SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an excerpt - an appetiser, if you will - from a full Samuel French title.

This sample is just for you to try out, and it can't be used for performance, downloaded, printed or distributed in any way.

Take it for a whirl and see if it tickles your fancy!

For more information about licensing this or other shows, or to browse thousands more plays and theatre books to buy please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

SF PERUSALS

HOARD

by Bim Adewunmi

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

ISBN 978-0-573-11645-2

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

For Amateur Production Enquiries

United Kingdom and World
excluding north america
plays@samuelfrench.co.uk
020 7255 4302/01

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

THINKING ABOUT PERFORMING A SHOW?

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

---

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

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

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

LEARN MORE & FIND THOUSANDS OF SHOWS

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

www.samuelfrench.co.uk/perform

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

plays@samuelfrench.co.uk 020 7387 9373

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.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bim Adewunmi is a producer with *This American Life*. She is a multimedia journalist whose work has appeared in publications such as the *Guardian*, *BuzzFeed News*, *Vogue*, and on *Netflix*. Her work was included in the Best American Magazine Writing 2018. She was born in east London and grew upon between London and Lagos. *Hoard* is her first play. She lives in New York.

Photo credit: Sylvie Rosokoff

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Hoard is a specific story, in as much as it is about this one Nigerian-British family in east London. But its heart can also be found in other West African households in London; that same tendency to accumulate, and then the weaving of all sorts of narratives to justify events. The stuffed-full Bakare family homestead in Plaistow is not a one-off; the recollected experiences of the Bakare sisters are not necessarily unique. After all, many of us have our own memories of…*stuff*.

Placing the dinner party in east London was a deliberate choice; while popular knowledge suggests south London as the epicentre of Nigerian life in the capital, east London has long held its own, with thriving Nigerian communities dotted through its postcodes. I'm a proud east Londoner, born and semi-raised there, and it is an integral part of my – and the Bakares' – identity. I wanted to tell this story because the richness of our stories has not always been allowed to exist in public spaces, for public consumption. *Hoard* is both a love letter to east London and also to the many Nigerian-British families who have made a home there. We are *splendid*.

The action takes place in one location: the Bakare sisters' living room-cum-dining room (but it can be extended to include a kitchen if so desired). They are in east London – Dalston or Stoke Newington at a push. This can be a minimalist set: a dining table and four chairs, a sofa, a rug, a tasteful bookcase/shelving with some succulent plants. The actors should feel free to move through the space as the dialogue moves them. This is a small dinner party with a named menu, and food and drink comes up often and joyously throughout the play; it should be served and eaten. For the avoidance of doubt, this is not a family that has hot sauce or even Maggi seasoning on the dining table. The buzzer sound that heralds Wura's arrival must be distinct in its formation, and different to what is heard when Bili and Brian or Ami arrive.

The stage directions are not sacrosanct, but they *are* there to guide the very specific moodscapes the characters occupy over the course of the play. The ellipses, italicised, and bolded words in the dialogue are wholly intentional. When a character's line ends in ellipsis the intention is to trail off, usually awkwardly. Italics denote either a lighter touch in delivery, or emphasis. The bold text denotes a heavier delivery. When the words are both italicised and bold, the actor has the job of emphasising, but lightly. Go with your gut. When a character's words end with –-/ they are being cut off, and the next character should start their line with no pause.

It has been my experience in popular culture that African accents of all stripes are treated as the shorthand to a punchline of a joke the author has not necessarily written. That is not to be the case here; for the purposes of performance, only Wura is to have a Nigerian* accent (naturally, after more than thirty years of living in the UK, it will have become somewhat dulled).

*what the ear hears is actually usually a Yoruba accent, but there is sadly little room for nuance in these situations.

FIRST PERFORMANCE INFO

Hoard was originally produced by Avalon and BBC Arts, and previewed at the Bush Theatre on 24 and 25 July, 2018. It featured the following company:

Rafi —Faith Alabi
Ami —Babirye Bukilwa
Bili —Pepter Lunkuse
Wura —Lucy Vandi
Brian —John Omole

Director – Tinuke Craig

Hoard opened at the Arcola theatre on 15 May 2019 with the following company:

Rafi —Elizabeth Ita
Ami —Emmanuella Cole
Bili —Kemi Durosinmi
Wura —Ellen Thomas
Brian —Tyler Fayose

Director – Femi Elufowoju Jr
Stage Manager – Catriona McHugh

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

The machine that helped create and bring *Hoard* to life is vast and lovely. My family: Adedayo Adewunmi, Ademola F. Adewunmi, Ade Adewunmi, Demola Adewunmi, Dapo Adewunmi. Karen "HC" Onojaife. Jonty Claypole, Jessi Stewart, Margaret-Anne Docherty, Tinuke Craig, Faith Alabi, Pepter Lunkuse, Babirye Bukilwa, John Omole, Lucy Vandi, Cherrelle Skeete, Tunji Lucas. Margaret-Anne Docherty, Nkenna Ibeakanma, Abby Ajayi, Destiny Ekaragha, Zezi Ifore, Susan Wokoma, the Bush Theatre, Bella Lamplough Shields, Catriona McHugh, Centre 151, ArtsEd, Brooklyn Public Library, every single person at the Arcola Theatre (not least the wonderful cast and director), and of course, every last Nigerian in east London tonight.

For Ade. I cannot imagine a world without you in it,
because I have never had to

CHARACTERS

RAFI BAKARE – 29, a classic big sister, intelligent, sharp
AMI BAKARE – 27, a peacekeeper by nature
BILI BAKARE – 24, smart and carefree
BRIAN BURTON – 26, a beautiful, charming American boy
WURA BAKARE – 57, self-assured, formidable,
and comfortable in most spaces

Scene One

Lights up. Friday night, **RAFI** *and* **AMI** *are in their flat, and in their work clothes, still.* **AMI** *is at the dining table.* **RAFI** *on the sofa, enjoying a glass of wine as she marks pupils' workbooks.*

AMI *(musing)* Okay…fried rice: done. Chicken: done. Plantains about to be done. I feel like Nigella Lawson. Only, you know, not rich. And well, *black*. *(a pause and then as if in realisation)* ***Nigeria*** Lawson. Imagine?

RAFI *shoots* **AMI** *a brief look.*

Rafi. Rafi, look at me. *(walks over to* **RAFI***)* It would be *amazing*. Picture it: Opening shot, daytime. **I'm dressed in ankara and a cute gele**, [*no not a gele, too formal – a little headwrap so I'm relatable to all the black girls supporting]* cook, serve, fake dinner party.

RAFI *puts down her pen and pays more attention.*

Closing shot: late night, I tiptoe into the kitchen, *wearing an Afrocentric nightie, you know, to startle Bev and Kev of Tunbridge Wells*. **The open fridge illuminates my face, and I open a Tupperware** – *real Tupperware, Raf, not an empty tub of Flora* – and then I eat some food right off of my fingers, before winking at the camera and closing the fridge door.

AMI *looks dreamily into middle distance for a beat.*

RAFI So, what Nigerian food are you licking off your fingers? Because I feel like pounded yam and okra isn't, like, the *sexiest* food.

AMI *(faux-sharply)* Lies! Pounded yam *is* sexy. But fine – there are other sexy foods. We have, um…

RAFI *waits, eyebrows raised, exaggerating patience.*

…Plantains! *(***AMI** *holds a plantain aloft.)* Phallic, because Nigella. But – and this is crucial – it's *actual* finger food.

RAFI Yeah, but dodo is supposed to be hot.

AMI *(massaging temples)* Rafia Bakare, why are you like this? Do you enjoy sprinkling sand in my garri, hm? Stop pissing on my dreams! I could be discovered down Ridley Road market tomorrow! **Nigeria Lawson**.

Extends hand, as if showcasing a cinematic scene.

(in Del Boy Trotter voice) This time next year, Rodders, we'll be millionaires!

RAFI All I know is, you can't put salt on this batch. It's a crime against God and man.

AMI You're just going to have to cope, darling. Because salt on plantains is in keeping with all the tenets of *my* religion.

RAFI News flash: anyone who puts salt on their plantain *has no religion.*

AMI Gerrout of my house, please!

RAFI Abeg – it's my house too! And I can't just idly stand by while you impart faulty wisdom to this un-Nigerian boy, who, by the way, I'm actually excited for you to meet, because I think Bili's fully on board with this one.

AMI Same.

RAFI So imagine Mum goes to visit him and Bili one day, and there he is, sprinkling salt on plantain like a pagan…

AMI *is rolling her eyes at this point.*

...and then the true horror will be revealed: THE CALL! WAS COMING! FROM INSIDE! THE – *(The buzzer goes off, cutting* **RAFI** *off.)* HO-OO-O-USE!

AMI Get the door, weirdo. *(heads into the kitchen)*

RAFI *smiles and walks towards the door. She speaks lowly into the receiver before pressing the door release and hanging up. Moments later, the front door opens to reveal third sister* **BILI** *and her boyfriend, the guest of honour,* **BRIAN.**

BRIAN *is holding a bottle of Prosecco and a shopping bag containing dessert.*

RAFI You're here! *(yells back to* **AMI** *in the kitchen)* THEY'RE HERE!

Come in, come in. *(to* **BILI***)* Hello, darling.

RAFI *greets* **BILI** *and* **BRIAN**, *taking the bag off him.*

BILI Hey, sweets.

BRIAN Hey, Rafi. How're you doing?

RAFI *(to* **BRIAN***)* I'm great, I'm good. How're you doing?

BILI I feel like my stomach is eating itself. When are we eating?

BRIAN I can't wait to eat. *(a pause)* And meet Ami, obviously.

RAFI Well, ***obviously***. Don't worry, we'll make you a party box to go.

RAFI *fusses with the coats, as* **BRIAN** *starts exploring the flat and* **AMI** *emerges from the kitchen.*

BILI *(in a chrirpy Cockney accent)* Awl-right, treacle? *(hugs* **AMI***)*

AMI *(hugs* **BILI**, *tenderly holds her sister's face in her hands, before kissing her cheeks)* Hello, darling. Food's almost done.

BILI Oh, thank God. *(beat)* Okay, look ferocious, here comes Brian.

AMI *(turning to* **BRIAN** *with a big smile)* Brian! Such a pleasure to *finally* meet you. *(The two start to shake hands before* **AMI** *shrugs and opens her arms to him in a "ah, why not?" manner.)* I'm gonna hug you. Welcome!

BRIAN Thank you so much for inviting me. Bili tells me all the Nigerian food I've had since I've been in London is trash compared to yours.

AMI Oh, so you're here to do a Yelp review? How *American* of you.

BRIAN *(visibly mildly flustered)* Um, I...

AMI I'm messing with you, Brian. You'll get used to it.

BRIAN *(nervously)* Haha, of course. Um, is there anything we can help with?

RAFI *(gently shooing)* Actually, **you** can tactfully disappear...

AMI Yes, and luckily, we have a task in mind: would you mind popping to the corner shop quickly? We need teabags.

RAFI Yorkshire Tea, please.

BRIAN *(looking at* **BILI** *in realisation)* Ohhh, *sure*. Bili warned me y'all would do this.

AMI Wonderful. So, go. Take your time.

BRIAN *walks away and they all watch him leave.*

RAFI I told you he was cute, didn't I?

AMI You did; he has a real American glow. Clap for yourself.

RAFI *pointedly claps three times.*

BILI *(sighing dreamily)* I think I'm like... **eighty per cent** in love with him.

RAFI Ooh, Bili and Brian, sitting in a tree... *(in a TV news reporter voice, with the wooden spoon as a microphone extended towards* **BILI***)* And what do you think will tip the final twenty per cent?

The sisters all pause briefly, thinking.

AMI Ooh, a pregnancy scare!

RAFI *and* **BILI** *gasp.*

BILI *(shaking her head)* Ami, you play too much! *(a beat)* But, like, *yeah*? *(laughs)* Obviously, I don't *want* to be pregnant. But it ***would*** give him an opportunity to have the ***correct*** response to a potentially life-altering situation.

AMI *Yesss*. Like, the church aunties used to say: "Lord, don't send the Holy Spirit to kill him, just shake him small-small!" Nothing bonds a couple like a pregnancy scare. *(a beat)* Or a mugging.

RAFI Wow. So you're both sick. I hate you.

BILI *(in unison with* **AMI***)* You love us!

All laugh.

I just mean, I think I'm all the way in with him. We just *fit*. Like we're…just having a natural conversation. You know?

AMI Ugh, okay, budget Neruda.

BILI *sticks her tongue out at* **AMI**.

RAFI Don't worry, I'm going to keep my game face on. He needs to sweat a little.

BILI *(apprehensively, after a pause)* Guys, do you think it's okay I haven't introduced him to Mum and Dad yet?

RAFI I think it's **very** okay.

AMI I agree. Dad's in Nigeria for the rest of the year, and anyway: where were you going to take him to meet Mum since you can't take him home? Pizza Express? Starbucks? Nah.

RAFI *We'll* do the initial vetting, and only *then* can you ascend to the next level and fight the big boss.

BILI But you don't think th––/

RAFI *(firmly)* No, we do not. The "Plushness of Plaistow" can wait until your one-year anniversary or something.

AMI Yeah, he'll be in too deep by then. And in his confusion that a creature as lovely as you could have emerged from such a hellscape, he'll propose! Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you, the Bakare – *(looks to* **BILI***)* what's Brian's surname again?

BILI Burton.

AMI I present to you the Bakare-Bur—! Wait, you'd be called Bili Bakare-Burton? Triple Bs?

BILI No, I would *remain* Bilqis Bakare. I happen to like my name, thank you very much.

RAFI Right on, sis. *(throws up a militant fist)*

The buzzer goes and **BILI** *goes to answer. Moments later,* **BRIAN** *enters, now bearing teabags.*

Let's eat!

AMI *(to* **BRIAN***)* Get your phone out, Brian – time to start writing your Yelp review.

The group sits down to dinner.

Scene Two

BRIAN Wow, this all looks and smells amazing. I'm in awe of anyone who can cook, let alone cook *well*. *(gesturing)* So, what is all this?

AMI Barely Nigerian, to be honest. *(pointing)* Chicken, plantains. Naija fried rice. I don't mean to brag but my mum says it's the best *she's* ever tasted.

BRIAN Yeah, I had some of her, uh…what was it called again, Bil?

BILI Efo. You had rice and efo.

BRIAN Yeah, that was it. It was *amazing*. My parents are competent, but that's about it. You three must've grown up like royalty, eating all that fine food.

The sisters share a quick, loaded look.

RAFI Sure did. You haven't lived till you've had her pounded yam and egusi.

AMI Yeah, and you *hate* egusi, so that's saying a lot.

RAFI Exactly. Anyway. Time to cross-examine the witness. *(to* **BRIAN***)* In punishingly minute detail, I want you describe *exactly* what you do at your fancy Google job. Follow up: are the office snacks *spectacular*?

BRIAN *(laughing)* They are, actually! And I'm in snack heaven. Right now I'm in love with um …Bili, what are those salty, melty things called again?

BILI Skips.

BRIAN Skips! I *love* Skips. But um, yeah, my job is essentially a sort of data journalism?

BILI *(proudly)* Brian's team is digitising and analysing the British Library's catalogue. It's a big deal.

AMI So let me get this straight: you work as a tech bro and earn money like a tech bro *(mouths "Right?" to* **BILI***, who nods,*

prompting **AMI** *to fist bump* **BILI***)*, but you don't actually have to *be* a tech bro? Wow, Brian, you're my capitalist hero.

BRIAN *(laughing)* I gotta say, I'm kinda my *own* hero, too! I know it sounds boring to a lot of people but I love my job. I have a really amazing team, and getting to move to London, and meeting Bili, and now you guys is…just the cherry on top.

RAFI Brian, you charmer. *(simpers at* **BRIAN** *fake-coquettishly)* I appreciate the attempt but I have to tell you, the only person that needs to hear that flowery shit is Bili.

BILI *(smiling)* Oh, shut up!

BRIAN Okay, so you're a teacher, Rafi, and Ami, you're a freelance journalist. I can't believe how…*spare* this place is. If I were a teacher, there'd be stacks and stacks of crap everywhere. It's bad enough with my own job.

A very brief, almost imperceptible hush falls over the dining table. **BILI** *picks up the rice abruptly.*

BILI Have some more rice, babe.

AMI Yes – eat! I slaved over a hot stove, and I won't rest until everyone's top button is undone. I'm a feeder. I get it from my mama.

BRIAN Wait, so not only is your mum an amazing cook, and she's a feeder too? *(a beat, then to* **BILI***)* Did I tell you I don't like my current roommate?

RAFI *drops her fork abruptly, and picks it back up,* **AMI** *gives her a sharp look, while* **BILI** *smiles tightly.*

BILI You don't wanna commute from Zone four, babe, trust me. I mean, yes, you'd get all those amazing meals, but *at what cost*?

RAFI Seriously. Zone two is exactly the right distance for almost everything that matters in London. Believe.

BRIAN *(to* **BILI**, *fake-exasperated)* I guess I'll just get to know your parents in the more conventional way, then. I mean, I still don't quite understand all the zones on this subway of yours but I can tell you're not joking.

AMI Quite right, Brian. Here at 242 Nuttall Road, we don't believe in jokes and we'll thank you to remember that. Also, promise me you will never in your life call it the "subway" again.

BRIAN *(placing his hand over his heart)* I promise. *(smiling)*

RAFI Okay, I'm just going to go for it. *(in a grand voice)* Brian, I *must* know: what are your intentions towards this genteel creature, our youngest ravishing rose, our Bili?

BILI *(muffled from behind her hands)* Brian, we can leave *right now*.

AMI Hush, Bili. Your presence isn't even technically required. You're lucky we haven't banished you to the kitchen like a housegirl.

RAFI Exactly. Brian, continue.

BRIAN Um, Bili's great, as you know.

AMI That we do, sir. But we're here for *new* news.

BILI *(to* **BRIAN***)* Seriously, you don't have to do *any* of this.

RAFI *(mock sternly)* Let him speak, Bil.

BRIAN *(after a thoughtful pause)* I **really** like Bili. And I think Bili really likes me. *(smiles at* **BILI**, *who smiles back)* And I think it must be going pretty great if I'm getting to meet you two. Cos you three are crazy close – your group chat respects neither time nor place – and Bili would probably dump me the minute we left here if you guys told her to. *(a beat)* Which is why I hope that will not be your recommendation tonight.

RAFI *and* **AMI** *look at* **BILI**, *who shrugs slightly.*

AMI *(slow clapping)* Flawless execution. Oh, he's good. Isn't he ***good***, Rafi? Triple axel, triple toe loop.

RAFI A bravura performance, Ami, a dream on the ice. He even put his fork down and everything. *(to* **BRIAN***)* Have you done this before, Brian? You've got a gift for it.

AMI You can stay, Brian. Eat some more chicken.

BRIAN *nods happily, kisses* **BILI** *on the cheek.*

BILI Ugh, I hate you guys.

RAFI *(in unison with* **AMI***)* You love us!

BRIAN So only the parents to go now...

AMI Oh, I'd be careful what you wish for, there, sport – there are always angels listening...

BILI What are you writing right now, Ami?

AMI I'm about to do a pitching workshop for freelance writers. Gonna be super-hard not to just roll up and say: "Don't do it! Go train to be a dentist instead!"

BRIAN My dad's a dentist, actually.

AMI Really?

BRIAN Yeah. He always told me and my sister Karen to run far away from dentistry. He'd say, "Do you wanna spend your entire career staring into people's mouths?" I think he was only half-joking.

RAFI I wouldn't have minded being a dentist, you know. Even with the halitosis exposure. It's a necessary job. *(a beat)* Like hunting.

AMI You *would* say that, Miss I-was-a-school-governor-even-before-I-trained-to-be-a-teacher. You love a boring, necessary job. No offence, Brian. *Some* offence, Rafi.

BRIAN Oh, none taken. My dad would cheer you on.

RAFI Er, I *love* being a teacher. Even if the kids can be little shits. But fine – if I *had* to, my frou-frou career choice would be interior design. I've always loved the blankness of an empty room. Nothing but space to carve up.

BRIAN Well, you've done a great job here. It all matches, but it's not matchy-matchy. And it's sparse but somehow not severe. Which I think is very hard to do.

AMI Oh, there are harder things to do when it comes to interior design, believe me. But thank you.

The sisters share another quick look.

RAFI *(standing up)* Okay, I want cheesecake. Yay or nay? Bili, what flavour—

The buzzer goes off, in a distinct four-piece pattern.

BILI *and* **AMI** *stand up to join* **RAFI**, *who is already standing. They look to the door as one.*

BRIAN Are you guys expec—

All three women, without meaning to, hush him in unison, hands flapping impatiently, eyes still focused towards the door.

The buzzer goes again, in the same formation.

AMI I'll answer it. It might not even be...

BRIAN *(to* **BILI***)* Might not be who?

BILI It might not be Mu––/

AMI *(goes to speak into receiver and returns quickly)* Yup, it's Mum.

RAFI *(lowly)* Argh, I hate the drive-by visits *the most*.

Scene Three

Enter **WURA**, *a neat woman with a busy manner. She is carrying three or four bags, maybe one is a "Ghana Must Go" bag. Everyone in the room stands to attention, as though caught doing something wrong.* **BRIAN** *looks confused by the suddenly rigid atmosphere.*

WURA *E ku'le o!* Hello! Ugh, I'm so tired! *(***WURA** *kisses* **AMI** *on the cheek and continues moving deeper into the living room.)* Where's your sist-- *oh*!

BILI *(rushing forward)* Mum! What a...*bonus* to see you tonight.

RAFI *(pointedly)* You didn't call. *(kisses* **WURA***)* I mean, you **never** do, so...

WURA *(with eyes on* **BRIAN**, *who seems frozen)* Even *I'm* surprised to be here. And you know I can barely use that phone, Rafi. And who is this? *(to* **BRIAN***)* Good evening, young man.

BRIAN *(unfreezing)* Hello, good evening! I've heard so much about you, Mrs Bakare! I'm Brian, Bili's bo––/

BILI *(rushing to cut off* **BRIAN***)* My *friend*, Brian, Mum! We were just having a nice Friday night dinner. Do you want some rice? Ami cooked. You know you love Ami's fried rice.

AMI I can make you a to-go box, Mum. I cooked so much.

WURA Thank you. But I'm not going just yet. Brian, you don't sound like you're from here. How do you know Bili?

BRIAN Well, Mrs Bakare, we met abou––/

BILI *(cutting* **BRIAN** *off again)* We met at work. Brian just moved here from California, and he didn't really know anyone in London, so I said he should come round for dinner, and here he is!

WURA That's nice of you, darling, but I was talking to Brian. *(a beat)* Brian?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and enjoy other theatre-related larks, do follow us on our spangley social media channels.

Samuel French London

SamuelFrenchLtd

SF **PERUSALS**