

CONCORD THEATRICALS SAMPLE PERUSAL

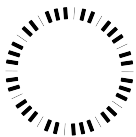
This sample is an excerpt from a full Samuel French title.

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

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.concordtheatricals.co.uk

or, in the US www.concordtheatricals.com



CONCORD
THEATRICALS

CONSUMING PASSIONS

A Play in Two Parts

by Alan Ayckbourn

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

Copyright © 2015 by Haydonning Limited
All Rights Reserved

CONSUMING PASSIONS 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 978-0-573-11669-8

concordtheatricals.co.uk

concordtheatricals.com

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 Concord Theatricals,
depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *CONSUMING PASSIONS* 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.

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

The Professional Rights in this play are controlled by Casarotto Ramsay & Associates Limited, 3rd Floor, 7 Savoy Court, Strand, London WC2R 0EX.

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 Alan Ayckbourn 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

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, Concord Theatricals, 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.

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 (www.prsformusic.com). 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.

CONSUMING PASSIONS

First performed at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough, in the McCarthy auditorium on 12 August 2016, with the following cast:

CORA / FEMALE PC

Rachel Caffrey

FREDDY / EDMUND / PC

Andy Cryer

MELANIE

Louise Shuttleworth

AGGI / DINKA / CEDRIC

Leigh Symonds

Director Alan Ayckbourn

Designer Kevin Jenkins

PREMONITIONS

CHARACTERS

MELANIE

CORA

FREDDY

AGGI*

DINKA*

*Played by the same actor

TIME

One Monday/Tuesday evening.

SETTING

Ristorante Calvinu, a bistro.

Ristorante Calvinu, a popular, low-priced, informal bistro of no fixed nationality.

A table, in a remote alcove, currently laid for four. Chargers, basic glassware, but no cutlery as yet.

Despite being a Monday, in the background at another table nearby, a rowdy party is celebrating.

DINKA, a rather sullen waiter, leads on MELANIE, a woman in her forties.

DINKA (*somewhat ungraciously*) Here you are.

MELANIE Thank you.

DINKA This quiet enough for you?

MELANIE Thank you, this will do nicely. That other table was right on top of that rowdy party, that's all. I couldn't have heard myself think.

DINKA That's Mr Miller. That's his party. They're celebrating.

MELANIE They certainly were...

DINKA Mr Miller, he's a good customer. He comes here a lot to celebrate.

MELANIE What are they celebrating?

DINKA I don't know. Birthday. Anniversary. Engagement. I don't know. I don't ask. Mr Miller and his family, they always celebrating something. Celebratory family, eh?

MELANIE Well, I wish they'd do it more quietly...

DINKA He's a good customer. This table's just for you?

MELANIE No, I said, I'm expecting someone else to join me. He's going to be a trifle late.

DINKA Oh, yes? Your husband, again, eh?

MELANIE (*guardedly*) Possibly...

DINKA I remember from the other day. He was late that time.

MELANIE Yes, well, he's a very busy man...

DINKA You sit here for two hours waiting for him and he don't show. Nothing all evening except one jug of tap water, he never show –

MELANIE It was an important meeting –

DINKA – what kind of husband leave his wife all evening with just a jug of tap water...?

MELANIE – he couldn't get in touch with me, the meeting overran. As I say, he's a very busy man. Extremely busy...

DINKA He don't turn up for you tonight, I tell you, you divorce him – that's what I'd do...

MELANIE That's what you'd do, is it?

DINKA What?

MELANIE Divorce your wife?

DINKA Me? I don't have a wife. I got more sense. You want a drink while you wait for him?

MELANIE No. I'd just like a jug of water, please.

DINKA Water?

MELANIE A jug of tap water.

DINKA Tap water?

MELANIE Yes, please.

DINKA All right but in an hour, this table is needed.

MELANIE Needed?

DINKA It's booked for somebody else. You ring him, tell him if he don't get here soon, he won't get no dinner.

MELANIE Oh, really that's outrageous...

DINKA It's already booked for someone else. Someone who wants to eat.

MELANIE Well, I'm certainly not moving! I've booked this table for the evening -

DINKA I get your jug of tap water...

He moves away.

MELANIE (*calling after him*) - we're certainly not moving, we refuse to - (*alone*) Charmless man. Absolutely graceless. The last time we eat here. The very last time.

She sits and looks about her. A loud burst of merriment from the offstage party.

(*not quite loud enough to be heard*) Oh, do shut up, shut up, shut up! Rowdy lot! Celebrate more quietly, can't you? Have some consideration for others!

She takes out her mobile phone and places it on the table. She looks at her watch.

Well, if you stand me up again tonight, John, I think we really will be looking at a divorce. Enough is enough, my darling.

Another loud burst of merriment.

She glares across at them. Someone evidently sees her and reacts. She pulls a face back at them.

AGGI, another waiter, enters. As he does so, the restaurant ambience grows suddenly much quieter, as if it is suddenly a different night, possibly the following night, Tuesday. AGGI looks somewhat similar to his colleague but is of a much sunnier disposition.

Following him is CORA, in her thirties. She is wearing a headscarf and dark glasses in an attempt at anonymity.

AGGI shows her to the table.

AGGI Here we are, this table here. Nice and quiet, for you. You won't be disturbed, here.

He seats CORA.

MELANIE looks on indignantly.

They both seem totally unaware of her.

CORA Thank you.

MELANIE (*recovering, much affronted*) I say, excuse me! Do you mind?

AGGI Would you like a drink, madametta, while you wait for him?

CORA Yes, I'll have a large gin and tonic, thank you. Bombay Sapphire, if you have it...

MELANIE I say –

AGGI Bombay Sapphire. Tonic. Slimline, yes?

CORA Slimline, yes please.

MELANIE Look, I'm sorry, this table is reserved! Do you mind most awfully?

AGGI (*departing*) Right away!

MELANIE (*calling after him*) Waiter, that seat is taken! There's going to be someone sitting there in a minute...

AGGI has gone. MELANIE glares at CORA, who still seems totally unaware of her.

(*to CORA*) You can't sit there, you know. My husband's going to be joining me any minute. He's going to need that seat. I'm terribly sorry, this is a reserved table. You can't just sit there, you know.

CORA, ignoring her, delves into her handbag and locates her phone, which she starts to check for messages.

Oh, yes, you can ignore me as much as you like but the point is, I was here first. I'm calling the waiter and I'm going to ask him to move you. Do you hear me?

CORA reads a message on her screen that causes her to smile.

It may be a big joke to you, madam, but let me tell you, I don't find this funny, not at all. Calmly sitting down at someone else's –

DINKA has returned from the other direction with a jug of iced tap water.

Ah, waiter... Would you kindly tell this woman, I don't know who on earth she is –

DINKA (*plonking down the jug*) Tap water!

MELANIE – will you tell her to move at once! Go on, tell her!

DINKA looks puzzled.

Go on! She doesn't take a blind bit of notice of me! Tell her!

DINKA Tell who?

MELANIE This woman! Tell her to move, this is my table!

DINKA What woman?

MELANIE That woman, there!

DINKA I don't see no woman. (*moving off*) Enjoy your tap water!

MELANIE (*calling after him*) Will you tell her at once kindly not to sit at my table!

But DINKA has gone.

CORA is still playing with her phone, oblivious to all this.

MELANIE *fumes.*

My husband will be joining me in a moment you know. He's due any minute. Any moment now. Then you'll have

to move, won't you? He'll make you move. He's a very high-powered man. Very important. He'll get you to move, see if he doesn't! He's a former rigger blue. He won't stand any nonsense, I can tell you.

CORA *obliviously continues with her phone.*

(frustratedly) Listen, don't keep ignoring me! Will you have the common courtesy to look at me, please!

AGGI *returns, carrying a tray with CORA's drink. He is with FREDDY, who is in his late twenties wearing a distinctive cap pulled down, half concealing his face.*

AGGI Here he is! He's here!

FREDDY *(to CORA)* At last! At last! Darling, I'm so sorry!

CORA Darling! Where on earth have you been, you idiot?

They embrace.

MELANIE Oh, now this is just too much! What on earth is going on here? Really! Waiter, will you please stop showing people to my table!

FREDDY Sorry, got on the wrong tube...went halfway to Tooting...

CORA Yes, I just got your message...

AGGI *(delivering the drink)* One Bombay Sapphire –

FREDDY Hey! Look at you! Hardly recognised you –

MELANIE Excuse me, waiter!

AGGI – one slimline tonic.

CORA *(to AGGI)* Thank you. *(to FREDDY)* Just in case someone recognised me, we can't be too careful. Even out here.

FREDDY Bet you didn't recognise me, did you? –

CORA I'd recognise you anywhere, you clown!

MELANIE *(indignantly)* Listen, you two, excuse me! I am here you know! I am sitting here!

CORA That ridiculous hat! Take it off, you idiot!

MELANIE (*loudly*) I say, excuse me, you two!

FREDDY (*removing it*) Don't you like it, I think it rather suits me –

MELANIE Waiter, I want it known, this is the very last time I am setting foot in this restaurant –

AGGI May I take your hat, sir?

MELANIE – ever again –

FREDDY (*handing it to AGGI*) Thanks.

CORA Yes, please do. Take it away.

MELANIE – the very last time –

FREDDY You said incognito.

MELANIE – ever!

CORA I said unobtrusive.

FREDDY Same thing. Unobtrusive – incognito.

MELANIE Is that clear?

AGGI Can I get you a drink, sir?

FREDDY Scotch and soda, thanks very much. (*to CORA*) Incognito.

AGGI One Scotch-soda, coming up!

He goes off.

CORA No, not incognito, unobtrusive –

MELANIE I'm sorry, I am not sitting here a minute longer –

CORA – meaning do not wear something that makes you stand out a mile!

MELANIE (*rising*) – I am moving to another table.

She stands up and looks around her rather aimlessly, clutching her glass and the water jug, searching round for a vacant table.

FREDDY and CORA *continue, obliviously unaware of her.*

FREDDY Where the hell are we, anyway? What is this place?

CORA It's known as South of the River, darling. No need to panic you're perfectly safe. *(taking his hand across the table)* It's good to see you. I've missed you.

FREDDY Same here. Missed you, too. God knows, I've missed you, my darling.

CORA Won't be much longer –

FREDDY *(uncertainly)* Yes...

CORA We must be strong! We can do it! Together.

They gaze intently into each other's eyes.

DINKA *returns from the other direction, on his way to somewhere else with a tray. He stops as he sees MELANIE.*

DINKA *(to MELANIE, suspiciously)* What you doing? Where you going?

MELANIE Ah, waiter! You are my waiter, aren't you –?

DINKA You leaving?

MELANIE – you all look so terribly alike.

DINKA You going, you leave the jug there –

MELANIE Now, listen to me, your colleague, without so much as a by-your-leave, has just shown these people to my table –

DINKA – that jug the property of the management. You can't take that away –

MELANIE – now either they leave, or show me to another table – are you listening to me, waiter –?

DINKA – you put the jug down, you hear? You can't take the jug –

MELANIE *(banging the jug down on the table)* I don't want your wretched jug! I simply want these people moved!

DINKA What people?

MELANIE These two people here! This person – and this – other – person! Both of them! I want them both to move!

DINKA *stares at her for a second.*

DINKA You're crazy.

MELANIE I beg your pardon?

DINKA You see people?

MELANIE Of course I can see them.

DINKA Sitting there?

MELANIE Yes!

DINKA Two people?

MELANIE Yes! A man – here! And a woman – here!

DINKA You're crazy.

MELANIE How dare you?

DINKA I don't see no one. There's no one.

MELANIE But they were being served by the other waiter. Your colleague.

DINKA Other waiter? What other waiter?

MELANIE He was – I can't see him at the moment – he looks very much like you – about your height, maybe a little taller. And I think he has a moustache.

DINKA Moustache? Waiter with a moustache?

MELANIE I'm almost sure he has –

DINKA That's my brother.

MELANIE Ah, there you are then! Now, do you believe me?

DINKA No, I don't believe you.

MELANIE Why not?

DINKA He's not working tonight.

MELANIE But I've just this minute seen him.

DINKA My brother, he don't work Mondays. His night off.

MELANIE Well, he's certainly here now. I saw him.

DINKA Tonight, he's at the football. He's not here. Now you want to leave, you want to stay, make up your mind. I got other people to look after –

MELANIE Well, could I – possibly – I demand another table, please. A table on my own.

DINKA There's no other tables, we're full. You sit there. Don't take the jug.

He goes off.

MELANIE *sits again. She is getting slightly hysterical.*

CORA and FREDDY *are still locked together, hands held.*

MELANIE *(to the others, with a laugh)* Did you hear that just now? Did you ever hear anything like it? He claims he can't even see you...ridiculous. It's like you were invisible! Absurd. You almost feel like laughing...don't you? Really?

The couple still don't acknowledge her.

I mean, I can see you. Perfectly clearly. Idiotic man!

AGGI *returns with a glass of Scotch and a soda water bottle on a tray.*

Ah now, the very person. Waiter, I've just been speaking to your brother and he tells me...

AGGI *(putting them down, ignoring her)* One Scotch and soda. Thank you, sirrah.

FREDDY *(absently)* Thanks...

MELANIE He told me you weren't working here tonight but that is palpably untrue isn't it? Your brother was clearly lying to me... *(tailing off)* ...wasn't he?

AGGI has gone without so much as glancing at her.

MELANIE is starting to panic slightly.

What on earth's the matter with these people? He took absolutely no notice of me. Like I didn't even exist... You can see me. Can't you? You two? You can see me? Can't you?

FREDDY (*to CORA*) Cheers!

CORA To us.

They toast.

MELANIE I can see you, you know...

FREDDY God, you're sexy. Even dressed like that. Especially dressed like that. Like some bloody Mata Hari. I want to make love to you right now...

CORA Oh, God, yes... Yes, please.

FREDDY Right here and now. I'll spread you across this bloody table...

CORA (*getting excited*) Oh, please...

MELANIE Oh, my God – this is simply too much –

She snatches up her water jug.

FREDDY Come on, then! What about it, baby?

CORA No, we can't, darling – not now –

FREDDY Come on, get 'em off...

CORA – we really can't, not here –

MELANIE No, you certainly can't...

FREDDY Come on, let's get out of this place, then...

MELANIE Please, do –

FREDDY – we'll go somewhere else...

MELANIE – the sooner the better!

CORA Where else is there? Where the hell can we go, darling?
Be practical.

FREDDY Some hotel, some knocking shop... I don't care... I can't
take much more of this –

MELANIE Neither can I!

FREDDY – I don't care about the risks. Let him find out! See
if I care! I don't care if he does...

CORA (*calming him*) Darling, my sweet darling, you're so young
and impetuous, aren't you? It'll all be over soon, I promise.
Be patient just for a little bit longer. We've waited this long –

FREDDY This waiting! It's agony! I need you so much...

CORA – only another week, sweetheart. Listen, today's Tuesday –
one more week, that's all –

MELANIE No, it's not, it's Monday –

CORA One more week –

MELANIE Today's Monday –

CORA Just think of that. One more week –

MELANIE You didn't think this was Tuesday, did you?

CORA – and it'll finally all be over.

MELANIE Oh, that's what it is. That's the confusion. You're here
on the wrong night!

CORA In exactly one week's time, next Tuesday –

MELANIE Next Monday –

CORA – it'll be our tenth wedding anniversary –

FREDDY I can't believe you've been married to that bastard
for that long –

CORA No, listen, I know what he's like. He gets so sentimental
about these things. Next Tuesday we'll be having dinner
out as usual with friends –

MELANIE No, next Monday –

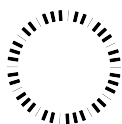
WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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

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

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

**@ConcordUKShows and @ConcordShows on
Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.**



CONCORD
THEATRICALS