclair in *The Originals* (The CW), Michal in *Of Kings and Prophets* (ABC) and Vixen/Amaya Jiwe in DC's *Legends of Tomorrow* (The CW). She is thrilled to be returning to the stage for *3Women*.

CREATIVES

KATY BRAND

Writer



Katy Brand is an award-winning writer, actor and comedian. She has appeared in numerous films, (*Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang*), TV shows (*Katy Brand's Big Ass Show*, *Peep Show*, *Grandpa's Great Escape*) and radio programmes (*News Quiz*, *The Infinite Monkey Cage*). Her critically acclaimed live work includes her 2016 show *I Was a Teenage Christian* ("*Intelligent storytelling.*" *The Times*). She has also written for many TV and radio shows, including her own. She is the author of *Brenda Monk is Funny*, her debut novel published in 2014 ("*Compulsive and absolutely essential.*" Irvine Welsh).

3Women is her first play.

MICHAEL YALE

Director

Michael Yale most recently directed the play *Late Company* at Trafalgar Studios (Broadway World Award nomination, shortlisted for Best New Production of a Play 2017).

Other work as director includes: *Late Company* (Finborough Theatre – OffWestEnd Award finalist), *This Little Life of Mine* (Park Theatre – multi-award nominations, including Best Director, Broadway World Awards and Best New Musical, Broadway World and OffWestEnd Awards), *Thrice Ninth Kingdom* (Soho Theatre and Tristan Bates Theatre), *Henry IV: Part One* (Rose Playhouse Bankside, and St. James Theatre), *Baby Mine* (Omnibus Theatre), *The Disappeared* (Theatre503), *Maternity* (Riverside Studios), *Wicked Will* (BAC and Tour),

Hell's Kitchen (Midlands Art Centre), and the award-winning *Monsieur D'Eon* (Union Theatre).

Michael is co-artistic director and founding member of Stage Traffic Productions. He trained at LAMDA and continues to act and write for theatre and television.

EILENE DAVIDSON

Producer and Creative Director

Eilene trained at drama school and worked as an actress, performing on stage and screen in her twenties. She then moved to the States and studied playwriting and screenwriting and worked as a freelance writer and playwright. Her company, Stage Traffic, was set up in 2016 to showcase new writing. Recently produced acclaimed plays include *This Little Life of Mine* (Park Theatre, London) and *Late Company* (Trafalgar Studios, London). Through her work with Stage Traffic, Eilene has a commitment to exclusively producing new writing from around the world. As an independent producer, Eilene has also produced or co-produced *A Lie of the Mind* (Southwark Playhouse), *Insignificance* (Langham, NYC), *WarPaint* (Nederland Theatre NYC), *Apologia* (Trafalgar Studios) and *The Grinning Man* currently showing in London (Trafalgar Studios). In 2018 Eilene is producing *Monogamy* (Park Theatre and tour), *Paper Dolls* (Mosaic Theatre, Washington DC) and this October she will produce the award-nominated European premiere of *A Guide for the Homesick* in a transfer from the USA to London.

STAGE TRAFFIC PRODUCTIONS

Stage Traffic Productions is a dynamic new UK/US theatre production company. Based in London, but looking at inspiration from around the globe, it is committed to creating productions with a strong emphasis on contemporary storytelling that truly resonates with modern audiences. The company's last production, *Late Company* (Trafalgar Studios), was met with

universal critical acclaim and has made the shortlist for Best New Production of a Play at this year's Broadway World Awards. The company's inaugural production was the musical *This Little Life of Mine*, which ran at the Park Theatre in 2016. The show was nominated for many awards, including Best New Musical Production, OffWestEnd Awards and Best Musical, Best Director and Best Actress, Broadway World Awards. Eilene and Michael first met as actors eighteen years ago and since then both have worked additionally in the role of writer, director and producer, both in the States and the UK.

SUSANNA GULLIFORD
Marketing and PR Director

Susanna has over fifteen years' PR and marketing experience. She spent ten years at WPP as a director of Cohn & Wolfe, consulting for a number of major entertainment brands including the BBC, Sky, Orange, O2, Samsung, Northcliffe Media and the Rank Group. She moved to the Daily Mail General Trust in 2005 as Media Director, where she was responsible for launching and developing a number of new online brands. Susanna has worked with Stage Traffic Productions on *This Little Life of Mine* (2016) and *Late Company* (2017).

SARAH REED
Assistant Producer

Sarah has worked with Stage Traffic Productions on *Late Company* (Trafalgar Studios and Finborough Theatre) and *This Little Life of Mine* (Park Theatre). Stage management roles include *Absolution* and *Bill Clinton Hercules* (Park Theatre), *The Odd Couple* (CW Entertainment), *Austen's Women* (Leicester Square Theatre) and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Really Useful Group). Her previous work with Theatre Tours International involved preparing their Edinburgh Festival season of shows, such as the Fringe First Award winner *Follow Me* (Assembly Rooms), while touring domestically and abroad. Sarah is very happy to be working again with Stage Traffic Productions at Trafalgar Studios.

ZAHRA MANSOURI
Set and Costume Designer

Trained at Central Saint Martins. Theatre includes the OffWestEnd Award-nominated *This Little Life of Mine* (Park Theatre), *The Cause* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *American Wife* (National and International Tour) and *The Marked* (Pleasance Edinburgh and Ovalhouse). Costume design for film includes *Shadowplan*, *The Movie Trilogy* and *Scrooge and the Seven Dwarves*. Zahra is also Associate Designer for Fourth Monkey Theatre Company, designing for their repertory seasons, and was also Assistant to the Designer for Trevor Nunn's *King John* (Rose Theatre, Kingston). www.zahramansouri.com.

NIC FARMAN
Lighting Designer

Nic is winner of The Worshipful Company of Lightmongers & ALD Award for New Talent in Entertainment Lighting 2016 and winner of the Francis Reid Award as part of the Association of Lighting Designers Michael Northen Bursary in 2013. Nic was also nominated for Best Lighting Designer at the OffWestEnd Awards in 2016 for *The Spanish Tragedy* and in 2015 for *Shock Treatment* and *The Win Bin*. Credits include: *The Toxic Avenger* (Arts Theatre and Southwark Playhouse); *Spring Awakening* (Hope Mill Theatre, Manchester); *Liver Birds Flying Home* (Liverpool Royal Court); *Tonight: The Eighties (*National Theatre, Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, Kuwait); *Working* (Southwark Playhouse); *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (Wilton's Music Hall); *Priscilla* (ArtsEd Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Theatre); *La Bohème* (Trafalgar Studios and King's Head Theatre); *Kindertransport* (Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch, Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg and UK Tour); *The Invisible Man* (Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch); *Late Company* (Trafalgar Studios and Finborough Theatre); *Shock Treatment,* Puccini's *Madame Butterfly, Così fan tutte* (King's Head Theatre); *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Salisbury Playhouse).

ELLIE COLLYER-BRISTOW CDG
Casting Director

Recent credits include: *Dusty* (UK Tour), *Monogamy* (Park Theatre and UK Tour), *Turn of the Screw* (Mercury Theatre and UK Tour), *Witness for the Prosecution* (County Hall, Southbank), children's casting for *The King and I* (London Palladium), *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Salisbury Playhouse), *Cookies* (Theatre Royal, Haymarket), *Wait Until Dark* (UK Tour), *Wordsworth*, *Two Way Mirror*, *After the Dance*, *As You Like It*, *Handbagged*, *Remarkable Invisible*, *Miss Julie* and *The Secret Garden* (Theatre by the Lake), *A Lie of the Mind* and *Doubt: A Parable* (Southwark Playhouse), *Madame Rubinstein* (Park Theatre), *Dirty Great Love Story* (Arts Theatre), *Fool for Love* (Found 111), children's casting for *The Wind in the Willows* (London Palladium), *Much Ado About Nothing* (ReFASHIONed Theatre @ Selfridges for The Faction), *French without Tears* (Orange Tree/ETT – UK Tour), *Night Must Fall* (Salisbury Playhouse/Original Theatre Company – UK Tour), *Sideways* (St James Theatre), *Gaslight* (Ed Mirvish, Toronto), *The Glass Menagerie* (Nuffield, Southampton), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Lyric Theatre, Belfast), *Handbagged* (Eleanor Lloyd Productions – UK Tour), *The Gathered Leaves* (Park Theatre), *Arcadia* (ETT – UK Tour), *Told Look Younger* (Jermyn Street Theatre), *Eldorado* (Arcola Theatre), *Tape* (Trafalgar Studios), *Blue Remembered Hills*, *Playhouse Creatures* and *Fred's Diner* (Chichester Festival Theatre), *Four Nights in Knaresborough* (Southwark Playhouse); *Fings Ain't Wot They Used T'Be* and *Bernarda Alba* (Union Theatre); *This Is How It Goes* and *A Christmas Carol* (King's Head Theatre).

Ellie was previously Casting Associate for the Ambassador Theatre Group.

3WOMEN

A Play

by Katy Brand

SAMUEL FRENCH

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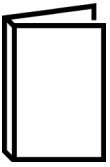
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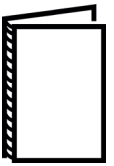
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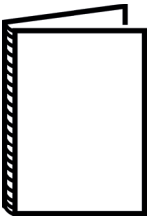
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CHARACTERS

SUZANNE – forty, a bit soft and scruffy. Laurie's mother. Eleanor's daughter.

ELEANOR – sixty-five, elegant and well put together. Suzanne's mother. Laurie's grandmother.

LAURIE – eighteen, androgynous but delicate, ideally mixed-heritage. Suzanne's daughter. Eleanor's granddaughter.

RUFUS – twenty, a room service waiter who is striking and androgynous. A young man who is drifting but open.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Eilene Davidson and Stage Traffic for commissioning and producing *3Women*, and supporting it all the way, along with Michael Yale for directing the first production and all the excellent script feed back. Thanks to the actors Anita Dobson, Debbie Chazen, Maisie Richardson-Sellers and Oliver Greenall for being the first to interpret the characters and performing them so brilliantly.

Thanks to Sarah Reed for wonderful Stage Management, Zahra Mansouri for beautiful design and Nic Farman for the sensitive lighting. Thanks to all at Emma Holland PR, Maidwell Marketing and Susanna Gulliford for letting people know about *3Women*. Thanks to Feast Creative for the artwork design. Thanks to Ellie Collyer-Bristow for all the help with casting the first production. Thanks to Trafalgar Studios for giving *3Women* its first home and being so fantastically supportive of new writing. Thanks to my agent Mandy Ward and all at Mandy Ward Artist Management. Thanks to Samuel French for publishing the play and being so enthusiastic.

Thanks to David, my husband and all important First Reader, and Skye and Thomas, for always being an inspiration. Finally thanks to all my female friends and family – I couldn't have done it without you.

For any woman in pursuit of her own happiness.

Lights up.

It is early evening in a smart hotel suite – we are in the living room area, where there are a couple of sofas, a couple of armchairs, a coffee table. There are two large vases of flowers. There are three doors leading off from this area – one to the corridor, and two to the bedrooms.

The door to the corridor opens and a room service **WAITER** *enters with a bottle of champagne in a clear plastic ice bucket, three champagne flutes, and three roses, one white, one red and one yellow. He is a bit androgynous and quite striking, but smart in his uniform.*

He places the champagne flutes carefully on the coffee table with the ice bucket, and then consults a note on a small piece of paper. Following instructions, he delicately places one rose stem in each flute in this order: white, red, yellow. He places a small card on the table.

There is some light scratching and scraping on the outside of the door to the corridor. There is some muttered swearing outside too. The door handle on the corridor door starts being violently pushed up and down.

The room service **WAITER** *goes and opens the door.* **SUZANNE** *bursts in with her luggage, flustered and embarrassed, waving a credit-card-style key. She is carrying one too many bags, and her clothes are a bit all over the place. She wears a floaty, fringed scarf that has caught round her neck, throttling her slightly.*

SUZANNE Why don't these stupid keys ever work?

She dumps her bags with a thud and fights to disentangle herself from the never-ending scarf.

WAITER I think...

SUZANNE *(startled)* Oh hello!

WAITER I think...if you just tap it against the...

He gestures to the card and door as he speaks.

SUZANNE I did, I did, I did tap it, I tapped it a thousand times – I'm not smart enough for these types of places... Are you supposed to be in my room?

WAITER Sorry madame, I had to...

He trails off as he gestures to the arrangement of roses. **SUZANNE** *finally gets free of the scarf and looks around her, suddenly brought up short by how lovely the room is.*

SUZANNE Goodness me.

The **WAITER** *expertly gathers up* **SUZANNE***'s pile of bags.*

WAITER Will you take the single room, madame, or the double room?

SUZANNE The double, please, yes the double.

The **WAITER** *nods and takes the bags to the double room.*

SUZANNE *continues to look round the room. She notices the roses and goes over to the table. She picks up the card, reads it, and places it over her heart, touched.*

The **WAITER** *re-enters.*

WAITER You have a nice view of the park...

SUZANNE *goes over to the window, and looks out at the dusky light.*

SUZANNE This must've cost him a fortune...

WAITER Your champagne is on the table, madame...

__SUZANNE__ turns to see it. She smiles, slightly bashfully. She seems to brush away a tear – she is moved by it all.

SUZANNE It's lovely. It's just lovely.

WAITER If there is anything else I can get for you?

SUZANNE *(in a daze)* What? Oh, no – not at the moment, thank you.

WAITER Would you like me to open your champagne for you?

SUZANNE *(slightly giddy, playful)* No, thanks – Oh! Unless you can do that thing where you slice off the end of the bottle with a sword?

She mimes doing this, as she has seen on TV. It is quite a strong motion outwards, and the **WAITER** *flinches a bit.*

WAITER *(baffled)* Uh, no, I don't think... We don't keep any swords in the hotel...

SUZANNE That's probably just as well.

WAITER *(slightly nervous)* Yes. Shall I...?

He indicates the champagne.

SUZANNE No, no – I'll do it. Don't worry, thank you.

He turns to go. He reaches the door when **SUZANNE** *comes to her senses.*

Wait, sorry – here, let me give you...

She grabs her purse and rummages in it.

God, I never carry cash anymore – hang on, sorry.

She rummages a bit more and finds a couple of pound coins. She counts out another pound in silvers. He waits patiently.

Is that alright? Sorry.

WAITER Thank you very much, madame. Please just call down if you would like anything else.

SUZANNE Thank you.

He leaves. She looks around again, touching the beautiful sofas, and smelling the vases of flowers. She looks at the three champagne flutes, taking in the roses. She picks the bottle up from its ice bucket. She hesitates for a minute before removing the red rose from its flute. Then she stops herself, puts the bottle back in the bucket unopened and places the red rose back in the flute, exactly as it was.

She calls room service.

Hello, yes it's Suzanne Lloyd in the Taylor Suite – could I have a large gin and tonic please? Thank you.

She hangs up.

The door opens and in walks **ELEANOR**, *elegant and unhurried, in a beautifully cut pair of trousers, silk blouse, immaculate hair and make-up. She is followed by the same* **WAITER**, *who is carrying her perfectly formed overnight bag.*

SUZANNE *is slightly taken aback.*

Mother! How did you...?

The **WAITER** *hurriedly takes her bag into the other (single) room in the suite.*

ELEANOR God, they gave me murder downstairs about giving me a key – I honestly think hotels are trying to keep people out these days.

I said, "It may be in *her name* but she is *my daughter*, and I need to speak to her urgently."

As she speaks, **ELEANOR** *has got out her purse, removed a couple of coins, and is now holding them out as the* **WAITER** *returns and passes her. She smoothly drops*

them into his hand, he nods, and exits. This is all a bit of a blur. **SUZANNE** *can't quite keep up.*

SUZANNE But...but how did the key work?

ELEANOR What?

SUZANNE On the door?

ELEANOR Oh, you just tap it, darling.

SUZANNE *nods – of course.*

SUZANNE So what did you want to speak to me about so urgently?

ELEANOR You've lost me.

SUZANNE You said you told the receptionist that you had to speak me urgently.

ELEANOR *considers this for a moment – she had forgotten. Then the penny drops.*

ELEANOR Ah yes, so I did! Oh nothing, darling – don't panic. It's just something I say – I find things happen more efficiently if I look like I might make a scene.

SUZANNE I can imagine.

ELEANOR *is oblivious, or seems to be.*

So, there's nothing then?

ELEANOR Nothing. Nothing that can't wait.

SUZANNE *nods, slightly suspicious.* **ELEANOR** *presses on.*

Well, let me look at you, on this auspicious evening.

She looks **SUZANNE** *up and down.*

Ok, ok – have you got some good underwear for tomorrow? Because it makes all the difference...

There's a soft knock at the door. **SUZANNE** *opens it, takes the gin and tonic straight off the tray at the door,*

scribbles a signature and shuts the door again. She takes a large sip.

ELEANOR *is looking at the roses in flutes.*

Are these from...

SUZANNE Gary, yes, there's a note...

She looks around – it's here somewhere. **ELEANOR** *doesn't need the note.*

ELEANOR Very clever.

SUZANNE What is?

ELEANOR The red for you, of course, the virginal white for Laurie, and the funereal yellow for me...

SUZANNE I don't think he meant it like that...

ELEANOR Did you know in Russia it's considered extremely bad luck to send yellow roses? Totally taboo. It almost amounts to a threat...

SUZANNE *(faintly)* No, I didn't know that. I don't think Gary wants you dead.

ELEANOR Give him time – he barely knows me.

SUZANNE *drinks from her gin and tonic again.*

SUZANNE Have you seen the view?

ELEANOR *goes to the window.*

ELEANOR The park. Yes lovely. They used to have such beautiful lights there years ago, strung along between the trees. Can't see much in the dark now...

SUZANNE Probably an environmental thing. Or council cuts – something like that.

ELEANOR It's a shame, anyway.

ELEANOR *turns back to* **SUZANNE.** *An awkward moment of silence – neither quite knows what to say to the other. Conversation does not come easily or naturally.*

A knock at the door – saved!

SUZANNE Ah! – this'll be her. Here she is.

SUZANNE *goes to open it with nervous energy.* **LAURIE** *walks in, full of natural confidence, perhaps even a slight hint of teenage swagger, a bit of bounce to her. She has an androgynous quality – no make-up, very short hair, wears a very plain dress or trousers, an oversized lumberjack shirt, with thick socks and heavy boots. She dumps a duffel bag on the floor.* **SUZANNE** *throws her arms around her.* **LAURIE** *hugs back, tightly.*

LAURIE Mum – or should I say, blushing bride?

SUZANNE Hello, my baby – just in time...

SUZANNE *engulfs* **LAURIE** *again in a huge, all-encompassing hug, kissing her on the cheek, from which* **LAURIE** *has to good-naturedly struggle free.*

LAURIE For what? It's not til tomorrow morning...right?

SUZANNE Yes, yes, that's right, tomorrow morning, yes, ah it's good to see you – I've missed you. I've missed you.

LAURIE *(laughing)* It's only been a few weeks, Mum... Hi, Grandma.

ELEANOR, *by contrast with* **SUZANNE**, *allows* **LAURIE** *to approach her, and turns her cheek slightly to allow* **LAURIE** *to kiss it – no body contact at all.*

ELEANOR Hello darling, let me look at you.

She stands back and looks **LAURIE** *up and down, just as she did with* **SUZANNE.**

Very modern.

She smiles and **LAURIE** *smiles back, taking it as a compliment, which it sort of is, or as close to compliments as* **ELEANOR** *will get.*

SUZANNE Right, we're all here now, so let's open the fizz!

She drains her glass of gin and tonic and pulls the bottle from its bucket.

LAURIE *picks up the red rose by the stem.*

Careful – thorns.

LAURIE *looks – no thorns.*

ELEANOR They cut the thorns off roses at the smart places – makes them easier to handle.

LAURIE *looks closer.*

LAURIE Oh yeah – nice. Nice touch.

She puts her nose in the rose to smell it.

ELEANOR That one's your mother's. They're from Gary.

LAURIE *drops it like it's hot, suddenly embarrassed that she assumed it was for her.*

LAURIE Oh! Sorry.

ELEANOR The white one's yours... It's meant to be virginal.

LAURIE *smirks knowingly.*

LAURIE That's...nice. What's the yellow one mean, then?

ELEANOR *goes to speak.* **SUZANNE** *cuts her off.*

SUZANNE Nevermind that...

She pulls the three roses from their flutes with one hand and drops them lightly on the coffee table. She pours three glasses of champagne, and they each take one.

SUZANNE To...to...to...

ELEANOR *(drily)* Wedded bliss?

SUZANNE ...second chances...

ELEANOR I'll drink to that.

They raise their glasses and drink.

LAURIE So, where is Gary tonight anyway? Last night of freedom – Vegas? Dubai?

SUZANNE Hitchin.

LAURIE Hitchin.

SUZANNE *laughs.*

SUZANNE Gary's not really a very Vegas kind of guy.

ELEANOR Glad to hear it...

SUZANNE He wanted to just be at home, with his brothers and a couple of mates.

LAURIE Wild. So he got this for us?

She looks around.

Sweet.

SUZANNE He wanted us to have a night together, you know, just the three of us. Family time.

ELEANOR *and* **LAURIE** *nod, but don't quite connect with the idea somehow.*

LAURIE Cool – so is Uncle John not coming too then?

SUZANNE No, no – it's for us women. A bit of female bonding.

LAURIE Is he coming tomorrow? I haven't seen him for ages.

SUZANNE Yes, I think so – he said he was.

ELEANOR Ah lovely – what a treat to see him.

SUZANNE Don't get your hopes up, Mother – he'll slide in ten minutes before it starts, charm the pants off everyone, and then slide off ten minutes before the end, like he always does.

LAURIE He cracks me up, though.

SUZANNE Me too, darling – I wasn't trying to be...

ELEANOR Your brother's a very busy man, Suzanne. He works hard. And he's in the middle of a house sale right now – he can't just drop everything at a moment's notice.

SUZANNE *rolls her eyes.*

SUZANNE Yes, well, anyway – family's a big deal for Gary – it's important to him. He likes having a tribe. Maybe it's sensible – like an old survival technique. He thinks I should make more...

LAURIE *(cutting her off with enthusiasm)* I once read that we are all descended from either hiders or fighters, because everyone else just gets killed or captured.

SUZANNE That's funny – I wonder which ones we are?

ELEANOR Hiders.

LAURIE Fighters.

They say this simultaneously and they all laugh a little.

ELEANOR Is he from a big family – Gary?

SUZANNE Three brothers and a sister.

ELEANOR Goodness – are his parents Catholic?

SUZANNE No, just wanted lots of kids.

ELEANOR *looks mystified, bordering on appalled. She almost shudders.*

ELEANOR I suppose it's easier in a big family.

LAURIE What's easier?

ELEANOR Well, to…to…get along, I suppose. More people, more things to talk about.

Another slightly awkward pause. **SUZANNE** *and* **LAURIE** *exchange a wry, amused glance. They all drink.* **LAURIE** *changes the energy, grabbing her mother's hand impulsively and squeezing it.*

LAURIE So, are you nervous?

SUZANNE A bit. It's a big thing, getting married. I think that's only just fully dawned on me.

ELEANOR The biggest… Well, that and buying a house.

SUZANNE I wouldn't know…

ELEANOR No…

SUZANNE I can't see me ever buying a house.

ELEANOR No…

SUZANNE I guess older people bought them cheap and are going to just cling onto them for life.

ELEANOR By older people, I assume you mean me and your father?

SUZANNE How are those four bedrooms, Mum?

ELEANOR Well, one of them's yours.

SUZANNE But I don't live there now.

ELEANOR We've all had hard times, you know – the 70s, my god – I won't even bore you with it…

SUZANNE *goes quiet.*

LAURIE I don't think I'll ever bother buying a house – I can just live somewhere exciting where the rents are cheaper.

ELEANOR Such as?

LAURIE Barcelona. Estonia. Anywhere really – I don't want to be chained to a desk my whole life, just to die in a suburban box with my name on it.

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