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*Dramatic Publishing*

# THE MOVIE GAME

A Romantic Comedy  
by  
ADAM HUMMEL



**Dramatic Publishing**

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THE MOVIE GAME was originally produced by the University of Minnesota Duluth Department of Theatre as part of its 2001-2002 season and opened on November 29, 2001. The production was directed by Tom Isbell; the set design was by Jeffrey Petersen; the costume design was by Deanna Frieman; the lighting design was by J.P. Gross; the sound design was by Ryan Gallagher assisted by Jason Wilson; and the choreography was by Ann Aiko Bergeron. The technical director for the production was Tom Thatcher. The production was stage managed by Abbey Vargo assisted by Melissa Edison. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

Jack . . . . .	JASON PETERSON
Sam . . . . .	JESSIE RAE JOHNSON
Dr. Seuz . . . . .	ANDREW BENNETT
Florence . . . . .	KATHRYN HELBACKA
Frank. . . . .	RYAN GALLAGHER
Francine . . . . .	CAROLYN JENSEN
Blake Langley . . . . .	DAVE STRONG
Maggie . . . . .	JESSICA LIND
Paul . . . . .	JAIME TINTOR

# THE MOVIE GAME

A Play in Two Acts  
For 5 Men and 4 Women

JACK . . . . . an unemployed cinephile  
SAM (aka Samantha) . . . . . Jack's friend  
DR. SEUZ . . . . . Jack's unconventional therapist  
FLORENCE . . . . . Jack's mother  
FRANK . . . . . Jack's father  
FRANCINE . . . . . Jack's sister  
BLAKE LANGLEY . . . . . the director  
MAGGIE . . . . . Jack's love interest  
PAUL . . . . . Maggie's fiancé

# ACT I

*(From the darkness we hear two voices. They are playing the Movie Game. Lights slowly fade up to reveal a marquee in disrepair. The Bijou. A condemned movie palace. JACK and SAM are seated next to each other in one of the boxes. They are eating Chinese takeout with chopsticks.)*

SAM. *It Happened One Night.*

JACK. Clark Gable.

SAM. *Gone With the Wind.*

JACK. Vivien Leigh.

SAM. *A Streetcar Named Desire.* And please don't...

JACK *(his best impression)*. "Stella!" Marlon Brando.

SAM *(cont'd)*. ...do that. *On the Waterfront.*

JACK. Rod Steiger.

SAM. *Doctor Zhivago.*

JACK. Julie Christie.

SAM. *Shampoo.*

JACK. Warren Beatty.

SAM. *Splendor in the Grass.*

JACK. Natalie Wood.

SAM. Ummm... *Love With the Proper Stranger.*

JACK. Interesting. Steve McQueen.

SAM. *The Magnificent Seven.*

JACK. James Coburn.

SAM. *Charade*.

JACK. Audrey Hepburn.

SAM. *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

JACK. George Peppard.

SAM. *The A-Team*.

JACK. Nice try. I'll give you a new one. Jimmy Stewart.

SAM. *The Philadelphia Story*. My personal favorite.

JACK. Katharine Hepburn.

SAM. *African Queen*.

JACK. Humphrey Bogart.

SAM. *Sabrina*.

JACK. William Holden.

SAM. William Holden. Now there was a guy who knew how to woo a girl.

JACK. Yeah. Good thing he had a script to help him along the way. (*Referring to takeout.*) This doesn't taste right. Did you get my kung pao chicken?

SAM (*looking in JACK's container*). That is kung pao chicken.

JACK. Is it? It tastes funny.

SAM. *Sunset Boulevard*.

JACK. What?

SAM. William Holden. *Sunset Boulevard*.

JACK. Right. Ummm...Jack Webb.

SAM. *Dragnet*.

JACK. This is not kung pao chicken.

SAM. OK. All right. They were out of kung pao chicken, all right? I got you something else.

JACK. What is it?

SAM. I don't know, Jack. I told them to give me the closest thing they had to kung pao chicken and then they said something I couldn't understand and so I nodded



and smiled and they put something in the little white box and I paid and I left, all right?

JACK (*taking note of her outfit*). Take it easy, Annie Hall.

SAM. What? Oh, God, is it that noticeable?

JACK. Give me a pair of thick black glasses and a pendant for aimless dialogue and we could re-enact a scene from the movie.

SAM. I wanted to try something new.

JACK. It looks like you mugged Diane Keaton.

SAM. Really? I thought it would be kind of neat. Sort of an homage.

JACK. I think you may have passed homage and gone straight to disturbing resemblance.

SAM. You know, that's what I love about our relationship. I pity you. You pity my clothes. Or, at least, me in my clothes. And we can just come here and get away from that horribly cruel and un-cinematic world and sit...and eat.

JACK. Yeah. It's real give and takeout.

SAM. Which reminds me... (*From her bag she produces a bottle of champagne and two plastic cups.*) Champagne?

JACK (*referring to the cups*). And you remembered the fine crystal.

SAM (*reading bottle*). Brewed in Idaho. Is champagne brewed?

JACK. I'm more worried about the Idaho part. What are we celebrating?

SAM (*opening the champagne*). You are looking at the new vice-president of public relations.

JACK. You're taking the promotion.

SAM. No. They've offered me the promotion. Taking the promotion would mean I would have to move to Seattle.

JACK. Are you going to take it?

SAM. And leave you here all by yourself? I don't think so!

No one should go to the movies alone. Even if the movie theater is being prepped for demolition.

JACK. You're turning down the promotion for me?

SAM (*pouring champagne*). No, I'm turning down the promotion because I don't want to leave New York. I love New York.

JACK. Sam...

SAM (*giving a cup to JACK*). I've already made up my mind. Anyone who leaves New York develops an irresistible desire for knickknacks and lawn ornaments and I refuse to become one of those people. So, a toast to me. (*She raises her cup.*) Here's to turning down a lot of money so that I can still ride the G and play guess that bodily fluid every morning.

JACK (*raising his cup*). To bodily fluids. (*They drink.*)

SAM. Besides, what would you do if I wasn't here?

JACK. I'd probably get a job and an apartment. I'd be successful. On the other hand, instead of you and me here, it would just be me here.

SAM. Do you ever wonder why it's you and me here?

JACK. Well, that would change if you'd take the promotion.

SAM. We are never here with anyone else. It's always just us.

JACK. I like us.

SAM. It's pathetic.

JACK. That's true. If you weren't here I could be married by now; surrounded by pink flamingo lawn ornaments and wooden cutouts of old people bending over. Ahhh, that would be the life. Pathetically speaking, of course.

SAM. You know what our problem is? We've seen too many movies. We're cinephiles. Our idea of reality is, well, it's not real. My idea of fashion. Your life.

JACK. Ouch.

SAM. Take for instance the date I had last night. Last night, I went out with a guy who decided it would be a good idea for him and me to attend bingo night at the VFW with his grandmother. Little did I know it was his turn to pull the balls...

JACK. No comment.

SAM (*cont'd*). And he left me there with the witch, who, by the way, had applied the Ben-Gay liberally. I kept popping Altoids into my mouth and spraying her with my designer imposters.

JACK. What's your point? So you had a bad date.

SAM. My point is that I was expecting much more than bingo with Grandma. I was expecting this guy to be chivalrous and charming. I wanted him to open doors for me and pull out my chair. I wanted Cary Grant or Gene Kelly. I had all these expectations that couldn't be met because I've seen too many movies.

JACK. No. No. You just haven't met the right guy yet.

SAM. Thank you, Captain Cliché. And what about you?

JACK (*joking*). I haven't met the right guy yet either.

SAM. C'mon, Jack. How long has it been since your last date?

JACK. Well, let's see. Is this a leap year?

SAM. You need to get out there.

JACK. It's not as easy as you make it sound.

SAM. Bingo with Grandma sounds easy?

JACK. I have a hard time approaching women. I mean, c'mon, Sam, you've seen me. Whenever I get around a

beautiful woman I turn into a freak show. I stare and I can't keep my mouth closed. I'm sure I drool. I don't even think about what I'm saying while I'm saying it and do I even need to bring up the flop sweat? It's like my pits are Niagara.

SAM. You weren't sweating when you met me?

JACK. C'mon, that's different.

SAM. You're saying I'm not a beautiful woman?

JACK. No, I'm saying you're Sam. You're like "one of the guys." Except that you're my only "guy."

SAM. Thanks for that.

JACK. And even if, by some miracle, there was a beautiful woman out there who was somehow attracted to a bug-eyed, slack-jawed, sweaty freak, what would I say? "Hello, my name is Jack Goldberg. I'm thirty years old, unemployed and live with my parents." (*Pause.*) I don't need a date, Sam. I just need to get out of this slump I'm in.

SAM. I think you may have passed slump and gone straight to hopeless abyss.

JACK. Touché! (*Pause.*) No, what I really want is a change.

SAM. So eat the "not" kung pao chicken.

JACK. A real change. And one that won't lead to food poisoning.

SAM. So get a job and get an apartment. Make a commitment. Get some fish or a beagle.

JACK. It needs to be something bigger than that.

SAM. Get a St. Bernard. (*Pause.*) "Oh, Jack. To get away. Somehow to be useful in the world."

JACK. *It Happened One Night?*

SAM. *The Philadelphia Story.*

JACK. I must be losing my touch. *(Pause.)* You know I'm seeing that therapist tomorrow.

SAM. You're seeing a shrink?

JACK. My mother said I had to go see this guy or move out of the house. So, I decided it would be in my best interest to see the shrink. It's embarrassing. Apparently, he's the *therapist to the stars*.

SAM. How did *you* get in to see him?

JACK. I'm not quite sure. My mother set up the appointment. She said she had no problem getting me in.

SAM. Maybe you'll get all the juicy gossip on his celebrity clients.

JACK. Yeah. I'm pretty sure the hypodermic oath forbids that.

SAM. Hippocratic.

JACK. Whatever.

SAM. I should get going. Some of us have to turn down a promotion tomorrow. *(She rises.)* Call me with all the gory details.

JACK. Good night, Mrs. Calabash.

SAM. That's Miss Calabash, to you. Good night.

*(SAM crosses offstage. Lights up on Dr. Seuz's office. JACK crosses into the office. It is empty.)*

JACK *(looking around)*. Hello?

SEUZ *(offstage)*. I'll be right with you. Take a seat. Would you like a shot of wheat grass? It has a very calming effect.

JACK. No. Thanks.

SEUZ *(offstage)*. Your funeral.

*(JACK takes a seat. The lights in the office suddenly fade as music, a recognizable fanfare from a movie studio, booms from an unknown source. JACK flinches in surprise. Lights to black as the overture continues and upon its completion, lights up full to reveal DR. SEUZ sitting comfortably across from JACK.)*

JACK *(surprised)*. Oh my God.

SEUZ. I know. Impressive, huh? I find that my clients are more apt to divulge information of a more personal nature when given a familiar overture.

JACK. Really?

SEUZ. Would you have preferred something a little more subtle?

JACK. No. No, that was fine.

SEUZ. Doesn't surprise me. That overture is a favorite among my male clients. So soothing it puts Tarentino at ease.

JACK. Quentin Tarentino?

SEUZ. Mmmm. You may want to forget I said that.

JACK. Wow. I mean, I knew you worked with celebrities, but...Quentin Tarentino.

SEUZ. You'd be surprised who drops in here for analysis.

JACK. Like who?

SEUZ. Uh-uh. We're here to talk about you... *(Looks at notebook.)* Mr. Goldberg.

JACK. Well, I guess I should be grateful for your seeing me.

SEUZ. Nonsense. You'd be surprised how many relatives of celebrities I see.

JACK. What?

SEUZ. Feelings of jealousy and co-dependency are not uncommon among those overshadowed by their brother's or sister's or parents' fame.

JACK. I don't think you understand.

SEUZ. I understand perfectly. You are here because your sister has had continued success in film and television and you feel left behind. You are not alone. Two words for you: Eric Roberts.

JACK. No, listen...

SEUZ. Roger Clinton.

JACK. Look, I...

SEUZ. Tito Jackson.

JACK. Look, Dr. Seuss...

SEUZ (*interrupting*). Seuz.

JACK. What?

SEUZ. It's pronounced Seuz. Like news. Or booze. Or wooz...y.

JACK (*over announcing*). Dr. Seuz.

SEUZ. Thank you.

JACK. Dr. Seuz, my sister is not famous.

SEUZ. So, you're in denial?

JACK. No, she's a librarian.

SEUZ. Delusional? OK. Good, Jack. Ride the delusion to a sandy beach where there is no Whoopi.

JACK. Excuse me?

SEUZ. In here, Jack, there are no *Hollywood Squares*.

JACK. You think Whoopi Goldberg is my sister?

SEUZ. What's your favorite color, Jack?

JACK. Why?

SEUZ. I bet it's not *The Color Purple*, is it?

JACK. Dr. Seuz, Whoopi Goldberg is not my sister.

SEUZ. That's good. Let the hostility flow forth. Don't be a man *Interrupted*

JACK. I don't want to appear hostile.

SEUZ. But you do.

JACK. I don't mean to appear hostile, it's just that, look, she's not my sister, OK? I mean, *hello*, do I look black to you?

SEUZ (*realizing his mistake*). You have a point.

JACK. Whoopi Goldberg is not my sister.

SEUZ. You're not black.

JACK. No, I'm not.

SEUZ. You're white.

JACK. Yes.

SEUZ. Half brother?

JACK. No!

SEUZ. Dammit!

JACK. No relation! I am not related to Whoopi Goldberg or anyone remotely famous!

SEUZ. Well, then what the hell are you doing here?

JACK. My mother made an appointment for me to see you and I assumed she'd told you a little about me.

SEUZ. She didn't tell me anything about you.

JACK. Obviously.

SEUZ. She didn't even mention the whole not being black thing. I mean, I could've at least worked with that. We could have *pretended* you were somehow related to Whoopi. But now, I don't know. I mean, I've never analyzed the "little people" before. No offense.

JACK. None taken, I guess. (*He begins to exit.*) Look, maybe I should just go. This isn't going to work out.

SEUZ. Wait a minute. This could be interesting. A commoner. *This* could be refreshing. No whining about as-



sistants or drivers or pharmaceuticals. I bet you haven't even been to a rehab clinic, have you?

JACK. No, I haven't.

SEUZ. You are a mortal.

JACK. OK.

SEUZ. Sit down. I'm taking your case.

JACK. You are?

SEUZ. This could be fun. Like a Chia Pet.

JACK. Not quite sure I follow that analogy.

SEUZ. So, talk, mortal! Tell me what you want.

JACK. I want a change.

SEUZ (*screaming*). Look, I'm not a plastic surgeon!

JACK. What?

SEUZ. Sorry. Force of habit. Continue. You wanted?

JACK. Change.

SEUZ. Ah, yes. Change. Talk about change.

JACK. OK. Ummm. Well, the thing is, my parents, who I live with are...

SEUZ. Talk about your parents.

JACK. In depth?

SEUZ. And breadth, yes.

JACK. Are you sure you wanna do this? I mean this is my first visit. Going into my parents seems like something we should do on maybe a second or third appointment.

SEUZ (*mesmerized by JACK*). I love it. Good God, you're so real. You're like regular old Joe. Joe Goldberg. Do you mind if I call you Joe?

JACK. Yes.

SEUZ. Fair enough.

JACK. Look, I appreciate your enthusiasm about...well about me. But I think it might be more beneficial for *me* if I see a shrink who's a little more...mortal.