

THE PHYSIC OF FITCHER'S BIRD

By

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DIALOGUE SAMPLE

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CHARACTERS

The Experimenters:

LADY, female, 20s-40s, who plays the Daughters in the story of Fitcher's Bird

GENTLEMAN, male, 20s-40s, who plays the Wizard in the story of Fitcher's Bird

The Device (called collectively THE FOUR):

DOCTOR MAN and **DOCTOR WOMAN**, a male and female, played by any age, but they must act old, ugly and educated.

TV WOMAN and **TV MAN**, a female and male, any age, but they must act young, beautiful and frivolous.

SETTING

The stage is littered with objects and furniture used in the telling of the story of Fitcher's Bird. It is a place where experiments are performed. The presentation and blocking are left to the imagination of the director and cast.

In the premiere production, The TV MAN and TV WOMAN stood at the back of the audience, but their faces appeared on television screens on stage.

The Physic of Fitcher's Bird was first presented by the Ground Floor Theatre Lab in New York City, NY, with the following cast:

LADY	Julie Rapoport
GENTLEMAN	F.L. Dammann
DOCTOR WOMAN	Charlotte Dooling
DOCTOR MAN	Alfred Preisser
TV WOMAN	Beth Hylton
TV MAN	Josh Stark

It was directed and designed by DJ Mendel.

(The CAST runs out before the house lights dim, like they couldn't wait to get the hell out from back stage. They speak, shout, whisper, sing the following, starting at different times with different tempos, scurrying toward the stage.)

ALL CAST

O, Fitcher's Bird, how com'st thou here?

I come from Fitcher's house quite near.

And what may the young bride be doing?

From cellar to garret she's swept all clean,

And now from the window she's peeping, I ween.

(A skeleton in a bridal gown appears.)

DOCTOR MAN

Cause

TV MAN

and

TV WOMAN

effect

DOCTOR WOMAN

And

DOCTOR MAN

cause

TV MAN

and

TV WOMAN

effect

DOCTOR WOMAN

And

(This cycle continues under the following dialogue.)

LADY

Are you up for this?

GENTLEMAN

I'm pumped. I'm so pumped. How do you feel?

LADY
I'm you know -

GENTLEMAN
I'm interested.

LADY
Yes. I'm you know.

GENTLEMAN
You're not pumped. You're not pumped at all, are you?

LADY
I've got a lot of nervous energy.

GENTLEMAN
You of course realize that they've already started. They're on the clock. You -- you don't want to stop it, do you?

LADY
Do you?

GENTLEMAN
That's not up to me.

LADY
What if it were? In your experience.

GENTLEMAN
I'd say this: look at it like this. No experiment is a failure, right?

LADY
So we won't fail.

GENTLEMAN
We can do this.

LADY
We *can* do this.

GENTLEMAN
Right. So.

LADY
So.

Prologue!

(GENTLEMAN and LADY speak with the four-count "cause and effect and" rhythm of TV MAN, DOCTOR MAN, DOCTOR WOMAN & TV WOMAN, scored below.)

GENTLEMAN

Oh Fitch - / er's Bird / [rest] / [rest]
How coms't / thou here? / [rest] / [rest]

LADY

I come / from Fitch - / er's house / quite near.

GENTLEMAN

And what / may the young / bride be do - / ing? [rest]

LADY

From cel - / lar to gar / ret she's swept / all clean,
And now / from the win - / dow she's peep - / ing, I
ween.

(The word-round stops.)

THE FOUR

The scientific method!

DOCTOR WOMAN

Step One. State Problem.

TV WOMAN

Step Two. Form Hypothesis.

TV MAN

Step Three. Experimentation.

DOCTOR MAN

Step Four. Interpretation.

THE FOUR

Step Five. Revision!

DOCTOR MAN

This is an experiment in

TV MAN

cause

TV WOMAN

and

effect TV MAN

and TV WOMAN

cause. TV MAN

This is an experiment. DOCTOR MAN

This is an experiment in a sealed test tube from which you may observe the cause DOCTOR WOMAN

and TV WOMAN

effect TV MAN

and TV WOMAN

cause of the inevitable laws of drama. DOCTOR WOMAN

Conflict crisis climax resolution! THE FOUR

What'd I say? Professional, huh? GENTLEMAN (to LADY)

The subjects, A. DOCTOR MAN

Evening. GENTLEMAN (to the audience)

And B. DOCTOR WOMAN

Thank you for coming. LADY (to the audience)

How we doing for time? GENTLEMAN

DOCTOR MAN

We're right on schedule!

LADY

Part one. Conflict.

GENTLEMAN

Here we go!

LADY

Once, before the sun shined at night, there was a wizard.

GENTLEMAN

The thing with this wizard was he would change into the form of a poor man and go from house to house begging for bread.

LADY

But what he really took from the houses were all the pretty girls.

GENTLEMAN

No one knew where he took them,

LADY

for they were never seen again.

GENTLEMAN

This upset the local townspeople.

DOCTOR MAN & DOCTOR WOMAN

Ah, conflict!

(They make notes.)

GENTLEMAN

Nice huh? We take minutes! You like that?

LADY

Yes yes. You did good. Let's do this.

DOCTOR MAN & DOCTOR WOMAN

Once upon a time, two people met, fell in love, and decided to drive each other insane.

TV MAN

Will you marry me?!

TV WOMAN

Hell yes!

DOCTOR MAN

Marriage: the state in which two individuals are joined by a number of bonds.

GENTLEMAN

See? See how they get all the angles right there? Very professional!

LADY

Yeah yeah yeah. So one morning this wizard shows up at the house of a poor miller.

GENTLEMAN

No. No, I think it was the king's castle he came to.

LADY

Uh, should you be contradicting me?

TV WOMAN

Friction. Noun. One. The rubbing of one object or surface against another. Two. A clash. Conflict.

DOCTOR MAN & DOCTOR WOMAN

Ah, conflict!

(They make notes.)

LADY

He came to the home of a well-off wainwright. The door was answered by the eldest daughter.

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD *(to LADY:)*

A crust of bread for an unloved beggar?

LADY - ELDEST DAUGHTER

I'll fetch one, you poor soul.

LADY

And when she turned to get it, he touched her, and his special magic wizard power forced her to jump in the sack.

(GENTLEMAN grabs LADY.)

GENTLEMAN *(to the audience:)*

You see?! Get 'em to feel sorry for you!

LADY

Stop stop stop stop. Something's missing.

GENTLEMAN

Nothing's missing.

LADY

I know from missing and something's missing. I'll tell you what's missing.

GENTLEMAN

What?

LADY

Mood.

GENTLEMAN

Mood?

LADY

Mood.

DOCTOR MAN

Friction.

DOCTOR WOMAN

Three. Physics.

TV MAN

My name's Richard and I'm from Mars!

TV WOMAN

My name's Carlie and I'm from Venus!

(They laugh.)

LADY

Let's not argue.

GENTLEMAN

Whatever, whatever.

THE FOUR

Revision!

LADY

I sat with the old storyteller by the iron stove. Her face limp with age and like wood grain, it's beautiful in the light of the oil lamp. Her lips teeter on the first word of her tale, which is a vale of demons, a castle of glass terrifying and wonderful. My brother readies his pen -

GENTLEMAN

Kay, there's the frickin' mood.

LADY

Once, before the sun shined at night, there was a wizard. He would disguise himself as a beggar and go from house to house.

GENTLEMAN

But what he wanted from the houses were the pretty girls.

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD

Any bread for an unloved beggar?

LADY

You poor soul, I'll fetch you some.

(He grabs her:)

GENTLEMAN

Happy?

LADY

Yeah.

GENTLEMAN

So the wizard carried the eldest daughter to his house, deep in the middle of a dark forest.

TV MAN

Force: Loosely speaking, a push or uuuuuuuuhhhhhh –

TV WOMAN

Pull!

LADY

He opened the sack and emptied her into the middle of a grand entryway.

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD

Rejoice! You will never need anything anymore. I can give you everything.

TV WOMAN

Marriage: state in which two people are joined together by a number of bonds, which include the economic.

LADY

This house was amazing.

GENTLEMAN (*to audience*)

You'll have to pretend here folks because as you can see we're a spit-and-bailing-wire outfit. If I had my twenty million dollars I'd cover the place with video screens playing "Great Castles of Europe." But that's me. How we doing for time?

DOCTOR WOMAN

We're right on schedule!

GENTLEMAN

After a few days of wining and dining the eldest daughter, the wizard called her to his study.

DOCTOR WOMAN

Force: loosely speaking, a

TV WOMAN

push

TV MAN

or

DOCTOR MAN

pull!

LADY - ELDEST DAUGHTER

You wished to see me, sir?

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD

I must go out into the world, to tend to my business. I shall leave you to keep my stupendous mansion. Give me your hands.

DOCTOR MAN

Marriage: state in which two individuals are joined by a number of bonds, which include the economic and the religious.

TV MAN

Will you marry me?

TV WOMAN

Why the hell not?

(LADY puts out her fists.)

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD

Open your right hand.

(MORE)

(She turns over her hand. He gives her keys.)

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD *(cont'd)*

These are the keys to everything in the house. You may go everywhere except one room, which this little key opens.

DOCTOR MAN

Newton's Third Law of Motion: To every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

DOCTOR WOMAN

Cause and effect.

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD

Open your left hand.

(She turns over her hand. He gives her an egg.)

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD *(cont'd)*

This egg is precious. Your job is to preserve it. Should this egg be damaged, you will suffer for it.

DOCTOR WOMAN

Gravitation: One of the four forces known.

DOCTOR MAN

The others are

TV MAN

strong

TV WOMAN

and weak nuclear forces

DOCTOR WOMAN

and electromagnetism.

TV WOMAN

I'll never marry you!

TV MAN

I'd sooner die!

GENTLEMAN - WIZARD

This egg will tell me if the right one jumped in my basket.