Acting Edition

How The Other Half Loves

by Alan Ayckbourn

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 © 1972 by Alan Ayckbourn
All Rights Reserved

HOW THE OTHER HALF LOVES 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, online/digital production, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-11166-2

concordtheatricals.co.uk
concordtheatricals.com

FOR AMATEUR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

United Kingdom and World
excluding North America
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 *HOW THE OTHER HALF LOVES* 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 *HOW THE OTHER HALF LOVES* 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 the appropriate agent prior to any performance. Performance of this title(s) without a license is a violation of copyright law and may subject the producer and/or presenter of such performances to 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 is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

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

The Professional Rights in this play are controlled by Casarotto Ramsay Associates.

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. The text of this title(s), or any portion thereof, may not be utilized as an input or prompt in any generative artificial intelligence or machine learning system, software, website, program, or similar technology. No one shall utilize this title(s), or any part of this title(s), for the purpose of training any artificial intelligence or machine learning technologies. No one shall share this title(s), or any part of this title(s), through any social media or file hosting websites.

The moral 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.

USE OF COPYRIGHTED MUSIC

A licence issued by Concord Theatricals to perform this play does not include permission to use the incidental music specified in this publication. In the United Kingdom: 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 PRS for Music (www.prsformusic.com). A separate and additional licence from PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE LTD (www. ppluk.com) may be needed whenever commercial recordings are used. Outside the United Kingdom: Please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

USE OF COPYRIGHTED THIRD-PARTY MATERIALS

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use 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 materials that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for clearances of all third-party copyrighted materials, and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Concord Theatricals Ltd., against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of such copyrighted third-party materials by licensees.

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.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

After a lifetime of playwriting (I first started as an unpublished writer at the age of ten!) my career has moved steadily forward from the status of untried tyro through to establishment figure to ageing experimentalist!

The work has reflected this. From the early tried and tested plays, (*Relatively Speaking, How the Other Half Loves, The Norman Conquests*, etc.) which thankfully people still seem happy to produce and come to see, through the middle period, larger scale so called "social" pieces (*Man of the Moment, A Chorus of Disapproval*) to the more recent smaller scale departures such as *Private Fears in Public Places, Snake in the Grass and Haunting Julia*, I have continued to experiment with shape and form, whilst I hope continuing to deepen my characters.

Throughout this, though, I have always needed to remind myself of the over riding prime directive drummed into me at an early age by my mentor, Stephen Joseph, that above all else a playwright is a story teller.

To keep an audience in their seats you need to involve them in a constantly unfolding series of unexpected twists and turns. These can, of course, be the narrative of the story itself as in *Relatively Speaking* or, as with *Woman in Mind* say, through the psychological development of the characters.

One of the nicest things people can ever say to me, coming out of a new play for the first time of seeing it, is "Well, I never saw THAT coming!"

Alan Ayckbourn

HOW THE OTHER HALF LOVES

This play was presented by Peter Bridge at the Lyric Theatre, London, on 5th August, 1970, with the following cast:

FRANK FOSTER	Robert Morley
FIONA FOSTER	Joan Tetzel
BOB PHILLIPS	Donald Burton
TERESA PHILLIPS	Heather Sears
WILLIAM FEATHERSTONE	Brian Miller
MARY FEATHERSTONE	Elizabeth Ashton

Directed by Robin Midgley
Designed by Alan Tagg
Lighting by John B. Read

The action of this play takes place in the living-rooms of the Fosters and Phillips

Act I	Scene One	Early Thursday morning
	Scene Two	Evening
Act II	Scene One	Saturday morning
	Scene Two	Sunday morning

Time—the present

ACT I

Scene One

The living-rooms of the **FOSTERS** *and* **PHILLIPS**. *It is early Thursday morning.*

The lights come up on the main set to reveal two living-rooms. Not a composite setting but two rooms contained and overlapping in the same area. Only the furnishings themselves, both in colour and style, indicate which belongs to which room. The **FOSTERS***' furniture is smart period reproduction, while the* **PHILLIPS***' is more modern, trendy and badly looked after. Both rooms have similar items. Downstage right is the* **PHILLIPS***' dining-table and two chairs. To left of the* **PHILLIPS***' table is a three-seater settee with the right two seats matching the* **FOSTERS***' decor and the left seat matching the* **PHILLIPS***' decor. Centre is an armchair (***FOSTER***) and left is another armchair (***PHILLIPS***). Right of the centre chair is a small table (***FOSTER***). Upstage left is the* **FOSTERS***' dining-table and two chairs. Downstage centre is a composite coffee-table with the* **PHILLIPS***' section right and the* **FOSTERS***' section left. On each section is a phone. Downstage left is the* **PHILLIPS***' child's playpen and toys including a doll's house and the* **PHILLIPS***' armchair. Each room has two doors and a window as follows: Downstage right the* **PHILLIPS***' window, right the* **FOSTERS***' kitchen door, upstage right the* **PHILLIPS***' front door, upstage left the* **FOSTERS***' front double doors, left the* **PHILLIPS***' kitchen and downstage left the* **FOSTERS***' window.*

The **FOSTERS***' main door opens and* **FIONA***, an elegant woman in her forties, enters in her dressing-gown. She goes to the window left and draws the curtains. The lights come up on the* **FOSTERS***' areas. She crosses to the phone and dials. The phone in the* **PHILLIPS***' house starts to ring. After a second,* **TERESA***, an untidy, rather intense, tired-looking woman in her early thirties, enters from the kitchen door left carrying a mug of tea. She is in a different room to* **FIONA** *and so does not acknowledge her presence in any way. The characters in their different rooms will often pass extremely close but without ever actually touching.* **TERESA** *picks up her receiver.*

TERESA Hallo. Hallo...

FIONA *hangs up with a sigh. She looks at her watch.* **TERESA***, frowning, crosses to her curtains right and draws them. The lights come up on the* **PHILLIPS***' areas. She reacts to the bright early-morning light. She switches on her portable radio which is on the dining-table. It is a news programme.*

FIONA*, who has been standing thoughtfully, turns and goes out into the kitchen right.*

TERESA *sits reading a newspaper cutting and drinking tea.*

The **FOSTERS***' double doors fly open again and* **FRANK** *enters like a whirlwind.*

He is dressed in running shorts, a vest and a jaunty sporting cap and is breathing heavily.

As he enters, the kitchen timer which is on the coffee-table, rings. **FRANK** *reaches it and it stops ringing. He surveys it in digust and then switches on the radio on the coffee-table. Loud military music. He picks up a skipping rope from the coffee-table and with an effort, starts to skip.*

After a moment, **FIONA** *re-enters. She takes in* **FRANK** *with a frown, goes to the coffee-table and, almost unconsciously, switches the radio off.*

FIONA That's rather grotesque, darling. Do you have to do that first thing in the morning? I'm sure you'll damage yourself one of these days. It's twenty past. Did you know?

FRANK That's rather why I switched the radio on. *(He sits on chair centre)*

FIONA *(without pausing on her way out)* All right. So long as you know.

FIONA *goes out into the hall upstage left.*

TERESA *(crossing to the bedroom door and calling)* Bob! Bob! It's twenty-five past—Bob! Get up!

She gives up after hearing no reply and goes out left.

FIONA *enters immediately with the newspapers which she tosses on to the settee.*

FIONA Frank, I'll have to have the car this morning.

FRANK Oh yes?

FIONA I've got an awful lot of dashing around to do.

FRANK Well, you—haven't got to dash around this morning, have you?

FIONA I have to dash around every morning, darling, but this is more frantic than usual.

FRANK It's jolly inconvenient, as it happens...

FIONA Yes, it's jolly inconvenient for both of us, darling. But I just can't manage without it.

FRANK *(picking up phone and starting to dial)* As long as that's perfectly clear. I mean you're not the only one that has to dash around, you know. I mean there are times when I'm—dashing around...

FIONA Yes, well, I'll get us some breakfast. You ought to get dressed.

She goes out into the kitchen right.

The **PHILLIPS***' phone rings.*

FRANK *(muttering)* Quite frequently—dashing around...

BOB, *in his early thirties, enters blearily from the kitchen left. He switches off* **TERESA***'s radio.*

BOB *(answering the phone)* Hallo.

FRANK *(startled)* Hallo. Who's this?

BOB What?

FRANK Who am I talking to?

BOB Good-morning, Frank. This is Bob Phillips.

FRANK Ah, good-morning, Bob. I'm glad you rang, I wanted a word. I've asked everyone to get to the office a little earlier this morning. I tried to catch you yesterday. What happened to you? Sneak off a bit early, did you?

BOB Yes I had—to meet someone...

FRANK Oh yes? I won't ask who. *(He laughs)*

BOB *laughs.*

Listen Bob, can you be in by a quarter past?

BOB I'll try.

FRANK I'd like the whole team there. Full strength. Right?

BOB Right. *(He goes to hang up)*

FRANK Oh, Bob...

BOB Yes?

FRANK Do you know anything about Featherstone?

BOB Do I know about what?

FRANK Featherstone. Bright little chap from Accounts. Do you know him at all?

BOB Oh, William Featherstone. Yes.

FRANK What's your opinion of him?

BOB *(surprised)* He's all right.

FRANK Good man, is he?

BOB Fine—as far as I know.

FRANK *(hanging up)* Good. Good. Good. *(He rises, switches on his radio, takes it with him, and goes towards the hall, muttering)* I'm frequently dashing around.

He goes out to the hall upstage left.

BOB *is left holding the receiver for a moment.*

TERESA *enters from left engrossed in the paper, her mug of tea still in her hand.*

BOB *(replacing the receiver)* Morning.

TERESA *(without looking up)* Hallo. *(She sits on left end of the sofa)* Who was that?

BOB Just business.

TERESA Oh.

BOB Any tea?

TERESA Just made it.

BOB Oh. Good.

TERESA On the stove. My God, there's another letter from this woman. That's about three this week already.

BOB On the stove?

TERESA What?

BOB The tea?

TERESA That's right. Help yourself.

BOB *breaks left and turns back.*

Oh no, honestly, that's incredible. She's raised six hundred pounds just in coffee mornings amongst her friends. Isn't that incredible?

BOB *(crossing to left of* **TERESA***)* Perhaps you ought to do the same thing with tea mornings? Invite me along. That way I might even get a cup.

TERESA It's on the stove.

BOB Fine. Fine.

FIONA *enters from kitchen right with a loaded tray and crosses left.* **BOB** *crosses left and goes into kitchen left.* **FIONA** *puts the tray on table left and begins to unload it.*

TERESA *(engrossed again in her newspaper)* Oh—no! Honestly…

FRANK *comes in through the main door.*

FRANK *(crossing towards the kitchen right)* Darling—Darling?

FIONA Hallo?

FRANK *(crossing to right of* **FIONA***)* It would appear that I have no clean shirt. Is that in fact the case?

FIONA Hmm?

FRANK No clean shirts. I have no clean shirts, apparently.

FIONA Well, darling, if you'd like to pop upstairs again and look on the third shelf down, I think you'll find no less than three shirts, all nice and clean and still wrapped up in cellophane bags from the laundry.

FRANK Third shelf?

FIONA That's right.

FRANK What the devil are they doing on the third shelf?

FIONA Presumably lying there, waiting for you to put them on, darling.

FRANK What are they doing on the third shelf. What's wrong with the second shelf...?

FIONA Nothing at all as far as I know darling, but since nineteen fifty-seven your shirts have always been kept on the third shelf down. They have not been kept on the second shelf down since we moved from Woking.

FRANK Woking?

FIONA *(crossing to kitchen door right)* We weren't so well off in Woking, if you remember. You had a smaller wardrobe...

FRANK *(crossing to upstage centre)* I don't know anything about Woking...

FIONA *goes out right with the empty tray.*

FIONA *(as she goes)* You go and have a look.

FRANK Why the hell does she have to drag Woking into the conversation.

FRANK *tramps out upstage left, disgruntled.*

BOB *enters from kitchen left and crosses slowly to left of* **TERESA**.

BOB I see you're hanging on with grim nostalgia to that empty cornflake packet.

TERESA Mmmm? Oh, that. I didn't have time.

BOB Ah.

TERESA Did you get your tea?

BOB No. It appears you only made enough for one.

TERESA No, I didn't...

BOB That was the impression I got from the teapot, anyway. I did toy with the idea of chewing the leaves but decided to

make some fresh instead. *(He crosses to the dresser upstage right for a cigarette)*

FIONA *enters from the kitchen right with a tray, and crosses to the table left.*

BOB *crosses to upstage of* **TERESA** *who closes the newspaper.*

TERESA Is Benjamin awake?

BOB Haven't heard him.

TERESA He's marvellous these days. It used to be four o'clock, didn't it?

BOB So I remember telling you at the time.

TERESA I got up now and again, as well...

BOB Now and again.

FIONA *(going out right, calling)* Frank—breakfast.

BOB *goes to the dresser for matches.*

FIONA *goes out to the kitchen right.*

BOB *crosses to downstage right of the sofa.*

TERESA Did you want some breakfast, then? Is that what this is all about?

BOB Not if—you're rushed off your feet.

TERESA Well, there's no need to go on at me. I mean considering the fact that you rolled in here at two o'clock this morning stinking drunk and I haven't said a word about it...

BOB Till now...

TERESA Haven't said a word about it, I think it's really a bit of a nerve to sit there complaining there isn't any breakfast.

BOB I'm not complaining.

TERESA Good.

BOB *crosses left and pauses left of the centre chair.*

FIONA *enters from the kitchen right with egg and toast on a tray. She crosses to the table left.*

BOB *(going out left)* What on earth have I to complain about?

BOB *goes out left.*

FIONA Frank—it's on the table. *(She goes to the doors upstage left)*

FRANK *(offstage)* Coming.

FIONA *goes to the phone and dials.* **TERESA***'s phone rings.* **TERESA** *answers it.*

TERESA Hallo...

FIONA *is about to replace the phone as:*

FRANK *enters upstage left, pulling on his jacket.*

FIONA *(into the phone)* Eight twenty-eight and twenty seconds... *(She seems to adjust her watch)*

TERESA What? Hallo?

FIONA *replaces the receiver.*

Hallo? *(After a second she replaces the receiver, puzzled, and then resumes her reading)*

FIONA *(crossing to the table left)* Eight twenty-eight and twenty seconds...

FRANK *(crossing to the centre chair and moving the small table from right to the front of the centre chair)* Is that what it is?

FIONA Yes.

FRANK Oh. Damn fool on the wireless has just said it's eight thirty-three. *(He sits in the armchair)*

FIONA *picks up the tray and crosses to left of* **FRANK** *and puts the tray on his table, and then crosses back to the table left, sits and pours coffee.*

FIONA Well, they can't both be right...

FRANK Hardly. Ah! *(He tackles his egg)*

FIONA *butters herself some toast, and pours coffee.*

BOB *enters from the kitchen left and crosses to centre, waves his mug at* **TERESA** *and then crosses and sits in the armchair downstage left.*

BOB Benjamin's awake now.

TERESA Is he crying?

BOB No just beating on the floor with his wet nappy.

TERESA Oh, well, I'll leave him for a minute. Get you your bloomin' breakfast.

BOB As I say. Don't go out of your way...

TERESA Oh, shut up. Some woman rang up just now.

BOB Woman.

TERESA Yes. Told me the time and rang off.

BOB Tim's mother, do you think?

TERESA Oh no, it wasn't that. Anyway, you're supposed to ring them, aren't you?

BOB It's customary. Was she abusive as well—lewd suggestions?

TERESA No. *(She rises and drops the newspaper right of* **FRANK***)* She was a couple of minutes fast...

BOB No-one I know.

TERESA I didn't imagine it would be.

TERESA *goes out left.*

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