

# **Ipswich Little Theatre**

## **Secret Bridesmaids' Business**

Sides (Monologues for audition process)

Please be familiar with the monologue pertaining to the character you are auditioning for as it is likely you will be asked to perform a portion of it as part of the audition process.

**COLLEEN BACON** - playing age 55+, Mother of the bride. Flustered, bossy, well intentioned.

*Spotlight on COLLEEN. She wears a floral nightie and carries a toiletries bag. Savouring a delicious feeling of anticipation, she addresses the audience directly.*

COLLEEN: You know, I opened a wedding account for Meg two weeks after she was born. It's added up to quite a nice amount now, much more than I'd ever thought, but then, we weren't expecting to wait thirty-three years...Oh, it did look like she was going to marry Paul when she was in her late twenties, but he got cold feet. It broke her heart I think, and she didn't meet James till quite a while later. And in the meantime the questions from our friends started. 'So your Meg's still single then?' And I'd smile and say, 'Oh, she's a career girl!' But I could see they were feeling sorry for me and wondering where me and Bill had gone wrong. Honestly, it was so silly. And then they all started having grandchildren, and do you think we ever heard the end of that? I swear, if I'd had to look at one more baby photo... *[She allows herself a smug smile.]* But anyway, it's all worked out for the best now, because Meg's got James-and he's a lawyer. And he owns a house and an inner-city apartment-oh, not that that matters of course, but I have to say he's a lot more successful than any of Jan Grainger's sons-in-law. And so is Meg, now I come to think of it! *[She ponders that for a pleasing moment.]* I've spent months planning every detail for tomorrow—because every girl deserves a beautiful wedding. She should be able to show off those photos forever and say, 'That was the happiest day of my life and everything was perfect'. *[Suddenly tight]* Goodness knows you don't want people saying 'Is that a coffin in the corner?' like they say when they look at my wedding photos. But yes, there's a coffin behind me and Bill when we're signing the register. It looks like I'm balancing it on my left shoulder. 'Part bride, part pallbearer' some wag once said, and they thought it was funny, but it wasn't. *[The facade crumbling further]* It was supposed to be my special day, but there were grieving relatives weeping on the front steps so we had to have our photos taken round the back of the church. We didn't want to upset them with our happiness—not that I was happy—because nothing was the way I wanted it—and I'm not just talking about the funeral—I didn't have any say in anything—But anyway, that was a long time ago, and it's Meg's turn now. And her wedding's going to be perfect- *[Losing it again]* Because my mother—God rest her soul, is gone so she can't hijack Meg's wedding like she did mine!

*Fade to black.*

**MEG BACON** - playing age early 30's, the Bride. Smart, warm, fun.

*MEG addresses the audience directly.*

MEG: I blame Mum for this. I learned denial from her. She's a fantastic teacher. She gave me detailed, intricate lessons without one spoken word passing between us—which was, of course, the entire point. [*Beat, then slightly defensively*] Oh? I'm not a fool. I've had niggling a feeling about James... but I pushed it down from my brain and through *my* chest—carefully avoiding the heart area—and I kept pushing it down through my stomach and even further down still, until it was in the soles of my feet and every step I took squashed it. It wasn't that hard... I was busy with work, so I just kept walking faster and faster; so fast that no-one could tap me on the shoulder and force me to face the truth... Who wants to know that the man they adore—the man they're about to commit their whole life to—has been having sex with somebody else? Who wants to put on this amazing, magical dress and then have to take it straight off again and zip it back up in its plastic? Who wants to be thirty-three years old—with a biological clock that ticks so loudly it keeps you awake at night—and go back into the singles wilderness? Not me... *A beat or two. She sighs, then retreats back into flippancy.* This wasn't part of the fairytale. But hey, this is the real world, isn't it? And it turns out my Prince Charming's a toad. [*Deeply angry*] I hate him. And you know what? I hate the others too. I do. I hate Naomi for betraying me, I hate Lucy for telling me, I hate Angela not telling me, I hate James for cheating on me, then lying about it, and most of all for being honest, and I hate Mum for—well, I just hate her. [*Beat.*] But I hate myself the most. I hate the fact that I'm so smart, but I chose to be so bloody stupid. And I hate that if I had the chance, I might even do it again [*Beat.*] I just wish it was yesterday, you know? This hurts too much. James isn't who I thought he was. There are bits of him I didn't know about, bits that break my heart in half. Can I really learn to love those bits, too?

*Lights fade as we move straight into...*

**ANGELA DIXON** - playing age early 30's, the Matron of Honour. Loyal, giving, occasionally vague.

*Spotlight on ANGELA. She stands in her bathrobe, towelling her hair dry as she talks directly to the audience.*

ANGELA: I like Lucy, I really do, but she makes me feel like I'm the kind of person who buys all their clothes at Katies. I've bought maybe two skirts and one top there in twenty years. And so what if I bought *everything* there? What would it matter? And why am I talking about Katies, anyway... ? [*She sighs, then composes herself.*] Oh, I don't know... How can I explain a lifelong commitment to someone who doesn't want to understand? What could I say to her? That I look at John and I see my home? It sounds too cutesie for words, but it's true. I've always felt like that. Ever since we met, I was only seventeen, and he was my first ever boyfriend--well except for Darren O'Brien, but that doesn't really count, because he only touched my boobs twice, and I cried afterwards. [*Getting a bit sidetracked*] I can't remember why I cried. Maybe I had my period? No, that's right, yeah--he pinched my nipples, and it really hurt. Anyway, I married the only guy I'd ever had sex with. Can you Imagine what Lucy would think about that? Well, I *know* what she thinks. She thinks I'm a nerdy mum from the suburbs who's had an easy ride. And she thinks I don't understand what's going on with James and Meg--but *she's wrong*... [*Vulnerable*] The thing is, James is a nice man... And nice people make mistakes sometimes. He's probably torturing himself about it, and isn't that punishment enough? And he adores Meg. I can see it in his eyes. And as for her, well, I haven't seen her this happy since we won the Wham! competition when we were nine. George Michael kissed her, and she got to hold Andrew Ridgeley's hand, and she was so-o-o-o excited... Oh, except Mrs Bacon took some photos and they didn't turn out. That was such a bummer. [*She stops. Getting back to the point*] Anyway, the point is, Meg's ecstatic. And Lucy expects me to just, just turn around and destroy that for her, without knowing any of the facts? I won't do it. [*A beat or two.*] It's all very well for Lucy to be so self-righteous, but what's *she* got to lose? It's not *her* future she's playing with. And besides, friendship's not about gratifying your own ego, it's about doing what's best for your friend. And James is the best thing that's ever happened to Meg. I still believe that. And I know that men... and women, too do things that they regret sometimes. But if the commitment's there, a couple can come out on the other side, with their relationship stronger and deeper than ever... [*Beat.*] I don't want to be responsible for Meg missing out on that.

*Fade to black.*

**LUCY DEAN** - playing age early 30's, Bridesmaid. Earthy, impetuous, direct.

*Spotlight on LUCY. She meets the audience's collective eyes, staring out at them a little defensively, then speaks.*

LUCY: Go on, look at me like that if you want, but I'm just trying to be a good friend here. It's not like I'm enjoying this I can think of a lot more fun ways to spend a day, believe me—but real friends tell the truth. End of story. And it's all very well to hide behind niceness and lame excuses, but—Oh look, maybe that's not fair. Stuff it, I don't care—Angela's another one who's got this whole wedding thing way out of whack. *[Frustration tempered by amusement]* If you ask me and I know you didn't—weddings are toxic. And I'll tell you why. Because they force decent people to lie. I mean, who can honestly say to another person, 'Yes, I know *for certain* that I'll forsake all others for the rest of my life?' *[She gives a little laugh: What a ridiculous notion.]* No-one, that's who. If you ask me, the vows should go, 'Right now I feel like forsaking all others, but let's consult again further down the track...' *[Amused for a moment, then she remembers the situation, and her anger returns.]* Jesus, if I saw James right now... Why ask Meg to marry him if he can't even keep his dick in his pants while they're *engaged* ? *[She meets the audiences collective eyes.]* Oh, yeah yeah, I know what you're thinking. Some couples *can* be happy forever. Well, they've won life's lottery. Half their luck. But the rest of us have to keep buying tickets... And buying, and buying, and buying. Sometimes *I* feel like I'm running out of raffle books. Jesus, men have done terrible things to me, but I've treated them badly too. I've been unfaithful to a boyfriend once *[thinking]* no, technically twice, and I'm not proud of that. But you know what else? I have *never* been unfaithful to a *friend*. Because friendship's too important to stuff around with. So, alright— I can wait till Kate rings, and I can cross all my fingers and toes that it isn't the same James, but if it *is* I've never kept a friend in the dark—and wedding or no wedding, I'm not about to start.

*Fade to black.*

**NAOMI BARTLETT** - playing age late 20's, a friend. Sexy, self-absorbed, conflicted.

*The door bursts open and NAOMI re-enters in a hotel bathrobe. In tears and clutching soggy tissues, she addresses the audience directly.*

NAOMI: I had to walk down to Reception in my undies, because I was too scared to go back in there and ask for my clothes! And you know what? Even though I felt so guilty and so ashamed, I still found myself thinking 'Thank God I didn't wear that old blue bra and the baggy Cottontails'. Does that make me a bad person? Oh, I don't know. Maybe I already was... When I was younger I never thought I'd have an affair with *anyone's* boyfriend... let alone a friend's boyfriend... let alone a friend's fiancé... But things seem really simple when you're young—everything's so black and white. But as soon as life get interesting it starts to turn to grey. I didn't know he was Meg's fiancé when I met him... I was drunk and he was cute and what happened happened... and then I found out he was engaged, but I really liked him by then. I tried to end it but... well, I didn't... and I kind of convinced myself—and him—that it was cool, that I could handle it. I just wanted some fun with no strings attached... And then, well, then I got Meg's wedding invitation—and that's how I found out it was him! [*Pause as she remembers the awful moment.*] Can you *believe* it? I couldn't. I just, I didn't know what to do, and... [*Looking at the audience guiltily*] Oh look, I know what you're thinking. I shouldn't have accepted the invitation. And maybe I shouldn't have. But couldn't help it. I wanted James to look around the church and see my face and feel like the bastard he was—at least, that's what I told myself. But when he ended things two weeks ago I realised I'd been secretly hoping that when it came to the crunch he'd say to the priest, 'I can't go through with this. The woman I *really* love is sitting over there!' Dumb fantasy, huh? And awful to Meg. Sometimes I look at myself in the mirror and think, 'With friends like me, who needs enemies?' But you know how sometimes when you need it most you can't get your head and your heart to co-operate? Well, I hated what me and James were doing—in my head—but still, I couldn't seem to kick him out of my bed.

*Lights fade.*

**JAMES DAVIS** - playing age mid 30's, the Bridegroom. Successful, confident, sincere.

*Spotlight on JAMES as he addresses the audience, knowing they hate him as much as he hates himself right now, and trying in vain to explain the indefensible.*

JAMES: *[grasping at straws]* Look, sex and love are separate things... Well, they can be, that's all I'm saying. This thing with Naomi okay, it should never have happened—but it didn't have to impact on what I have with Meg. I thought that was the deal. It was a separate arrangement. She told me she just wanted a bit of fun, and now she turns around and does this! I mean, where the hell did that come from? If I'd known Naomi felt like that I would've broken it off with her months ago-- *[A beat as he realises: Who is he kidding?]* Well, maybe. Oh shit, maybe not. But I just—I just— *[A short silence as he struggles with his confusion.]* I just wish women would say what they mean. You know—plainly, clearly state what they want instead of expecting you to be psychic. Meg bought me this t-shirt at the Warner Brothers store, and it's got a picture of Superman on it. He's wearing this perplexed expression and he's saying, 'You want me to leap tall buildings *and* be sensitive and supportive?!' That's how it is with women. They want you to slay a dragon for them one second, then cry at a guide dog commercial the next. And somehow you're expected to guess when they want you to be controlling and when they want you to be crying—and if you don't make the right guess at the right time it's instantly construed as proof that you don't love them enough: 'If you really loved me, you wouldn't need to ask.' How many times have I heard that? Well, I'm sorry, I've loved a few people a lot, but no-one's ever stepped out of the shadows and handed me a crystal ball: *[He sighs-he hates himself for making excuses.]* Anyway, I know I'm trying to change the subject. The fact is, I've been acting like a prick.

*Lights fade.*