

PERUSAL SCRIPT

BEAM UP THE CLOWNS

A Short Play

by **Alice Jankell**



Newport, Maine

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BEAM UP THE CLOWNS

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ORDER #3360

CHARACTERS: 2f, 1m

WOMAN...50's, any ethnicity

MAN.....50's, any ethnicity

CHERYL....70's, Any ethnicity

SETTING A family home

TIME: Around now

BEAM UP THE CLOWNS a 10-minute play by *Alice Jankell* 2f, 1m, Simple Interior setting. Modern costumes. *Moms and daughters...and moms.* Do the huge, floppy clown shoes we believe we wear as mothers ever come off? Ever? Can we reconcile how we think we're seen with how we really are? And can our own mothers help? Or do they just complicate it all? *A 2022 Aery Festival Award Winner* **ORDER #3360**

ALICE JANKELL — For Disney, Alice helped to create and develop new Broadway musicals. As Associate Artistic Director of The Williamstown Theatre Festival, her directing work included *AS YOU LIKE IT*, *DINAH WAS*, and *ENOUGH ROPE*, the special event on Dorothy Parker starring Elaine Stritch. As Creative Director of The Barrow Group's F.A.B. (For, About, and By) Women, Alice co-helmed the company of 125 women and helped generate and produce 48 new plays. She has worked in theaters around the country, including the Mark Taper, L.A. Opera, The Public Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, The Hollywood Bowl, La Mama, and City Theater, among many others, as well as in film and TV. Favorite acting roles include a solo performance, backed by the L.A. Philharmonic, at the Hollywood Bowl. She has taught acting at Carnegie Mellon and on the graduate level. Alice directed and co-wrote *URBAN MOMFARE*, which won a Best Musical Award from the NY International Fringe Festival, was a Critic's Choice, and garnered 4 stars from Time Out. Just before Covid, Alice directed *AN ENCHANTED APRIL* Off-Broadway, and more recently, she directed and filmed Craig Lucas' brand new play, *MORE BEAUTIFUL* for the Putnam Theatre Alliance. A founding member of Core Artists Ensemble, member of The Actors Studio PDW, Theatre Now National Musical Theatre Workshop, New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect, and a co-founder of Putnam Theatre Alliance. AEA/SAG-AFTRA/Dramatist Guild
<https://www.alicejankell.com>

BEAM UP THE CLOWNS

(Just inside the entryway of a family home. LIGHTS come up on WOMAN and MAN standing at the open front door, looking out. They lovingly wave goodbye to somebody who is leaving, somebody we cannot see.)

(MAN is dressed casually in a sweater and jeans.)

(WOMAN stands next to him, dressed like a clown: Shiny red nose, puffy pants and huge comic shoes. Big horn in her hand.)

WOMAN: Bye bye, my baby girl!!!!

MAN: Bye Honey! Drive carefully!

(MAN starts to close the door. WOMAN holds it open with her huge shoe.)

WOMAN: Bye, my sweetheart!

(WOMAN suddenly honks the horn. Honk!)

Bye bye, Babes!

(She honks it some more. Honk! Honk!)

MAN: Cut it out.

WOMAN: I'm trying.

(She doesn't stop honking the horn and calling outside.)

Honk!

Bye!

Honk!

I love you!

Honk!

Call us!

Honk! Honk! Honk!

MAN: Move your foot.

(MAN pulls WOMAN back and closes the door.)

(MAN takes the horn away from the WOMAN, and puts it aside.)

(They look at each other.)

WOMAN: I always feel like a clown when I talk to her--

MAN: You try too hard.

WOMAN: Like I have a big red nose and huge feet--

MAN: You just don't need to push.

WOMAN: Every time I open my mouth, I see her staring at me like I'm fresh out of the circus.

MAN: You want some coffee? I'll make a fresh pot.

WOMAN: Will you just listen to me for a second?

MAN: Let me just put on the water. I have tennis soon.

(WOMAN doubles over.)

WOMAN: Oh my God...

MAN: Come on. She loves you. You're her mom. It's hard to say goodbye.

WOMAN: Not for you. You have *tennis*.

MAN: Yes for me. Of course for me. But this is part of life. We'll see her again soon.

WOMAN: Probably not soon. She's in no rush to come back, thanks to me. Thanks to me and my pushing.
Thanks to me and my clownish ways.

MAN: You're a good mom.

WOMAN: I just want to feel normal around her. I want her to see that I'm smart and funny and fun to be around.

MAN: She knows all that. Can I just put the water on?

WOMAN: No. No. I haven't felt like that around her in a long time. And the more desperate I feel the more I push. The faker and dumber I sound. I feel my shoes growing. I feel her staring at me like I have a huge red nose.

(MAN gently removes WOMAN's clown nose. He puts it aside.)

MAN: She loves you.

WOMAN: She thinks I'm foolish. She doesn't want to be with me. I ruin things with my pushing and "selling".

MAN: Well, you know you do "sell". You sell her on this part of the country. You sell her on this town.

WOMAN: I blew it! I blew it with my pushing!

MAN: You didn't "blow" anything--

WOMAN: She couldn't get away soon enough.

MAN: Just sell less next time.

WOMAN: Next time! When even is next time?!

(MAN gets down on his knee and begins to untie WOMAN's big clown shoe.)

MAN: She's our daughter. Life is long. And she doesn't always make it easy. She's finding her own way too.

(MAN removes WOMAN's big clown shoe. Puts it aside. Stands up.)

I've got to start that coffee. I'm going to be late.

(MAN starts off toward kitchen.)

She's finding her own way. She's doing exactly what we each did at her age.

(WOMAN hobbles after MAN with one big clown shoe still on.)

WOMAN: I don't want her to do what I did! I don't want her to be like I am with my mother!!!

(Suddenly we hear a bicycle bell.)

Ring! Ring!

(An older woman enters, riding a tricycle. She is in full clown regalia: Nose, wig, makeup, frilly clothes.)

Ring! Ring!

(She rides in a circle around MAN and WOMAN.)

WOMAN: Mom!!!!

Ring! Ring!

THREE MORE PAGES TO END