

LE CIRQUE DE FLEURS
Sample Packet
By Maggie Smith

Maggie Smith
Email: maggiesmithwrites@gmail.com
Phone: (402)-707-9609
Website: www.maggiesmithwritesandwrongs.com

SYNOPSIS: A one-act play taking place over the course of one night, LE CIRQUE DE FLEURS tells the story of six performers, all contracted to work with Le Cirque de Fleurs' during its 1919 national tour. They soon find, however, that they are spending their entire career making an unlivable wage in an unsafe environment. Their response: Set the circus on fire.

CHARACTERS

LOTTIE — 32, she/her, any race; the ringleader in every sense of the word; prideful, self-assured; unable to separate her onstage persona from her offstage actions

HAZEL — 19, she/her, any race; a tightrope walker; recently left home, been at the circus long enough that she's comfortable with the others but short enough that she has no connections

WARREN — 43, he/him, any race; advertised as the funniest clown touring in the big tops, not that you'd ever be able to tell

MARJORIE — 21, she/her, any race; a contortionist; a loyal observer, logically-oriented, not one to admit emotions; Simon's twin sister

SIMON — 21, he/him, any race; a contortionist; intelligent, seemingly knows everything that's unsaid; Marjorie's twin brother

ANNA — 25, she/her, any race; a magician; Florence's fiancé; reluctant to be caught in the mess, much more fearful than expected

FLORENCE — 24, she/her, any race; Le Cirque de Fleurs owner's only daughter and Anna's fiancée; strong-willed, loving, and curious

SETTING

Le Cirque de Fleurs, 1919

ACT ONE
SCENE FIVE
THIS IS THE CLOSEST YOU'LL GET TO A COMEDY

[WARREN stands under the bleachers with SIMON and MARJORIE.]

WARREN

They should be here by now.

SIMON

They aren't.

WARREN

I can see that. Where are they?

MARJORIE

Does it matter? All of their jobs are fillers, anyways.

WARREN

Everyone is in on this for a reason. No one's job is a filler.

MARJORIE

Let's see: Me and Simon for our swiftness, Anna for her competency, Hazel for her stoicism, and Lottie...?

WARREN

Lottie overheard the plan and I didn't trust her to keep it a secret if she wasn't in on it.

[ANNA enters.]

WARREN

Where've you been?

ANNA

I lost track of time.

WARREN

Bullshit. Where were you?

ANNA

I already told you.

WARREN

I don't believe you.

MARJORIE

Stop. She's here now, isn't she?

WARREN

Why are you defending her? We had a plan.

[HAZEL enters, eyes glued to ANNA.]

HAZEL

You idiot!

ANNA

What did I do?

WARREN

And where were you?

[HAZEL walks past WARREN, not even looking at him.]

HAZEL

[To WARREN] Shut up. *[To ANNA]* Are you stupid?

ANNA

I don't know what you're talking about.

HAZEL

“I don't know what you're talking about”— Like I believe that.

ANNA

Hazel. I don't know what you're—

HAZEL

Yeah, so you've said.

ANNA

But whatever you're mad about I can guarantee you wasn't my fault.

HAZEL

Oh, you can guarantee?

ANNA

Yes.

HAZEL

That you had no involvement whatsoever in what I'm pissed off about?

ANNA

Yes.

HAZEL

So you weren't a part of Florence's story where she said that you told her that you two need to skip town together?

[A beat.]

ANNA

I take back my statement.

WARREN

You said what?

ANNA

I just didn't want her to be here when everything started.

HAZEL

God, you're the worst.

WARREN

Is that where you were?

ANNA

I told you. I lost / track—

WARREN

Yeah, I know. You lost track of time. Lost track doing what? Telling your girlfriend all about our plan?

ANNA

Fiancée.

WARREN

Whatever the hell she is.

ANNA

I didn't tell her anything.

WARREN

No? What about her father? You tell him anything?

ANNA

Please, I didn't even ask him for permission before I proposed to her, what makes you think I'd tell him about this?

WARREN

I don't believe you.

ANNA

I want this just as much as you do.

WARREN

Do you? Because people who want something aren't late.

ANNA

Hazel was late, why aren't you yelling at her?

HAZEL

Leave me out of this.

ANNA

Leave you out of this? You brought me into this!

HAZEL

You brought yourself into this trying to warn your girlfriend about all of this.

ANNA

She is my fiancée!

HAZEL

And we'd be in complete shambles if I didn't talk her out of worrying over all the stuff you said. Convince her that everything you were saying was just you being anxious like you always are.

ANNA

I am not always anxious.

HAZEL

If you really believed in this job you wouldn't have felt the need to say anything at all. Worried you're going to mess it all up?

ANNA

No.

HAZEL

"Oh, Florence, stay away from the tent today. Something bad is going to happen!"

ANNA

I don't sound like that!

WARREN

Is that what you told her?

ANNA

Yes, that's what I told her!

HAZEL

Do you realize how bad that is? Because that's bad, Anna!

ANNA

It's not like I told her about the fire!

WARREN

No, but what's going to happen when something bad does happen? And she starts putting two and two together about how you told her to stay away from the circus today? What then?

ANNA

I... I don't—

WARREN

You don't know. But God forbid the magician can't put a little bit of trust in the rest of us that they won't let her girlfriend burn in a fire—

ANNA

Fiancée!

MARJORIE

Who cares?

[The fighting stops.]

MARJORIE

The girlfriend knows, the girlfriend doesn't know, why does it matter one way or the other? It'll be too late before she can put all of the pieces together, anyways. You're fighting over a hypothetical, and, frankly, it's not one that seems all that important. Who's she going to tell? Her father? I'd bet my entire month's pay that he isn't anywhere near the tent today. Never was before. What makes today different? We've been going back and forth and wasting time over nothing, so can we please just get this started?

WARREN

We're waiting for Lottie.

[LOTTIE'S head appears between two bleachers.]

LOTTIE

I've been here the whole time.

WARREN

Why—

LOTTIE

I wanted to make an entrance.

[LOTTIE maneuvers her way behind the bleachers in some odd fashion.]

LOTTIE

Why am I here, again?

HAZEL

I'll kill her.

WARREN

No, you won't. No one's gonna die.

SIMON

Seems difficult to ensure that when you're playing with fire.

WARREN

Don't play with it and it won't be difficult, then. We get one chance at this. Don't blow it.

LOTTIE

Can we get this moving? Some of us have jobs to get to.

WARREN

I know you did not just say that to me.

SIMON

Warren. Get on with it.

WARREN

Fine. We're going in shifts, starting after the parade. Lottie—

LOTTIE

Me.

WARREN

Between acts while you're out of the ring, you're behind the benches, adding more hay to the ground.

LOTTIE

What about my costume changes?

WARREN

What about them?

LOTTIE

My costume changes are when I'm offstage.

WARREN

Then add the hay after the costume changes.

LOTTIE

But some of them are intricate.

WARREN

I'm ignoring you now.

ANNA

Wait, behind the benches.

WARREN

Christ, what now?

ANNA

Behind the benches, that's where Florence and I meet after my act.

WARREN

You shouldn't be meeting anyone after your act, you should be ready to start a fire.

ANNA

It's our thing.

WARREN

I don't care what your thing is, keep her away from the benches.

ANNA

She'll know something's up.

WARREN

Figure it out. Simon and Marjorie. You—

SIMON

Keep a lookout for management. Make sure they don't catch on.

WARREN

Yes. And—

MARJORIE

Keep kids out of the way. We know what we're doing.

WARREN

Adults, too. But yes. Good. Anna, you've got the buckets.

ANNA

I've got the buckets.

WARREN

Don't pour them out too quickly. One every other act, maybe. If anyone notices that the buckets have been emptied they'll refill them.

ANNA

Right.

WARREN

And don't pour them inside the tent. If the hay is wet it won't burn.

ANNA

Not too quickly. Not inside.

[WARREN picks up a bucket with a yellow handle.]

WARREN

Do not pour this one out.

ANNA

What's that?

WARREN

Gasoline.

ANNA

Where'd you get gasoline?

HAZEL

I siphoned it. Florence's dad uses a motor car, right?

ANNA

No.

HAZEL

Well, someone does. And that someone's car no longer has gasoline inside of it.

ANNA

But—

WARREN

No time for questions. Anna, you're going to pour the gasoline in a trail around the inside of the tent. It'll make the fire start faster.

ANNA

That sounds dangerous.

WARREN

It should be. Hazel?

HAZEL

Yeah?

WARREN

You stay with me.

HAZEL

What? No. Come on, that's boring.

WARREN

You're helping me oversee all of this.

HAZEL

I don't work well in groups.

WARREN

Learn to. Does everyone have their matches?

[The group searches for their matches. HAZEL, still mad, is the last to pull her match out, petulantly. They each only have one match.]

WARREN

After Lottie's Vanishing Act we strike the matches and drop them in the hay.

HAZEL

What about the people?

WARREN

Last act of the show. They're already walking out by then. We need to wait for Lottie to be in position, anyways. The audience starts walking, we light the matches. It takes time for fire to spread.

ANNA

If it takes time won't someone put it out?

WARREN

Not if you do your job and get rid of the water buckets.

MARJORIE

And you think this is going to work?

WARREN

I know it's going to work. We've been planning this for months. Does anyone think I'm missing anything?

[No one answers.]

WARREN

Exactly. It's thought through. So I'd appreciate it if you didn't question my ability to keep you all in line again. Any other questions?

LOTTIE

Are we dismissed?

WARREN

Are you going to take this seriously?

LOTTIE

Consider me a heart attack from this moment forward.

WARREN

I'll see you all after the Vanishing Act.

[All except for HAZEL and WARREN move.]

WARREN

And Anna?

[ANNA stops.]

WARREN

If I ever hear you're sharing shit like that with Florence again? You're going to wish you died in the fire. Get out of here.

[ANNA exits.]

HAZEL

That was harsh.

WARREN

That's the job.

[WARREN leaves HAZEL. After a moment, HAZEL exits. Transition into:]

[END OF EXCERPT]

For the Full Script, Please Contact: maggiesmithwrites@gmail.com