

HATS

By

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CHARACTERS

Woman 30 +

Man 30+

The stage is empty apart from a kitchen stool centre stage. Woman, dressed casually, walks in, pauses, goes to stool, spins it, sits. She removes her shoes, throws her bag down.

WOMAN

Grasps her head

AHHHHHHHHHHHHH.....

She picks a dog eared heavily annotated script out of her bag, looks at it, throws it on the floor.

WOMAN

Shit the director. "Sing it with conviction?" How can you sing it with conviction? It's drivel.

she sings and mimes exaggeratedly

I'm just a girl who can't say no. I'm in a terrible fix. Then get on the pill you stupid bitch .Jesus!

Man, also dressed casually, enters, strides forward, hesitates, sees woman, stops and then stands right of woman in triumphant pose. Smiles broadly. Waits for reaction. There is none. She turns and looks, turns away.

MAN

You called? I'm home.

WOMAN

Yes. You're late. You are meant to have my dinner ready.

MAN

Anything wrong.

WOMAN

Mmmmmm.

MAN

What's the matter?

WOMAN

The rehearsal was..... I was told I was stiff, unconvincing. I had to act and sing with conviction.

MAN

Ahhhhh.... The director.

WOMAN

The production's going to be awful. Who wants to see a musical about Oklahoma in the middle of London in the winter.

MAN

Because it sells. It's a musical. Londoners need cheering up.

WOMAN

I hate it.

MAN

You've been cast. They pay you.

WOMAN

I wish I had never, ever, ever signed.

MAN

Look on it as a path to something else. It pays our bills.

WOMAN

Oh yes. What a career move! Ado Annie in Oklahoma..... I ought ta say Nix.

MAN

I have good news.

WOMAN

Don't tell me, you've finally got a paying role? You mess up another audition?

MAN

I zink you are very unkind.

He re-enters with a large suitcase and places it centre stage. She glances around to see what he's doing.

WOMAN

Please not the I -can do-accents audition routine. I've just had five hours of rehearsal.

He pulls out a beret from the suitcase. Puts it on and adjusts it, smiles, rocks his head, flicks an imaginary moustache and goes to her side.

MAN

(With a French accent)

Bonjour Madam.

WOMAN

Tell me what part did you land? Did they cast you in The Scottish play. You've done it before.

MAN

It is such a pleasant surprise to see you zis evening. How are you Madam?

WOMAN

What? Oh...

(She speaks in a Southern accent)

I'm just fine sir..... But I have a tiny little ole' problem with you callin' me Madam. Try Mademoiselle. A'm from Oklahoma.

MAN

I am so sorry Mademoiselle. Unforgivable. The bad light...

WOMAN

Oh I know bad lighting can affect a lady's appearance.

MAN

I 'ope you will accept my most profound apology.

WOMAN

I... do.

MAN

I 'ave not noticed you before.

WOMAN

We Southern girls like to stay in the background. We do not promote ourselves as is the tendency of those "ladies" in the North.

MAN

Naturelment. You are as we say in France... raffinee....

WOMAN

Raffinee? Oh, I do like you Frenchies. You are always so friendly. On the other hand I have heard that on occasion you have bad breath... from all that garlic you eat.

(Back to her normal voice)

Why don't we ever do a play together?

MAN

Bad breath!

WOMAN

And there is talk that you are not, how shall I say, good between the sheets, though we American women have been led to believe otherwise.

(Back to her normal voice)

We would be fabulous.

MAN

Not good between ze sheets?

WOMAN

(Back to her normal voice)

What does raffinee mean?

MAN

(With a sneer back in his normal voice)

Sophisticated.

WOMAN

Oh.

MAN

Perhaps you would like something different?

WOMAN

I have always found that variety adds texture to the subtlety of love's ways.

MAN

Variety? You want variety? O.K.!! Variety. Something German perhaps will cheer you up.. I have good news.

(He goes to case, pulls out a Tyrolean hat)

Guten Tag ...

(He clicks his heels smartly)

You are looking for somevun disciplined? Yah?

WOMAN

Sir.... I do not believe we have been introduced. My mama was very particular about the sort of men she allowed me to talk to.

MAN

I am coming from Germany.... Ze land of Beethoven, Bach, Schumann.

WOMAN

I don't care for that high falutin' type of music. We Americans are ordinary people, without pretensions, we prefer country music. "Unintellectual" you foreigners might call us but we are genuine and good hearted.

MAN

I vos not casting aspersions on your national character. I wanted merely to inquire whezzer you were interested in making ze babies. Yah?

WOMAN

Makin's babies!! Good Lord. How can you bring up a matter so personal in front of a lady so as to border on bein' offensive.

MAN

You don't like making ze babies?

WOMAN

Well, call me crazy but I like to get to know people first.

MAN

We could draw up ze schedule.

WOMAN

What do I look like? Some sort o' breeder?

MAN

Perhaps just some hank panky? I understand zat you American women are very fond of hanky panky.

WOMAN

Hanky panky?

MAN

Some Frauleins like a little rough treatment. I am not averse to a little spanking myself.

WOMAN

(Own accent)

You are a sick man. Have you tried therapy?

MAN

Zerapy! You want zerapy? Hanky panky iz not good enough for you.

WOMAN

We are not in the giving mood..... big boy.

(She returns to bored position on stool)

I'm tired. It's been a long day. This director doesn't know what he wants. He tells me to do it this way and then the next day he says the opposite. The lines read like an episode from Sesame Street. I'm exhausted. Don't you get it? Are you going to make dinner?

MAN

(Removes hat and puts on Aussie hat
with corks)

Well rattle me dags...

The poor old lady's tired. Can I get you a nice cool tinny? Freshen you up a bit?

WOMAN

What's a tinny?

MAN

A beer in a tin.... Tinny?

WOMAN

I have to work.

MAN

Well, sorry I bought it up. Just trying to be entertaining. Get a little romance into the life of a working couple. I'll light up the barbie baby, have a few tinnys, put the old gramophone onat your age you must remember the gramophone? Dance in the moonlight along with the roos... Kangaroos... and then perhaps a little romance?

WOMAN

I know what roos are.

MAN

Don't get yer knickers in a bowline.....

WOMAN

A bowline?

MAN

It's a knot. Weren't you ever in the girl guides? You know Boy Scouts, girl guides.

WOMAN

(back to Southern voice)

Listen ya'll, if you'd done the kind of guiding I've had to do in my life you wouldn't ask such a question. Ya see, Southern men spend too much time underwater in the hot tub and sure enough have difficulty navigating their way to the bathroom, much less the bedroom.

If you Australians are anything like the men I've known then it's not surprising you've got a small population.

MAN

Well thanks.... That really makes a fella feel loved and wanted.

WOMAN

(back to normal voice)

I'm sorry. I'm just not in the mood.

MAN

Wait a minute. I know. Here it is.

(Pulls out green hat.)

This will do the trick.

WOMAN

For God's sake! Where are we now?

MAN

Top 'o the mornin' to ya. Why's a beautiful girl like you ,whose face shines like a radiant star in the heavens, a professional actress, looking so sad and out of kilter with the world?

WOMAN

It's the Irish .

MAN

Could it be you're working too hard, stifling your creative juices, wearing yourself down in the mad frenzy to get ahead? You need to be takin' it easy my girl.

WOMAN

Listen... you dumb Mick...I spend my evenings rehearsing a play in a theatre where there are usually more people on the stage than in the audience, my days rehearsing a play that's about exciting as a tube of toothpaste for a director who spends most of his time on his cell phone and who says everything I do is "wonderful dahhling" and the rest of my spare time, if there is any, trying to coach you through Richard III. It's not exactly the acting career I imagined for myself.

MAN

Sorry.

WOMAN

It's not your fault. I shouldn't have accepted the part. If you don't like the director don't accept the part. I broke one of my basic rules. I just thought it would be a great chance for us to be together for a change.

MAN

Mmm.....

What? WOMAN

I heard from Bill. MAN

What did he say? WOMAN

He's cast me. MAN

What? Banquo? WOMAN

MacDuff? *Man shakes his head*
One of the witches ?

Noooooooo. I got the lead. MAN

You're joking. WOMAN

No.... Rehearsals start Monday . I got the fucking part. MAN

And they're paying you? WOMAN

Of course. 800 a week and a percentage. MAN

That's wonderful. That's fantastic. Oh darling. I'm so pleased. That's brilliant. I love you. WOMAN

Kisses him

We open at the Edinburgh Festival on the first of next month...then we're off Broadway on the 28th. MAN

But... WOMAN

MAN

I thought you'd be pleased for me.

WOMAN

I am.... I am.....

MAN

They agreed to everything... a flat for six weeks ,first class air fare, per diem... the lot!

WOMAN

So what do I do now?

MAN

You can come and visit.

WOMAN

I got you the original audition. I coached you. I read lines with you every day. I even took this lousy role to be with you and help you and now you are leaving me behind.

MAN

I'm sorry. It's such great opportunity. What do you want me to do? Turn it down? I'm doing Richard off Broadway for God's sake. This could make my career.

WOMAN

It's not fair.

MAN

I couldn't have done it without you.

WOMAN

I wanted us to be together. Have you accepted it? Without even asking me? Without even bothering to discuss it with me? You should have phoned.

MAN

You're right. I should have phoned you right away but I was so excited about the part and well, I had to run an important errand.

WOMAN

Ah wonderful when devils tell the truth!

MAN

More wonderful when angels are so angry.
Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman
Of these supposed crimes to give me leave
By circumstance but to acquit myself.

WOMAN

You're lying.

(She spits at him)

MAN

Why doest thou spit at me?

WOMAN

Would it were mortal poison for thy sake!

MAN

Never came poison from so sweet a place.

WOMAN

Never hung poison on a fouler toad.
Out of my sight! Thou doest infect mine eyes.

MAN

Thine eyes dear lady have infected mine.

WOMAN

I would I knew thy heart.

MAN

Tis figur'd in my tongue.

WOMAN

I fear me both are false.

MAN

Then never was man true.

MAN

But shall I live in hope?

WOMAN

All men, I hope live so.

MAN

(He searches in his pocket and brings out
small box)

Vouchsafe to wear this ring.

WOMAN

To take is not to give.

(Puts on the ring)

MAN

Look how my ring encompasseth thy finger,
Even so thy breast encloseth my poor heart ;
Wear both of them , for both of them are thine.

WOMAN

Damn... I wonder if I can resign. It would be the end of my career. I'd be blacklisted.

MAN

I'm sure there is a way out. Come to New York.

WOMAN

What can I say to him? I'll tel him I'm pregnant. Can't have a pregnant woman in the middle of Oklahoma. No I'll say it's a female problem. Whatever.

Do you mean this? You're not lying. We'll go together? You're a dahlling.....

(She kisses him)

Where's the phone. I am going to tell that director what to do with his play.

(Exits)

MAN

Was ever woman in this humor woo'd?

Was ever woman in this humor won?

I'll have her ; but I will not keep her long.

Or perhaps I will.

(Exit.)

