

## Sam Shovel CAST OF CHARACTERS

*A Jazz Dinner Script for 3 Male, 5 Female, and 3 M/F*

**SAM SHOVEL (F)** A cynical, world-weary private eye in the gritty city.

**BELLA BOSSYPANTS / HELEN / IRATE CUSTOMER (F)** Sam's very efficient and disappointed secretary / commercial voice / irate customer at laundromat

**DAN DEVINE / JOE (M)** An innocent, handsome man looking for his fiancée / commercial voice

**SVEN SVENGALI / STAN / JOHNNY (M)** A sultry and seductive man who is married, but has his sights set on Sam Shovel / commercial voices

**SERGEANT SULLIVAN / CABBIE (M)** An inept and overbearing member of the police force / a cranky cabbie who has a name!

**BUFFY HARDCASTLE / MOM / BETTY / JINGLE (F)** Enforcer for Big Al / commercial voices

**BIG AL / JINGLE / SPOKESMAN / DORIS (F)** Crime boss extraordinaire / commercial voices

**HOTEL CLERK / JINGLE / BILLIE / MARY (F)** is tired of being treated as a peon / commercial voices

**NERDY McNERDY (M/F)** Sound effects person

**ANNOUNCER (M/F)** narrates the episode

**SAXOPHONE PLAYER (M/F)** someone who can give you a sultry jazz sound

**TIME:** 1940'S

**PLACE:** A radio studio in NYC, the gritty city

## SAMPLE PAGES

*(Lights down on audience. Jazz music plays in the background. Stage lights up. Enter the cast who take their places by the mics. Jazz music ends.)*

ANNOUNCER: *(To CAST.)* All right everyone. We'll be live in 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1! *(ANNOUNCER points to the BAND who plays some short intro music. Then ANNOUNCER speaks to the audience.)* Welcome, everyone, to another adventure of *Sam Shovel, Private Eye*. In tonight's episode, there won't be one but four murders! How will our famous detective solve these crimes? Are they connected? Let's find out in this episode "*Tailor Made ... for Murder!*"

*(Slow, sultry, jazzy musical intro.)*

SAM: *(Narrating.)* It was a hot and sultry day in the city. The ceiling fan in my office churned slowly, like a blunt oar through crude oil. Business was way down due to some bad press after the *Case of the Crying Karen*. I was cooling my heels, throwing cards into my hat when my secretary, Bella Bossypants, buzzed me.

BELLA: Buzz.

SAM: What is it, Bella?

BELLA: Two things. First, when are you going to get the intercom fixed? I'm tired of yelling, "Buzz."

SAM: I'll get it fixed right after my next big case. And the other thing?

BELLA: You've got a potential client.

SAM: Can he pay?

BELLA: He doesn't smell like money.

SAM: As long as he doesn't smell. Send him in anyway.

BELLA: Okay.

SAM: *(Narrating.)* I was just tossing the king of hearts into my fedora, when in walked the man of my dreams. His shoulders were as wide as the Brooklyn Bridge and, call me a sucker, I was in a buying mood. I asked him-- *(To DAN.)* What can I do for you, um ...

DAN: I'm Devine.

SAM: You are at that.

DAN: Dan Devine. I came here just to meet you.

SAM: *(Hopeful.)* I see.

DAN: It's about my fiancée.

SAM: *(Disappointed.)* I see.

DAN: She has gone missing.

SAM: *(Hopeful.)* I see.

DAN: And I want you to find her.

SAM: *(Disappointed.)* I see. Did you check the hospitals?

DAN: ICU.

SAM: *(Hopeful.)* I see you, too.

DAN: Intensive Care Unit.

SAM: *(Disappointed.)* I see.

BELLA: Buzz!

SAM: Bella, not now.

BELLA: Buzz, buzz, buzz right now, you second-rate gumshoe.

SAM: That really stings.

BELLA: There's a man to see you, and --

*(SFX of man screaming then SFX of body falling on a desk. BELLA screams.)*

SAM: What on earth?

*(SFX of door opening and feet running.)*

BELLA: He just keeled over on my desk!

DAN: What's wrong with him?

SAM: He was murdered.

DAN: How do you know that? Deductive reasoning?

SAM: There's a yardstick plunged precisely twelve inches into his back.

BELLA: Someone did not go to great lengths to kill this guy.

DAN: Oh. Right. But why use a yardstick? That's pretty weird, isn't it?

SAM: No weirder than using a frozen parrot.

DAN: Why would you use a frozen parrot to kill someone?

SAM: Thawed parrots are too bendy.

BELLA: And flappy. *(Pause.)* Yeah, that was a weird day.

DAN: *(Beat.)* What do you think happened to this guy?

SAM: I'm not sure, but I can tell you this much: It was a case of death by inches.

*(Sax riff here.)*

ANNOUNCER: Who is that dead man on Bella Bossypants' desk? Why does he have a yardstick in his back? And if he wanted to see Sam, why didn't he go metric so that he could meter (*"meet her"*)? For the answer to these and other questions, stay tuned. Sam Shovel will be back after this message from our sponsor.

*(Commercial)* **Cornies**

*(Cold cereal for breakfast started about 100 years ago and was considered very modern and convenient. Early commercials stressed how nutritious they were. They weren't.)*

BILLIE: Hey, Mom. What's for breakfast?

MOM: Steak and eggs, with grilled onions, peppers, and asparagus.

BILLIE: Ah, Mom. Not again. And I guess the lobster –

MOM: Is on the side with garlic butter, just the way you like it. And I have a freshly-squeezed glass of –

BILLIE: Grapefruit juice. I know. Mom, I'm so tired of steak and lobster for breakfast. Can't we have anything else?

MOM: But this breakfast gives you the protein and vegetables that a growing girl needs.

BILLIE: Ah, Mom.

SPOKESMAN: Having trouble with a picky eater?

BILLIE: What! Who's that?

SPOKESMAN: I'm the spokesman for Cornies, the Breakfast of Winners.

MOM: What are you doing in my kitchen?

SPOKESMAN: I speak for Cornies!

MOM: You break into our house to speak for corn? Billie, call the police.

SPOKESMAN: Now just hold on there, little buckaroo. There's no need to call the police. I speak for Cornies, the Breakfast of Winners. We can help you with your picky eater problem. Try a bowl of Cornies.

MOM: All right. What's in it?

SPOKESMAN: Corn from America's heartland. Each ear is carefully picked by hand by migrant workers hired for just this purpose. The corn is puffed and then saturated with 23 essential vitamins and iron.

MOM: Saturated?

SPOKESMAN: With a firehose. Here, try some. *(SFX of cereal pouring into a bowl.)*

MOM: Wait. Isn't that ... caramel corn?

SPOKESMAN: Cornies is also saturated with Glucose, Fructose, Sucrose, Lactose, Corn Syrup, Maple Syrup, and Cough Syrup.

MOM: Cough Syrup?

SPOKESMAN: For those little rascals that have a bit too much energy. It settles them right down.

BILLIE: Wow, Mom. *(SFX of loud crunching.)* Cornies are *(Mumbles.)*!

SPOKESMAN: When served with chocolate milk, Cornies is a part of this balanced breakfast.

MOM: No more cooking over a hot stove or keeping the lobster tank stocked? You've sold me.

BILLIE: *(Mumbles incoherently.)*

MOM: What's that, Billie? Are you okay?

SPOKESMAN: Don't worry; Billie is fine. There is so much sugar in Cornies that her mouth is instantly glued shut.

MOM: I'm going to order this stuff by the truckload!

SPOKESMAN: Cornies. The Breakfast of Winners!

*(ANNOUNCER holds up "Applause" sign.)*

***(Music here SONG 1)***

*(Song ends. ANNOUNCER holds up "Applause" sign.)*

ANNOUNCER: Previously, Sam Shovel met a man who was drop dead gorgeous and a man who just dropped dead. Which man will Sam spend more time investigating? And now, back to *Sam Shovel, Private Eye in "Tailor Made ... for Murder!"*

*(Sax riff here.)*

SAM: *(Narrating.)* The man on Bella's desk was deadlier than a revival meeting at a Lutheran Church. And it was just my luck that Sergeant Sullivan was on duty when Bella called the police. Sullivan walked into my office like an obese walrus on hot sand. He didn't waste time on small talk.

SULLIVAN: *(Grunts.)*

SAM: I know what you're saying, but I don't know anything about the guy. This is the first time I've laid eyes on him.

SULLIVAN: *(Grunts.)*

SAM: Just look at him. You can see how he died. And if you look at the yardstick plunged in his back, he already had one foot in the grave.

SULLIVAN: *(Grunts.)*

SAM: No, that was hilarious. I mean, yardstick in his back, one foot in the grave ... You are not one of those metric system freaks, are you Sullivan?

DAN: Why is he just grunting?

BELLA: Sullivan is always like this before his first donut. Here, detective.

*(Sound of SULLIVAN chewing.)*

SULLIVAN: Cruller?

SAM: Yeah, nothing could be crueler than a yardstick in the back.

SULLIVAN: I'm talking about the donut.

BELLA: No, it's a glazed donut.

SULLIVAN: Really? But the texture and the sweetness suggest –

SAM: Hello? Dead body?

SULLIVAN: Right. Do you know why the victim was in your office?

BELLA: Probably because he was a typical customer for Sam. A deadbeat.

SULLIVAN: Your secretary has a mouth on her.

BELLA: And a brain. It's too bad you don't have both, too.

SULLIVAN: And who's this guy?

DAN: I'm Dan Devine.

SULLIVAN: What are you doing here? Did you know the victim?

DAN: I came to see Sam about –

SAM: About something confidential, between client and private detective.

SULLIVAN: You hired Sam Shovel? What for? One of your socks go missing?

DAN: I –

SAM: He's not at liberty to say.

SULLIVAN: Well, Dan, take my advice. Stay away from Shovel if you want to stay at liberty. I'll need both of you to come to the station to make a statement.

SAM: We will, but first –

SULLIVAN: But first nothing. You come down to the station today, or I'll have you arrested.

SAM: Arrested for what?

SULLIVAN: Obstruction of justice, conspiracy to commit murder, impersonating a private investigator ... I'll throw the book at you. Get down to the station!

*(SFX of footsteps, door opening, door slamming shut.)*

SAM: That man is as pleasant as a peacock with an eye infection.

DAN: Do you do that a lot?

SAM: Do what a lot?

DAN: Speak in similes.

SAM: You're not familiar with noir fiction, are you?

DAN: No.

SAM: Noir is full of similes. Noir is like first period English class: dark, gritty, and full of deadly sarcasm.

DAN: Deadly sarcasm?

SAM: You went to private school, didn't you? *(Beat.)* So, back to your case of the missing fiancée. You still want me to find her?

DAN: Yes.

SAM: I charge \$25 a day plus expenses.

DAN: What kind of expenses?

SAM: Bullets, shoe leather, a union-scale saxophone player *(Sax riff.)* ... the usual.

DAN: That sounds fair.

SAM: So, your fiancée came to the city?

DAN: Yes.

SAM: Where was she last seen?

DAN: At the Hyatt Regency. I went there. They said she checked out.

SAM: It's a place to start. What's her name?

DAN: Alexandria. Alexandria Barone.

SAM: The heiress?

DAN: Yes.

SAM: You certainly are marrying up.

DAN: Can't argue with you there.

SAM: Why'd she run off?

DAN: I honestly don't know. But she's been very angry lately.

SAM: Why?

DAN: I don't know.

SAM: Did you ask her why she was angry?

DAN: She said she was frustrated with shopping and then kept talking about it and just repeating herself over and over. I helped save time by giving her a five-point action plan to help her to shop more efficiently.

SAM: Let me guess. That plan did not help.

DAN: Alexandria got even angrier with my help. Women are a mystery.

SAM: Yeah, but mysteries are solved if you read the book.

DAN: Excuse me?

SAM: Just this once. Do you have a picture of her?

DAN: Yes. *(SFX of paper rustling.)* This was taken at our engagement party.

SAM: She's dressed to the nines.

DAN: She should be. We were an hour late to the party while I waited for her to just get dressed.

SAM: Uh-huh. "Just get dressed." *(Pause.)* Let me guess. That's the only suit you have?

DAN: Yes.

SAM: Off the rack.

DAN: Yes.

SAM: And you wear it for weddings, funerals, and iron smelting?

DAN: What's your point?

SAM: You don't know the first thing about women having to "just get dressed."

DAN: Okay. It's still a mystery.

SAM: Okay. You still need to read the book. I'll start my investigation today. Where can I reach you?



DAN: I'm staying at YMCA. It's all I can afford. *(Sighs.)*

SAM: Young man, there's no need to feel down. I said, young man. Pick yourself off the ground.

DAN: Um ... all right?

SAM: I'm just saying that it's fun to stay at the YMCA.