Acting Edition

Admissions

by Joshua Harmon

This sample is an excerpt of a Concord Theatricals title.

Samples of Concord Theatricals titles are for perusal and cannot be used for performance or downloaded, printed, and distributed in any way.

This sample may not reflect the version of the play currently in print.

SAMUEL FRENCH

Copyright © 2019 by Joshua Harmon
All Rights Reserved

ADMISSIONS is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, the British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all member countries of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the Universal Copyright Convention, and/or the World Trade Organization conforming to the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television, online/digital production, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-70748-3

www.concordtheatricals.com
www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

FOR PRODUCTION INQUIRIES

United States and Canada
info@concordtheatricals.com
1-866-979-0447

United Kingdom and Europe
licensing@concordtheatricals.co.uk
020-7054-7298

Each title is subject to availability from Concord Theatricals Corp., depending upon country of performance. Please be aware that *ADMISSIONS* may not be licensed by Concord Theatricals Corp. in your territory. Professional and amateur producers should contact the nearest Concord Theatricals Corp. office or licensing partner to verify availability.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *ADMISSIONS* is subject to a licensing fee. The purchase, renting, lending or use of this book does not constitute a license to perform this title(s), which license must be obtained from Concord Theatricals Corp. prior to any performance. Performance of this title(s) without a license is a violation of federal law and may subject the producer and/or presenter of such performances to civil penalties. 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(s) is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Professional/Stock licensing fees are quoted upon application to Concord Theatricals Corp.

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

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

For all inquiries regarding motion picture, television, online/digital and other media rights, please contact Concord Theatricals Corp.

MUSIC AND THIRD-PARTY MATERIALS USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music and/or other copyrighted third-party materials (e.g. artworks, logos) 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 and materials that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for clearances of all third-party copyrighted materials, including without limitation music, and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Concord Theatricals Corp., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of such copyrighted third-party materials by licensees. For music, 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.

Originally Produced by Lincoln Center Theater,
New York City, 2018

ADMISSIONS was originally produced by Lincoln Center Theater in New York City and premiered on February 15, 2018. The performance was directed by Daniel Aukin, with sets by Riccardo Hernandez, costumes by Toni-Leslie James, lighting by Mark Barton, and sound by Ryan Rumery. The stage manager was Kyle Gates. The cast was as follows:

SHERRI ROSEN-MASON . . . . . Jessica Hecht
BILL MASON . . . . . Andrew Garman
CHARLIE LUTHER MASON . . . . . Ben Edelman
GINNIE PETERS . . . . . Sally Murphy
ROBERTA . . . . . Ann McDonough

CHARACTERS

SHERRI ROSEN-MASON – Early fifties, very liberal secular Jewish woman. Head of Admissions for Hillcrest.

BILL MASON – Early fifties, very liberal WASP, Sherri's husband. Head of the School at Hillcrest.

CHARLIE LUTHER MASON – Seventeen, Bill and Sherri's son, a senior at Hillcrest.

GINNIE PETERS – Fifties, very liberal WASP, stay-at-home mom; her son is Charlie's best friend.

ROBERTA – Early seventies, white, works in development at Hillcrest.

SETTING

The play takes place at Hillcrest, a second-tier, on-the-cusp-of-being-a-first-tier prep/boarding school in rural New Hampshire.

TIME

It begins just before Christmas and ends shortly after Easter, during the 2015-2016 academic year.

This play must be performed without an intermission.

PART ONE: DECEMBER

(Early afternoon. New England winter. **SHERRI**, *in her office. A knock at the door.)*

SHERRI. Come in.

*(***ROBERTA** *enters.)*

ROBERTA. Sherri?

SHERRI. Hi Roberta. Come in.

ROBERTA. You wanted to see me?

SHERRI. Come in.

ROBERTA. Because I got a message that you wanted to see me.

SHERRI. Yes, come in!

ROBERTA. Oh, ok.

(She comes in but doesn't close the door. **SHERRI** *gets up and closes the door.)*

Can you believe it's almost Christmas break?

SHERRI. I can.

ROBERTA. Guess how many people I have coming for Christmas this year.

SHERRI. How many?

ROBERTA. Guess!

(Quick beat.)

SHERRI. A hundred.

ROBERTA. A hundred! Don't be – twenty-two. Twenty-two Homo sapiens in my house. What's a person to do?

SHERRI. That's a lot of… Homo sapiens.

ROBERTA. It sure is. But if I don't do something about my *mouse* problem –

SHERRI. Oh, I don't –

ROBERTA. I found one little guy – well its corpse anyway – rotting under my sofa.

SHERRI. I don't –

ROBERTA. It smelled like –

SHERRI. Roberta!

I don't have ti– I don't want to hear about the disgusting – about disgusting things. Please?

ROBERTA. I was just telling you about my mouse –

SHERRI. I know. I appreciate the… sharing. But. Let's get to it, ok?

ROBERTA. Oh. Ok.

(Quick beat.)

Is there a problem?

(Beat.)

SHERRI. Yes, Roberta. There's a problem.

ROBERTA. Oh?

SHERRI. Mac sent me the, the, uh, oh for godssake what-do-you-call-it, the draft, the publication draft for the admissions catalogue for next year.

ROBERTA. Oh good, that's all done, and on time, too.

SHERRI. Well, no it's –

ROBERTA. That's been done for two weeks. I believe we sent it to the printer.

SHERRI. No I asked Mac to send me the draft before it went to the printer but I've been a little behind and I didn't get a chance to look at it until today, but…

ROBERTA. That's been done for weeks.

SHERRI. No, it's not done.

ROBERTA. I finished that –

SHERRI. This is not the first time, Roberta, that we have had this conversation, and I don't know why this is so diff–

ROBERTA. What conversation?

SHERRI. Let me finish.

ROBERTA. But I don't –

SHERRI. Let me finish.

I don't know why this is so difficult... *(Unspoken: for you.)* but I'm going to spell it out, *again*, and ask that you really really focus and listen to what I'm saying, ok?

When I first got to Hillcrest, the student body was ninety-four percent white. Six percent students of color. Think about that: For every student of color, there were nineteen white kids. Nineteen to one. Now I have worked like a dog the last fifteen years so that our school looks a little bit more like the country in which it is situated, and today, we're eighteen percent students of color. Which is still an embarrassingly low number, but it's three hundred percent better than where we were just fifteen years ago.

Now, a lot of our applicants can afford to come and look at Hillcrest themselves. Which is great. But not everyone can, and – and not always, certainly not always – but sometimes, those students who cannot afford to visit, are students of color. And the process, the journey of even just applying here is a tremendous one. Tremendous. And despite the high-tech world we are living in, a very important part of their process is they see our catalogue and they bring it home to their parents, or their parents bring it home to their children, and this is their first introduction to Hillcrest. It begins with the Admissions Catalogue. It begins here.

But. If they open up that catalogue, and they don't see anyone who looks like them, that will be the end of their journey. They will not apply. And why should they? Who would want to be the only Black or Hispanic student in some far-away boarding school in New Hampshire, where they know no one, no one knows them, no one looks like them? Who would sign up for that?

So part of my job, Roberta, has been to make sure that at every step of the way, they feel supported. This catalogue does not support those students.

ROBERTA. But –

SHERRI. Let. Me. Finish.

I counted this time. There are fifty-two photos in this catalogue. Do you know how many feature students of color? Do you?

ROBERTA. But I don't –

SHERRI. Three.

SHERRI. Three photos. Out of fifty-two. That's…

(She opens her desk drawer, grabs a calculator.)

That is 5.76 percent. I'll round up for you – that's six percent.

Our students of color? Who actually do go here? Represent eighteen percent.

(Quick beat.)

This is a failure, Roberta. An absolute failure.

(Beat.)

Why can't you make this work? *What* is the problem here?

(Beat.)

ROBERTA. I am doing the best job I can, Sherri.

SHERRI. I beg to differ.

ROBERTA. I worked very very hard on this catalogue –

SHERRI. I don't doubt that –

ROBERTA. And this is just one of a hundred different tasks on my plate. My plate – I have a very full plate!

SHERRI. So do I. So do we all.

ROBERTA. I don't see color. Maybe that's my problem. I'm not a race person. I don't look at race.

SHERRI. Let's agree to disagree about that, ok?

ROBERTA. You're the one who seems to care about race – you're always race race race, you never –

SHERRI. This isn't about me always ra– This – This is about me telling you what I need and continually being ignored!

ROBERTA. I don't ignore you! There are – I don't even believe you, because I do make an effort, since we talked, and I don't –

*(***SHERRI** *turns her computer around to the open document of the draft for the catalogue.)*

SHERRI. Here's the proposed cover photo: our boys lacrosse team. All white. Next: a photo of Dr. Fitzgerald, also white, talking to a white student. Next: a classroom where Ms. Morgan, also white, is teaching, and we see the back of three heads, again: all white.

ROBERTA. That one on the left could be Asian.

*(***SHERRI** *shoots her a look.)*

It's just the back of his head. It's black hair. You don't know.

SHERRI. Next: Mr. Mollizerri, white, standing in front of the white accompanist, teaching chorus to two students, also white. Next: three of our boys basketball players, including my son, which I do appreciate, but again, all white.

ROBERTA. No. No! That's Perry. That's Perry!

SHERRI. Roberta, please.

ROBERTA. Perry's Black! His father's Black! Don is Black –

SHERRI. Don is, is – biracial and Perry… he doesn't always photograph – he looks whiter than my son in this picture.

ROBERTA. But Perry's Black. Isn't he?

SHERRI. Of course he is but he doesn't read Black in this photo, that's the issue.

ROBERTA. But you count him as Black? In your statistics?

SHERRI. What?

ROBERTA. When you tell everyone we're eighteen percent, jumping for joy, eighteen percent, you're including Perry in that, aren't you?

SHERRI. A Black child, seeing this photo, does not see a reflection of himself. He sees three White boys.

ROBERTA. If Perry's Black, he's Black. If he's not, he's not. But I don't see how I'm not doing my job when I use a photo of a Black kid who everyone else at this school counts as Black, but when I count him as Black, he doesn't count as Black anymore. I just don't understand that.

(Beat.)

SHERRI. I guess, Roberta, I guess my question for you is, do you not care if this school is diverse? Does that not matter to you?

ROBERTA. I don't like – what are you accusing me of here?

SHERRI. I'm not accusing you of anything, I'm asking you a question. Because it seems to me, year after year, you thwart my efforts to –

ROBERTA. I don't thwart anything Sherri I just don't have this same fixation on race as you do.

SHERRI. If no one fixated on it, nothing would ever change!

(Breath.)

Look. Either you're on board with helping this department, or you're not, in which case, we have a problem.

ROBERTA. I'm *on board*, but all that comes out of your mouth is diversity, diversity, diversity. It's exhausting. Diversity of admissions, diversity is the theme of half the assemblies, diversity of – Until the day I die I won't forget the faculty meeting where you railed against the ethno-centric meal plan.

SHERRI. I don't think I railed, Roberta –

ROBERTA. Kids like pizza. Period. They don't care what continent it comes from, and it doesn't make the kitchen staff racist for serving pizza.

SHERRI. I never said anyone was racist for serving pizza.

ROBERTA. You certainly implied it, and Janine was very upset. She was in tears. She works so hard, trying to accommodate a hundred different demands: gluten-free pizza for the gluten-frees, vegetarian pizza for the vegetarians, lactose pizza for those kinds. She tries so hard, and then you call her a racist –

SHERRI. I never called her a racist!

ROBERTA. My family has been part of this school for almost a century. My father taught chemistry here for thirty-three years –

SHERRI. *(On "thirty-three.")* Thirty-three years, I know.

ROBERTA. No one loves this place more than I do, but sometimes I don't recognize this school anymore.

SHERRI. Maybe that's a good thing.

ROBERTA. I try and see people for who they are, I don't stop to examine the exact color of their skin the way you do. Last time you said more people of color, and that's what I tried to do, but apparently they were the wrong shade. So what do you want, Sherri? More dark-skinned ones?

SHERRI. Did you really just say dark-skinned?

ROBERTA. Isn't that what you're asking for?!?

SHERRI. What I am asking for is pictures of students who are recognizably minorities. So that another minority student can RECOGNIZABLY RECOGNIZE someone who looks like them.

ROBERTA. So you mean dark-skinned?

SHERRI. No that is not what I mean.

ROBERTA. Well then what exactly do you mean? You never say what you mean. Maybe if you were specific about what you want, I could do my job.

SHERRI. Ok. Fine. Let me be specific. I want to see a lot more – a significant increase in the number of photos of Black and Hispanic students. I want those students to be easily and readily identifiable as Black or Hispanic. Got it? And let's stay away from any sports photos.

ROBERTA. What's wrong with sports?

SHERRI. Nothing's wrong with sports, let's just focus on a broader range of images.

ROBERTA. Can you be more specific?

SHERRI. Some classroom shots. Holding up a glass beaker. Punching numbers into a calculator. Reading a book in English class.

ROBERTA. Does it matter which book, or any book will do?

SHERRI. Any book will do.

ROBERTA. Does it matter which class, or...

*(***SHERRI** *thinks.)*

SHERRI. Why don't you try Don's class.

ROBERTA. So Don counts? He's Black enough?

SHERRI. Would you talk that way if Don were here with us right now?

ROBERTA. What's wrong with how I'm talking? I'm just trying to understand. I like Don. I'm happy to go to his class. He teaches junior English. That's when they do Moby Dick.

SHERRI. They don't read Moby Dick anymore.

ROBERTA. Sure they do. I remember, my brother, when he was a junior here, that was the year he read Moby Dick.

SHERRI. They don't read Moby Dick anymore.

(Beat.)

ROBERTA. You didn't.

SHERRI. We did. It's 2015. It's about time they realized not every book was written by a dead white man.

ROBERTA. Who cares who wrote the book, it's one of the great books.

SHERRI. There are plenty of other great books.

ROBERTA. But Moby Dick is a tough book, they'll never pick it up on their own.

SHERRI. Oh well.

ROBERTA. The poor children.

SHERRI. They're going to be alright.

(Beat.)

ROBERTA. Must be nice, to be so sure you're right, all the time.

SHERRI. I never said I was right *all* the time. But on this matter, I am. And I do run Admissions, and as long as I do, and as long as you work here, you'll do what I ask. Period.

(Beat.)

ROBERTA. This is going to take some time to redo.

SHERRI. I understand.

ROBERTA. Is that all?

SHERRI. Yes, Roberta. That's all.

ROBERTA. Ok then. More diversity, coming right up.

(She stands up and puts on her coat. Then her scarf, then her hat, then her gloves. It takes fucking forever, which is incredibly awkward and frustrating for **SHERRI**. *Then* **ROBERTA** *exits.)*

(Early that evening. In Sherri's open kitchen/ living room. A long staircase leads to the upstairs. **GINNIE** *sits at a barstool.)*

GINNIE. Shouldn't she have retired by now?

SHERRI. She'll never retire. She'll outlast us all. Roberta Russert and the cockroaches.

GINNIE. She is so white.

SHERRI. I know, I know.

GINNIE. This whole place is so white, *still*! Drives me insane. Ugh. If I were a terrorist, I'd blow this whole place right up.

SHERRI. Oh, don't do that.

GINNIE. I swear, as soon as I get Perry off to school, I'm gonna join the admissions committee.

SHERRI. She actually – by the end I actually had to say to her, MORE BLACK PEOPLE. MORE HISPANIC PEOPLE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

GINNIE. Screw her! She can't find any Black people here to photograph? Has she met my Black husband? Has she met my Black son? How! Lazy! Can! She! Be!

SHERRI. Oh no, she had a photo of Perry.

GINNIE. Well that's a start, right.

SHERRI. Yeah but he, he didn't…

(Quick beat.)

It was blurry. It was – it was kind of blurry.

GINNIE. Well, I've only got like a million photos of Perry, I'll send you some.

SHERRI. That'd be great.

GINNIE. I actually probably do have a million photos of him, it's stupid –

(Her phone dings with a text. She runs to it and checks.)

It's just Don. It's just Don. Oh god! Don!

*(***SHERRI** *laughs.)*

This is what I mean, though. This is what I was telling you. I've been like this all day. What a nightmare! I mean, *Yale*? Why'd our boys apply to *Yale*? Who gets into Yale?

SHERRI. Oh, they definitely still take at least six out of a thousand.

GINNIE. *Six* out of a *thousand*?

SHERRI. *(Laughing.)* It's not quite that dire, but close.

GINNIE. Oh my god, what a nightmare.

All summer long, I begged him: apply to Middlebury. Cause, you know, his aunt is a dean there – my brother's wife, a total pill but, well-established, been there for years –

SHERRI. Right.

GINNIE. Apply to Middlebury. It's a *great* school, he loves to ski, and not for nothing but my *brother's wife* is a *dean* there. But Perry didn't want to do anything Charlie wasn't and Charlie was dead-set on Yale, which, in theory sounds fun, how fun does that sound, you and me, road trips to visit the boys at Yale doesn't that sound *fun* but *Yale*? Why Yale?

SHERRI. Because. Mystic Pizza.

GINNIE. Mystic Pizza?

SHERRI. The movie. You know –

GINNIE. That's a movie, right?

SHERRI. We used to watch over and over –

GINNIE. That's Julia Roberts?

SHERRI. A young Julia Roberts, yeah, and one of the girls goes to Yale and Charlie had such a crush on her. She was into astronomy, we bought Charlie a telescope, I thought that'd be the end of it, but he wanted the Yale sweatshirt, too. At *eight*. Ever since, Yale has been built up as...

(She builds a mountain with her hands and takes it all the way up to heaven. To God.)

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.concordtheatricals.com

www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

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

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

concord
theatricals