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

COPENHAGEN

A Play in Two Acts

by Michael Frayn

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

Copyright © 1998 by Michael Frayn
Edited for the production at the Chichester Festival Theatre in 2018
All Rights Reserved

COPENHAGEN is fully protected under the copyright laws of the British Commonwealth, including Canada, the United States of America, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-13212-4

Concordtheatricals.co.uk

Concordtheatricals.com

This work is published by Samuel French, an imprint of Concord Theatricals.

For Amateur Production Enquiries

United Kingdom and World
excluding north america
licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk
020-7054-7200

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

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

The Professional Rights in this play are controlled by United Agents 12-26 Lexington Street, London, W1F OLE.

No one shall make any changes in this title for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall upload this title, or part of this title, to any social media websites.

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

MUSIC USE NOTE

The music parts for this title are available on hire to licensed productions from Samuel French. Fees and conditions of this hire are quoted on application. Sample materials are available on request for perusal prior to application.

USE OF COPYRIGHT MUSIC

A licence issued by Samuel French Ltd to perform this play does not include permission to use the incidental music specified in this copy. Where the place of performance is already licensed by the PERFORMING RIGHT SOCIETY (PRS) a return of the music used must be made to them. If the place of performance is not so licensed then application should be made to the PRS, 2 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG. A separate and additional licence from PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE LTD, 1 Upper James Street, London W1F 9DE (www.ppluk.com) is needed whenever commercial recordings are used.

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.

Other plays by MICHAEL FRAYN
published and licensed by Samuel French

Alarms and Excursions

Alphabetical Order

Benefactors

Clouds

Donkeys' Years

Make and Break

Now You Know

Number One (*translated from the Jean Anouilh original*)

The Two of Us

Other plays by MICHAEL FRAYN
licensed by Samuel French

Afterlife

Audience

Balmoral

The Bear

The Cherry Orchard

The Crimson Hotel

Democracy

Exchange

Here

Listen to This (Collection)

The Seagull

The 'Sneeze'

Three Sisters

Uncle Vanya

Wild Honey

FIND PERFECT PLAYS TO PERFORM AT
www.samuelfrench.co.uk/perform

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Frayn was born in London in 1933. He began his career as a reporter for the *Guardian* and later the *Observer*. After leaving the *Observer* he continued to write as a columnist as well as publishing novels and plays for television and stage.

His plays for stage include: *Copenhagen, Afterlife, The Two of Us, Alphabetical Order, Donkeys' Years, Clouds, Balmoral (Liberty Hall), Make and Break, Noises Off, Benefactors, Alarms and Excursions, Look Look, Here* and *Make and Break*.

Other translations include: four full-length Chekhov plays – *The Cherry Orchard, Three Sisters, The Seagull* and *Uncle Vanya* and four one-act plays – *The Evils of Tobacco, Swan Song, The Bear* and *The Proposal*.

NOTES ON SCRIPT

As in the previous post-production text of 2003, it incorporates the Postscript and the Post-Postscript, including the section on Karlsch. It now also takes account of the complete prewar and wartime correspondence of Heisenberg and his wife, first published in 2011.

COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen was first previewed at the Cottesloe Theatre, Royal National Theatre, London, on 21 May 1998, and opened on 28 May 1998, with the following cast:

MARGRETHE	Sarah Kestelman
BOHR	David Burke
HEISENBERG	Matthew Marsh

Directed by	*Michael Blakemore*
Designed by	*Peter J Davison*
Lighting by	*Mark Henderson*
Sound by	*Simon Baker*

This production moved to the Duchess Theatre, London, where it was presented by Michael Codron and Lee Dean, and opened on 5 February 1999.

It began previewing at the Royale Theatre, New York, on 23 March 2000, and opened on 11 April 2000, with the following cast:

MARGRETHE	Blair Brown
BOHR	Philip Bosco
HEISENBERG	Michael Cumpsty

Directed by	*Michael Blakemore*
Designed by	*Peter J Davison*
Lighting by	*Mark Henderson and Michael Lincoln*
Sound by	*Tony Meola*

It opened at the Minerva Theatre, Chichester, on 17 August 2018, with the following cast:

MARGRETHE	Patricia Hodge
BOHR	Paul Jesson
HEISENBERG	Charles Edwards

Directed by	*Michael Blakemore*
Designed by	*Peter J Davison*
Lighting by	*Mark Henderson*
Sound by	*Carolyn Downing*

CHARACTERS

MARGRETHE
BOHR
HEISENBERG

ACT ONE

MARGRETHE But why?

BOHR You're still thinking about it?

MARGRETHE Why did he come to Copenhagen?

BOHR Does it matter, my love, now we're all three of us dead and gone?

MARGRETHE Some questions remain long after their owners have died. Lingering like ghosts. Looking for the answers they never found in life.

BOHR Some questions have no answers to find.

MARGRETHE Why did he come? What was he trying to tell you?

BOHR He did explain later.

MARGRETHE He explained over and over again. Each time he explained it became more obscure.

BOHR It was probably very simple, when you come right down to it: he wanted to have a talk.

MARGRETHE A talk? To the enemy? In the middle of a war?

BOHR Margrethe, my love, we were scarcely the enemy.

MARGRETHE It was 1941!

BOHR Heisenberg was one of our oldest friends.

MARGRETHE Heisenberg was German. We were Danes. We were under German occupation.

BOHR It put us in a difficult position, certainly.

MARGRETHE I've never seen you as angry with anyone as you were with Heisenberg that night.

BOHR Not to disagree, but I believe I remained remarkably calm.

MARGRETHE I know when you're angry.

BOHR It was as difficult for him as it was for us.

MARGRETHE So why did he do it? Now no one can be hurt, now no one can be betrayed.

BOHR I doubt if he ever really knew himself.

MARGRETHE And he wasn't a friend. Not after that visit. That was the end of the famous friendship between Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg.

HEISENBERG Now we're all dead and gone, yes, and there are only two things the world remembers about me. One is the uncertainty principle, and the other is my mysterious visit to Niels Bohr in Copenhagen in 1941. Everyone understands uncertainty. Or thinks he does. No one understands my trip to Copenhagen. Time and time again I've explained it. To Bohr himself, and Margrethe. To interrogators and intelligence officers, to journalists and historians. The more I've explained, the deeper the uncertainty has become. Well, I shall be happy to make one more attempt. Now we're all dead and gone. Now no one can be hurt, now no one can be betrayed.

MARGRETHE I never entirely liked him, you know. Perhaps I can say that to you now.

BOHR Yes, you did. When he was first here in the twenties? Of course you did. On the beach at Tisvilde with us and the boys? He was one of the family.

MARGRETHE Something alien about him, even then.

BOHR So quick and eager.

MARGRETHE Too quick. Too eager.

BOHR Those bright watchful eyes.

MARGRETHE Too bright. Too watchful.

BOHR Well, he was a very great physicist. I never changed my mind about that.

MARGRETHE They were all good, all the people who came to Copenhagen to work with you. You had most of the great pioneers in atomic theory here at one time or another.

BOHR And the more I look back on it, the more I think Heisenberg was the greatest of them all.

HEISENBERG So what was Bohr? He was the first of us all, the father of us all. Modern atomic physics began when Bohr realised that quantum theory applied to matter as well as to energy. 1913. Everything we did was based on that great insight of his.

BOHR When you think that he first came here to work with me in 1924 ...

HEISENBERG I'd only just finished my doctorate, and Bohr was the most famous atomic physicist in the world.

BOHR ...and in just over a year he'd invented quantum mechanics.

MARGRETHE It came out of his work with you.

BOHR Mostly out of what he'd been doing with Max Born and Pascual Jordan at Göttingen. Another year or so and he'd got uncertainty.

MARGRETHE And you'd done complementarity.

BOHR We argued them both out together.

HEISENBERG We did most of our best work together.

BOHR Heisenberg usually led the way.

HEISENBERG Bohr made sense of it all.

BOHR We operated like a business.

HEISENBERG Chairman and managing director.

MARGRETHE Father and son.

HEISENBERG A family business.

MARGRETHE Even though we had sons of our own.

BOHR And we went on working together long after he ceased to be my assistant.

HEISENBERG Long after I'd left Copenhagen in 1927 and gone back to Germany. Long after I had a chair and a family of my own.

MARGRETHE Then the Nazis came to power...

BOHR And it got more and more difficult. When the war broke out – impossible. Until that day in 1941.

MARGRETHE When it finished forever.

BOHR Yes, why did he do it?

HEISENBERG September, 1941. For years I had it down in my memory as October.

MARGRETHE September. The middle of September.

BOHR A curious sort of diary memory is.

HEISENBERG You open the pages, and all the neat headings and tidy jottings dissolve around you.

BOHR You step through the pages into the months and days themselves.

MARGRETHE The past becomes the present inside your head.

HEISENBERG September, 1941, Copenhagen... And at once – here I am, getting off the train from Berlin, a plain civilian suit among all the field-grey of the Wehrmacht, the naval gold braid, the well-tailored black of the SS. Back in the city I know so well, with a sharp north wind off the Sound and the sky clearing after a day of rain. Suddenly the old familiar bells of City Hall ring out – and for a moment everything is as it always was. I'm a young man again, just setting out on my life... Only of course I'm not – I'm the middle-aged visiting professor with the text of a learned lecture in my bag. And hidden inside my head another communication

that has to be delivered. The lecture is on astrophysics. The text inside my head is a more difficult one.

BOHR We obviously can't go to the lecture.

MARGRETHE Not if he's giving it at the German Cultural Institute – it's a Nazi propaganda organisation.

BOHR He must know what we feel about that.

HEISENBERG My colleague Carl von Weizsäcker has written to warn Bohr of my arrival.

MARGRETHE He won't be the Heisenberg you used to know.

BOHR He'll be a little older, certainly.

MARGRETHE I still think of him as a boy.

BOHR He's nearly forty. A middle-aged professor, fast catching up with the rest of us.

MARGRETHE And you've invited him to the house?

BOHR Weizsäcker says he wants to see me privately. My love, we can't close our door to him.

MARGRETHE Niels! They've occupied our country!

BOHR He is not they.

MARGRETHE He's one of them.

BOHR He's a friend.

MARGRETHE He's a German.

BOHR A White Jew. That's what the Nazis called him. He taught relativity, and they said it was Jewish physics. He couldn't mention Einstein by name, but he stuck with relativity, in spite of the most terrible attacks.

MARGRETHE All the real Jews have lost their jobs. He's still teaching.

BOHR He's still teaching relativity.

MARGRETHE Still a professor at Leipzig.

BOHR At Leipzig, yes. Not at Munich. They kept him out of the chair at Munich.

MARGRETHE He could have been at Columbia.

BOHR Or Chicago. He had offers from both.

MARGRETHE He wouldn't leave Germany.

BOHR He wants to be there to rebuild German science when Hitler goes. He told Goudsmit.

HEISENBERG I wonder if they suspect for one moment how painful it was to get permission for this trip. The humiliating appeals to the Party, the demeaning efforts to have strings pulled by our friends in the Foreign Office.

BOHR The Gestapo planted microphones in his house. He told Goudsmit when he was in America. The SS brought him in for interrogation in the basement at the Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse.

MARGRETHE And then they let him go again.

BOHR He knows he's still being watched, of course.

MARGRETHE So it will all be reported upon. Who he sees. What he says to them. What they say to him.

HEISENBERG I carry my surveillance around like an infectious disease.

MARGRETHE You won't talk about politics?

BOHR We'll stick to physics. I assume it's physics that he wants to talk to me about.

MARGRETHE I think you must also assume that you and I may not be the only people who hear what's said in this house.

HEISENBERG I happen to know that Bohr is also under surveillance. I wonder if he realises.

MARGRETHE If you want to speak privately you'd better go out in the open air.

BOHR I shan't want to speak privately.

MARGRETHE You could go for another of your walks together.

HEISENBERG Shall I be able to suggest a walk?

BOHR I don't think we shall be going for any walks. Whatever he has to say he can say where everyone can hear it. I've nothing to hide.

MARGRETHE The Gestapo are not the only people watching you, of course. There's also our fellow-countrymen. It would be a terrible betrayal of all their trust in you if they thought you were collaborating.

BOHR Inviting an old friend to dinner is hardly collaborating.

MARGRETHE It might appear to be collaborating.

BOHR Yes. He's put us in a difficult position.

MARGRETHE I shall never forgive him.

HEISENBERG This is going to be a deeply awkward occasion.

BOHR He must have good reason. He must have very good reason.

MARGRETHE Some new idea he wants to try out on you, perhaps.

BOHR What can it be, though? Where are we off to next?

MARGRETHE So now of course your curiosity's aroused, in spite of everything.

HEISENBERG So now here I am, walking out under a starry sky to the Bohrs' house. Followed, presumably, by my invisible shadow. What am I feeling now? Fear, certainly – the touch of fear that one always feels for a teacher, for an employer, for a parent. Much worse fear about what I have to say. About how to express it. How to broach it in the first place. Worse fear still about what happens if I fail.

MARGRETHE It's not something to do with the war?

BOHR Heisenberg is a theoretical physicist. I don't think anyone has yet discovered a way you can use theoretical physics to kill people.

MARGRETHE It couldn't be something about fission?

BOHR Fission? Why would he want to talk to me about fission?

MARGRETHE Because you're working on it.

BOHR Heisenberg isn't.

MARGRETHE Isn't he? Everybody else in the world seems to be. And you're the acknowledged authority.

BOHR He hasn't published on fission.

MARGRETHE It was Heisenberg who did all the original work on the physics of the nucleus. And he consulted you then, he consulted you at every step.

BOHR That was back in 1932. Fission's only been around for the last three years.

MARGRETHE But if the Germans were developing some kind of weapon based on nuclear fission...

BOHR My love, no one is going to develop a weapon based on nuclear fission.

MARGRETHE But if the Germans were trying to, Heisenberg would be involved.

BOHR There's no shortage of good German physicists.

MARGRETHE There's no shortage of good German physicists in America or Britain.

BOHR The Jews have gone, obviously.

HEISENBERG Einstein, Wolfgang Pauli, Max Born... Otto Frisch, Lise Meitner... We led the world in theoretical physics! Once.

MARGRETHE So Heisenberg would be in charge of the work?

BOHR Margrethe, there is no work! John Wheeler and I did it all in 1939. One of the implications of our paper is that there's no way in the foreseeable future in which fission can be used to produce any kind of weapon.

MARGRETHE Then why is everyone still working on it?

BOHR Because there's an element of magic in it. You fire a neutron at the nucleus of a uranium atom and it splits into two other elements. It's what the alchemists were trying to do – to turn one element into another.

MARGRETHE So why is he coming?

BOHR Now your curiosity's aroused.

MARGRETHE My forebodings.

HEISENBERG I crunch over the familiar gravel to the Bohrs' front door, and tug at the familiar bell-pull. Fear, yes. And another sensation, that's become painfully familiar over the past year. A mixture of self-importance and sheer helpless absurdity – that of all the 2,000 million people in this world, I'm the one who's been charged with this impossible responsibility... The heavy door swings open.

BOHR My dear Heisenberg!

HEISENBERG My dear Bohr!

BOHR Come in, come in...

MARGRETHE And of course as soon as they catch sight of each other all their caution disappears. The old flames leap up from the ashes. If we can just negotiate all the treacherous little opening civilities...

HEISENBERG I'm so touched you felt able to ask me.

BOHR We must try to go on behaving like human beings.

HEISENBERG I realise how awkward it is. And Margrethe I haven't seen...

BOHR Since you were here four years ago.

MARGRETHE You've changed a lot.

HEISENBERG I had been hoping to see you both in 1938, at the congress in Warsaw...

BOHR I believe you had some personal trouble.

HEISENBERG A little business in Berlin.

MARGRETHE In the Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse?

HEISENBERG A slight misunderstanding.

BOHR We heard, yes. I'm so sorry.

HEISENBERG These things happen. The question is now resolved. Happily resolved. We should all have met in Zürich...

BOHR In September 1939.

HEISENBERG Only of course...

MARGRETHE There was an unfortunate clash with the outbreak of war.

HEISENBERG Sadly.

BOHR Sadly for us, certainly.

MARGRETHE A lot more sadly still for many people.

HEISENBERG Yes. Indeed.

BOHR Well, there it is.

HEISENBERG What can I say?

MARGRETHE What can any of us say, in the present circumstances?

HEISENBERG No. And your sons?

MARGRETHE Are well, thank you. Elisabeth? The children?

HEISENBERG Very well. They send their love, of course.

MARGRETHE They so much wanted to see each other, in spite of everything! But now the moment has come they're so busy avoiding each other's eye that they can scarcely see each other at all.

HEISENBERG I wonder if you realise how much it means to me to be back here in Copenhagen. In this house. I have become rather isolated in these last few years.

BOHR I can imagine.

MARGRETHE Me he scarcely notices. I watch him discreetly from behind my expression of polite interest as he struggles on.

HEISENBERG Have things here been difficult?

BOHR Difficult?

MARGRETHE Of course. He has to ask. He has to get it out of the way.

BOHR Difficult… What can I say? We've not so far been treated to the gross abuses that have occurred elsewhere. The race laws have not been enforced.

MARGRETHE Yet.

BOHR A few months ago they started deporting Communists and other anti-German elements.

HEISENBERG But you personally…?

BOHR Have been left strictly alone.

HEISENBERG I've been anxious about you.

BOHR Kind of you. No call for sleepless nights in Leipzig so far, though.

MARGRETHE Another silence. He's done his duty. Now he can begin to steer the conversation round to pleasanter subjects.

HEISENBERG Are you still sailing?

BOHR Sailing?

MARGRETHE Not a good start.

BOHR No, no sailing.

HEISENBERG The Sound is…?

BOHR Mined.

HEISENBERG Of course.

MARGRETHE I assume he won't ask if Niels has been skiing.

HEISENBERG You've managed to get some skiing?

BOHR Skiing? In Denmark?

HEISENBERG In Norway. You used to go to Norway.

BOHR I did, yes.

HEISENBERG But since Norway is also...well...

BOHR Also occupied? Yes, that might make it easier. In fact I suppose we could now holiday almost anywhere in Europe.

HEISENBERG I'm sorry. I hadn't thought of it quite in those terms.

BOHR Perhaps I'm being a little oversensitive.

HEISENBERG Of course not. I should have thought.

MARGRETHE He must almost be starting to wish he was back in the Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse.

HEISENBERG I don't suppose you feel you could ever come to Germany...

MARGRETHE The boy's an idiot.

BOHR My dear Heisenberg, it would be an easy mistake to make, to think that the citizens of a small nation, of a small nation overrun, wantonly and cruelly overrun, by its more powerful neighbour, don't have exactly the same feelings of national pride as their conquerors, exactly the same love of their country.

MARGRETHE Niels, we agreed.

BOHR To talk about physics, yes.

MARGRETHE Not about politics.

BOHR I'm sorry.

HEISENBERG No, no – I was simply going to say that I still have my old ski-hut at Bayrischzell. So if by any chance...at any time...for any reason...

BOHR Perhaps Margrethe would be kind enough to sew a yellow star on my ski-jacket.

HEISENBERG Yes. Yes. Stupid of me.

MARGRETHE Silence again. Those first brief sparks have disappeared, and the ashes have become very cold indeed. So now of course I'm starting to feel almost sorry for him. Sitting here all on his own in the midst of people who hate him, all on his own against the two of us. He looks younger again, like the boy who first came here in 1924. Younger than Christian would have been now. Shy and arrogant and anxious to be loved. Homesick and pleased to be away from home at last. And, yes, it's sad, because Niels loved him, he was a father to him.

HEISENBERG So…what are you working on?

MARGRETHE And all he can do is press forward.

BOHR Fission, mostly.

HEISENBERG I saw a couple of papers in the Physical Review. The velocity-range relations of fission fragments…?

BOHR And something about the interactions of nuclei with deuterons. And you?

HEISENBERG Various things.

MARGRETHE Fission?

HEISENBERG I sometimes feel very envious of your cyclotron.

MARGRETHE Why? Are you working on fission yourself?

HEISENBERG There are over thirty in the United States. Whereas in the whole of Germany… Well… You still get to your country place, at any rate?

BOHR We still go to Tisvilde, yes.

MARGRETHE In the whole of Germany, you were going to say…

BOHR …there is not one single cyclotron.

HEISENBERG So beautiful at this time of year. Tisvilde.

BOHR You haven't come to borrow the cyclotron, have you? That's not why you've come to Copenhagen?

HEISENBERG That's not why I've come to Copenhagen.

BOHR I'm sorry. We mustn't jump to conclusions.

HEISENBERG No, we must none of us jump to conclusions of any sort.

MARGRETHE We must wait patiently to be told.

HEISENBERG It's not always easy to explain things to the world at large.

BOHR I realise that we must always be conscious of the wider audience our words may have. But the lack of cyclotrons in Germany is surely not a military secret.

HEISENBERG I've no idea what's a secret and what isn't.

BOHR No secret, either, about why there aren't any. You can't say it but I can. It's because the Nazis have systematically undermined theoretical physics. Why? Because so many people working in the field were Jews. And why were so many of them Jews? Because theoretical physics, the sort of physics done by you and me, was always regarded in Germany as inferior to experimental physics, and the theoretical chairs and lectureships were the only ones that Jews could get.

MARGRETHE Physics, yes? Physics.

BOHR This is physics.

MARGRETHE It's also politics.

HEISENBERG The two are sometimes painfully difficult to keep apart.

BOHR So, you saw those two papers. I haven't seen anything by you recently.

HEISENBERG No.

BOHR Not like you. Too much teaching?

HEISENBERG I'm not teaching. Not at the moment.

BOHR My dear Heisenberg – they haven't pushed you out of your chair at Leipzig? That's not what you've come to tell us?

HEISENBERG No, I'm still at Leipzig. For part of each week.

BOHR And for the rest of the week?

HEISENBERG Elsewhere. The problem is more work, not less.

BOHR I see. Do I?

HEISENBERG Are you in touch with any of our friends in England? Born? Chadwick?

BOHR Heisenberg, we're under German occupation. Germany's at war with Britain.

HEISENBERG I thought you might still have contacts of some sort. Or people in America? We're not at war with America.

MARGRETHE Yet.

HEISENBERG You've heard nothing from Pauli, in Princeton? Goudsmit? Fermi?

BOHR What do you want to know?

HEISENBERG I was simply curious… I was thinking about Robert Oppenheimer the other day. I had a great set-to with him in Chicago in 1939.

BOHR About mesons.

HEISENBERG Is he still working on mesons?

BOHR I'm quite out of touch.

MARGRETHE The only foreign visitor we've had was from Germany. Your friend Weizsäcker was here in March.

HEISENBERG *My* friend? *Your* friend, too. I hope.

MARGRETHE When he came here in March he brought the head of the German Cultural Institute with him.

HEISENBERG I'm sorry about that. He did it with the best of intentions. He may not have explained to you that the Institute is run by the Cultural Division of the Foreign

Office… Germany is more complex than it may perhaps appear from the outside. The different organs of state have quite different traditions, in spite of all attempts at reform. Particularly the foreign service. We have good friends in the Embassy here. They are quite old-fashioned in the way they use their influence. They would certainly be trying to see that distinguished local citizens were able to work undisturbed.

BOHR Are you telling me that I'm being protected by your friends in the Embassy?

HEISENBERG What I'm saying, in case Weizsäcker failed to make it clear, is that you would find congenial company there. The occupation of Denmark is of course unfortunate…

BOHR Unfortunate?

HEISENBERG But things will change. Our tanks are almost at Moscow. The war will very soon be over. Unless…

MARGRETHE Unless…?

HEISENBERG Unless…well… My point is that we should look to the future. It might be sensible to establish good relations with the Embassy now. I know people would be very honoured if you felt able to accept an occasional invitation.

BOHR To cocktail parties at the Germany Embassy? To coffee and cakes with the Nazi plenipotentiary?

HEISENBERG To lectures, perhaps. To discussion groups. Social contacts of any sort could be helpful.

BOHR I'm sure they could.

HEISENBERG Essential, perhaps, if circumstances should change.

BOHR Change in what way?

HEISENBERG I think we both know.

BOHR You mean because I'm half Jewish?

HEISENBERG We all at one time or another may need the help of our friends.

BOHR Is this why you've come to Copenhagen? To invite me to watch the deportation of my fellow-countrymen from a grandstand seat in the windows of the German Embassy?

HEISENBERG Bohr, please! Please! What else can I do? How else can I help? It's an impossibly difficult situation for you, I understand that. It's also an impossibly difficult one for me.

BOHR Yes. I'm sorry. I'm sure you also have the best of intentions.

HEISENBERG Forget what I said. Unless...

BOHR Unless I need to remember it.

HEISENBERG In any case it's not why I've come.

MARGRETHE Perhaps you should simply say what it is you want to say.

HEISENBERG What you and I often used to do in the old days was to take an evening stroll.

BOHR Often. Yes. In the old days.

HEISENBERG You don't feel like a stroll this evening, for old times' sake?

BOHR A little chilly tonight, perhaps, for strolling.

HEISENBERG This is so difficult. You remember where we first met?

BOHR Of course. At Göttingen in 1922.

HEISENBERG At a lecture festival held in your honour.

BOHR It was a high honour. I was very conscious of it.

HEISENBERG You were being honoured for two reasons. Firstly because you were a great physicist...

BOHR Yes, yes.

HEISENBERG ...and secondly because you were one of the very few people in Europe who were prepared to have dealings with Germany. The war had been over for four years, and we were still lepers. You held out your hand to us. You've

always inspired love, you know that. Wherever you've been, wherever you've worked. Here in Denmark. In England, in America. But in Germany we worshipped you. Because you held out your hand to us.

BOHR Germany's changed.

HEISENBERG Yes. Then we were down. And you could be generous.

MARGRETHE And now you're up.

HEISENBERG And generosity's harder. But you held out your hand to us then, and we took it.

BOHR Yes... No! Not you. As a matter of fact, you bit it.

HEISENBERG Bit it?

BOHR Bit my hand! You did! I held it out, in my most statesmanlike and reconciliatory way, and you gave it a very nasty nip.

HEISENBERG *I* did?

BOHR The first time I ever set eyes on you. At one of those lectures I was giving in Göttingen.

HEISENBERG What are you talking about?

BOHR You stood up and laid into me.

HEISENBERG Oh... I offered a few comments.

BOHR Beautiful summer's day. The scent of roses drifting in from the gardens. Rows of eminent physicists and mathematicians, all nodding approval of my benevolence and wisdom. Suddenly up jumps a cheeky young pup and tells me that my mathematics are wrong.

HEISENBERG They were wrong.

BOHR How old were you?

HEISENBERG Twenty.

BOHR Two years younger than the century.

HEISENBERG Not quite.

BOHR December 5th, yes?

HEISENBERG 1.93 years younger than the century.

BOHR To be precise.

HEISENBERG No – to two decimal places. To be *precise*, 1.928 ... 7 ... 6 ... 7 ... 1 ...

BOHR I can always keep track of you, all the same. And the century.

MARGRETHE And Niels has suddenly decided to love him again, in spite of everything. Why? What happened? Was it the recollection of that summer's day in Göttingen? Or everything? Or nothing at all? Whatever it was, by the time we've sat down to dinner the cold ashes have started into flame once again.

BOHR You were always so combative! It was the same when we played table-tennis at Tisvilde. You looked as if you were trying to kill me.

HEISENBERG I wanted to win. Of course I wanted to win. *You* wanted to win.

BOHR I wanted an agreeable game of table-tennis.

HEISENBERG You couldn't see the expression on your face.

BOHR I could see the expression on yours.

HEISENBERG What about those games of poker in the ski-hut at Bayrischzell, then? You once cleaned us all out! You remember that? With a non-existent straight! We're all mathematicians – we're all counting the cards – we're 90% certain he hasn't got anything. But on he goes, raising us, raising us. This insane confidence. Until our faith in mathematical probability begins to waver, and one by one we all throw in.

BOHR I thought I *had* a straight! I misread the cards! I bluffed myself!

MARGRETHE Poor Niels.

HEISENBERG Poor Niels? He won! He bankrupted us! You were insanely competitive! He got us all playing poker once with imaginary cards!

BOHR You played chess with Weizsäcker on an imaginary board!

MARGRETHE Who won?

BOHR Need you ask? At Bayrischzell we'd ski down from the hut to get provisions, and he'd make even that into some kind of race! You remember? When we were there with Weizsäcker and someone? You got out a stop-watch.

HEISENBERG It took poor Weizsäcker eighteen minutes.

BOHR You were down there in ten, of course.

HEISENBERG Eight.

BOHR I don't recall how long I took.

HEISENBERG Forty-five minutes.

BOHR Thank you.

MARGRETHE Some rather swift skiing going on here, I think.

HEISENBERG Your skiing was like your science. What were you waiting for? Me and Weizsäcker to come back and suggest some slight change of emphasis?

BOHR Probably.

HEISENBERG You were doing seventeen drafts of each slalom?

MARGRETHE And without me there to type them out.

BOHR At least I knew where I was. At the speed you were going you were up against the uncertainty relationship. If you knew where you were when you were down you didn't know how fast you'd got there. If you knew how fast you'd been going you didn't know you were down.

HEISENBERG I certainly didn't stop to think about it.

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**