

A 100 WAYS TO LAUGH

Written by

Simon K. Parker

simonkyleparker@hotmail.co.uk
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INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

An open mic night. Sam, steps up to the microphone on a small stage. A spotlight shining down, lighting it up.

Sam is incredibly nervous, holding onto several flashcards.

He looks out at the small audience of comedy fans, sitting at tables with drinks.

Sam smacks his lips together, leaning into the microphone.

SAM

Hi. I'm Sam. And I guess here are
my jokes.

Silence from the audience. Sam looks down at his cards.

SAM (CONT'D)

So, my mother in law is a real, you
know. A real, you know what.

He's so nervous and sweating so badly it's hard for him to find the right words.

He flicks through his cards, but in the process he drops them onto the stage. He quickly bends down to gather them all up again only to crash his head against the microphone.

A couple in the audience laughs at him.

Sam gathers his flashcards up. He flips through them, reading his handwritten notes.

SAM (CONT'D)

So my mother in law is so
judgemental. She came over for
dinner the other night. I opened up
the fridge, put a bib on her and
said, go for it you fat pig.

Sam chuckles to himself. The audience is silent. Sam returns to his cards.

SAM (CONT'D)

I can't read my own writing. I'm
dyslexic. I write dyslexic and read
dyslexic but I'll never be able to
spell dyslexic.

He smiles in hope, nothing from the crowd. Sam sleepily turns and walks off stage.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - FRONT ROOM/ KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sam opens his front door, Alex is already on his sofa flicking through a magazine.

It's an open flat, the front room and kitchen in the same space.

Alex jumps up from the sofa, smiling as he sees Sam come in. Sam just has a look of confusion.

ALEX

So how did it go?

SAM

What are you doing in my flat?
Because the last time I checked I
live alone. And when I left this
afternoon the place was empty.

ALEX

I got myself a set of keys.

SAM

Oh, and that's not troubling at
all.

ALEX

I like to be able to check in on
you.

SAM

This is like the beginning of a
movie where I'm a single helpless
female and you're a crazy killer.

ALEX

You can have a set of keys to my
place.

SAM

No thanks.

Sam goes into the kitchen and fixes himself a drink.

ALEX

So how did it go?

SAM

I died up there. I mean I really
died up there. I did the whole
routine in the shower this morning.
I was perfect in the shower. So
what's missing? What's changed.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)

Is it the clothes? Should I be performing naked? With shampoo in my hair.

ALEX

No, you really need to be wearing clothes. They arrest people for being naked.

SAM

Why can I do it in the shower and not on stage?

ALEX

It's just nerves.

SAM

That was more than nerves, that was the most humiliating experience of my life.

ALEX

And you think doing it again but only this time naked would be less embarrassing.

SAM

Am I funny?

ALEX

You're hilarious. You've got to go back.

SAM

Will you listen to me, I died. You want me to die again. Even a cat only has nine lives. And I'm no cat.

ALEX

Well, I've got some good news for you.

SAM

You do.

ALEX

You're not going to believe who I bumped into tonight.

SAM

Who?

ALEX

Karen Owens. The top talent scout for the chuckle and scream agency.

SAM

Chuckle and scream? Sounds like a horror movie title from the 70's.

ALEX

Oh, you've never heard of them. MR I love all things comedy.

SAM

Who are they?

ALEX

She's only the agent for some of the biggest names in comedy. Every night after work she goes and gets a drink of wine in this real fancy wine bar.

SAM

And what were you doing in a wine bar?

ALEX

I've dated girls who smoke weed. Girls who drink beer. Vodka, whiskey. All ended in heartbreak. My heartbreak. I think I want a wine girl.

SAM

I think what you're after is a wine-o. I see them living under bridges and behind abandoned railway stations. I believe those are the women for you.

ALEX

You need to go and speak to this woman.

SAM

Let her see my act, I think that's all the impression she needs.

ALEX

She's a beautiful woman who holds the keys to your career.

SAM

My career.

ALEX
Will you just trust me?

SAM
Beautiful woman?

Alex nods.

ALEX
Beautiful woman. Just make some
jokes, let her see that you're
funny.

There's a knock at the front door. Sam gestures for Alex to
go on over.

SAM
You let yourself in, so you might
as well let whoever this is in too.

Alex goes over and opens the door. Kevin steps in, clearly an
older man in his early 60's he's dressed like he's only 15.

Kevin smiles at Sam.

KEVIN
Yo, Mr Rice.

Sam nods.

SAM
I told you to call me Sam.

Kevin comes over.

KEVIN
I've got a problem. And you always
said I could talk to you about my
problems.

Alex watches this exchange horrified.

SAM
What is it?

KEVIN
Tomorrow night, I've got a study
group coming over. But my mom and
dad, who suck said it can't happen
now. If I go to school tomorrow and
say it's off they'll hate me.

SAM
Just ask.

KEVIN

Can I use your place? Just a couple of hours. Just four of us. We've got a maths test we need to study for.

SAM

Alright.

KEVIN

Gee Mr Rice, you're the best.

SAM

I told you, call me Sam.

Kevin gives Sam a high five and rushes out of the flat. Alex, still stunned, slams the front door shut behind him.

ALEX

(to Sam)

And who the hell was that?

SAM

Nice kid, lives in the flat just above me.

ALEX

He's at least sixty.

SAM

He lives with his parents.

ALEX

Have you ever seen them, they've got to be well over a hundred.

SAM

Will you relax, he's in school.

ALEX

What is he, the teacher?

SAM

It's fine.

ALEX

I do not want you getting involved in some old man pretending to be a kid.

SAM

I like him.

ALEX
You're nuts.

SAM
Are you going to tell me about this
wine bar or not?

Alex suddenly perks up.

ALEX
Are you going to go?

Sam bobs his head from side to side as though he's weighing
up his options.

SAM
You need to tell me about it first.

EXT. WINE BAR - DAY

Alex and Sam meet up outside the fancy looking wine bar.
They both take it in turns to peer in through the window.

SAM
Very nice place.

ALEX
Great security too.

SAM
They have security?

ALEX
Top notch. Keep all the riff raff
out.

SAM
Then how did you get in?

ALEX
Very funny.

SAM
Well, are you going to tell me how
you got in or not?

ALEX
I climbed through the back.

SAM
Climbed or crawled.

ALEX

A little of both.

SAM

I'm not a climber and I'm certainly not a crawler.

ALEX

I'll get us in here no problem.

SAM

Well, them having security sounds like it might be a problem.

ALEX

All you need is confidence.

Alex peers in through the window.

SAM

You certainly don't lack that.

ALEX

Look those big ugly security guards in the eyes and say, hey, do you know who I am with right here. Sam Rice. The next big thing in international comedy.

SAM

Well I don't think...

Alex suddenly grabs onto Sam excited, cutting Sam off.

ALEX

Look, here's our chance. Lets go, lets go, lets go.

SAM

What's wrong?

ALEX

The bouncers are going out the back for a smoke break. Come on, it's now or never.

Alex basically gets Sam into a headlock and drags him into the wine bar.

INT. WINE BAR - DAY

Alex leads Sam over towards the bar. Both trying to be as low key as possible.

They spot Karen. She holds onto a glass of wine.
Alex and Sam find a spot close by and watch her.

ALEX

Right here's your chance. Just go
right up to her. Remember,
confidence is key.

SAM

And what do I even say to her?

Alex thinks this over for a few seconds.

ALEX

Just say, hi, I'm Sam, the funniest
man alive.

SAM

Suttle.

ALEX

Then make jokes. Insult her a
little, but do it so it's funny.

SAM

Wow, you really do know how to talk
to women. Women do love to be
insulted don't they, especially by
men they've never met before. Good
idea.

ALEX

You need an agent, and she's the
best in the business. You want to
be a professional comedian don't
you?

SAM

More than anything.

ALEX

And she is beautiful isn't she?

SAM

She is.

ALEX

Then seduce that beautiful woman
who can help your career.

SAM

Now I just feel dirty.

ALEX

You want to be a star, you've got to get dirty. Have you ever seen a pig roll around in its own mess before? That's Hollywood. Out in the desert, there is no water. Everyone is dirty.

Sam watches Karen peacefully drinking alone and playing on her phone

SAM

I don't want to disturb her.

ALEX

You're not disturbing her. You're just a nice guy offering to buy her a drink.

SAM

She's already got a drink.

ALEX

I've already thought of that. Just watch the master work. You need a wingman. I'll be your wingman. Just like top gun. You be Tom Cruise and I'll be the other guy.

SAM

Goose?

ALEX

Hawk.

SAM

I think the other guy was called goose.

ALEX

Well I don't want to be goose. All fat and stupid. I'll be hawk.

SAM

Alright then hawk, show me what you've got.

Alex nods, giving him a wink.

ALEX

Say no more.

SAM

Oh good lord, not the wink. I hate it when you give me that wink. You always end up doing something incredibly stupid after giving me that wink.

Alex now approaches Karen, staggering about, doing his best impression of somebody who's incredibly drunk.

Alex goes right up to Karen and slaps her glass of wine right out of her hand.

Alex then goes to speak to her, but before he has a chance two large bouncers rush over to him, lifting Alex up off the floor.

BOUNCER

Alright, you're out of here.

They carry Alex out towards the door. They pass by Sam.

SAM

I rest my case.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The two bouncers throw Alex into a pile of rubbish, head first.

They then return to the inside of the wine bar.

Alex slowly crawls his way out of the mess.

ALEX

(happy)

Nice and dirty, just like the stars.

INT. WINE BAR - DAY

Sam joins Karen at the bar, she's in a state of shock.

SAM

Hi, I saw what happened. Can I get you a replacement drink?

KAREN

Oh, I don't know if I should. Who the hell was that guy?

SAM

I think he was hoping to talk to you.

(mimes drinking)

Maybe a little too much Dutch courage. Never go full Dutch. Don't even speak it. Double Dutch, no one can understand you. Going Dutch on a first date, bad idea. Just avoid the Dutch all together I say.

She smiles coyly.

KAREN

Oh and what's so special about me?

SAM

Well, I don't like to gossip, but the talk around here is that you're some kind of big shot talent agent.

KAREN

Interesting, and you?

Sam gestures to himself.

SAM

Comedy.

KAREN

Oh, you do stand up?

SAM

I tried some tonight.

KAREN

And how did it go?

SAM

About as well as causing a car crash in rush hour traffic. Everyone is staring at you, they're trying to work out what's happening and slowly they're realising you're going to be the reason their whole day is ruined.

KAREN

And now you just happen to come up to a comedy agent?

SAM

What are the odds? So how about that drink?

KAREN

Sure.

EXT. WINE BAR - DAY

Sam has his arm linked with Karen, leads her towards a waiting taxi.

SAM

So?

KAREN

So?

SAM

Can I show you my stuff?

She gives him a slow look up and down.

KAREN

I usually don't look at a man's stuff until the second date.

SAM

I mean my stand up.

KAREN

Well I hope at your age it still stands up.

SAM

My comedy.

KAREN

Sure. You tell me where you're performing and I'll try and catch you.

SAM

The thing is. I perform better at my own place.

KAREN

Your own place. This isn't a lazy come on is it.

SAM

My place. You tell me when you're free.

KAREN

Tomorrow night.

SAM

Great.

He goes to kiss her. She raises a hand, presses a finger against her puckered lips.

KAREN

Just comedy.

She gets into the taxi and Sam closes her door shut for her. He smiles, feeling rather pleased with himself.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Sam and Alex enter, Sam kicks his front door shut behind him. He pushes Alex in the back with one hand, whilst pinching his nose with the other.

SAM

Come on, go into the shower.

Alex resists.

ALEX

No way, you still haven't told me everything that happened tonight.

SAM

There's nothing more to say, she's coming round here tomorrow night.

ALEX

But you're still going to have to perform.

SAM

I'll worry about that when she gets here. Now get in that bathroom, your stench is making my eyes water and the wallpaper peel.

ALEX

Can't I just shower at home. My shower is a little better.

Sam stops pushing, seems offended.

SAM

My shower is just fine.

ALEX

Fine might be good enough for you, but not for me.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I need better than fine. I need the best. And my shower is the best.

SAM

Hey, that's a good shower, I'll have you know I come up with all my best material in there.

ALEX

Yeah, yeah, I know, I know, but I'd much prefer my own.

Something hits Sam. Lost in his own thoughts. He turns away from Alex, deep in thought.

Alex watches him, suspicious.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Are you OK? Is it something that I said?

SAM

No. Something that I said.

ALEX

Well, are you going to share?

SAM

(laughing)

The shower, that's it. It's so simple.

ALEX

What is?

SAM

I could kiss you if you weren't so disgustingly dirty. I know exactly how I'm going to win this woman over.

ALEX

Romantically or career wise.

Sam gives Alex a wink. Then continues pushing him towards the bathroom. This time Alex doesn't put up any kind of resistance.

SAM

Both.

ALEX

Why can you wink but I can't. How is that fair?

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Kevin is making alcoholic drinks for a small crowd of school age kids. About twenty of them and they're all crowded in and around the front room.

Alex enters. He's shocked at seeing all these different kids.

Kevin sees Alex, quickly hiding the vodka bottle underneath the kitchen counter.

Alex marches over to him.

ALEX

And what the hell do you think you're doing?

KEVIN

Study group.

ALEX

Study group. You're like fifty years of age.

KEVIN

Hey, I've got a skin condition that ages me a little I'll admit but there's no need to get nasty.

ALEX

Skin condition. Does that skin condition affect your drivers licence as well, because I can almost guarantee that it'll have your date of birth starting with 1970 something.

KEVIN

Mr. Rice said I could use his place for a study group.

ALEX

Does he know you're here?

Kevin shrugs.

ALEX (CONT'D)

How did you even get in?

Kevin winks and gives Alex a knowing smirk.

KEVIN

Same way as you do.

Kevin then pulls out his very own set of front door keys.

ALEX
You copied my copy?

Kevin gives him another wink.

KEVIN
I copied your copy.

ALEX
Why does everyone get to wink but me.

He wags a finger in Kevin's face.

ALEX (CONT'D)
You need to leave.

KEVIN
Take it up with Mr rice.

ALEX
Oh believe me I will.

Alex storms out.

Kevin addresses the gathered kids.

KEVIN
Right. Who's trusty?

Kevin continues to pour out cups of vodka, the kids all rush forwards, grabbing onto the paper cups and drinking down what's inside.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Sam stands at the side of his shower, the water is running. Sam has a large white towel wrapped around his waist, except for that he's completely naked.

Alex calls in from outside the door.

ALEX
(O.S)
Sam, are you in there?

SAM
Yeah, come in.

ALEX

(O.S)

I hear water running. Are you in the shower?

SAM

Not yet, but I will be.

Alex opens the door to the bathroom. He storms in.

ALEX

You do realise you've got about fifty kids out there?

This is news to Sam, shocked.

SAM

What?

ALEX

That middle aged man has brought a class full of kids into your home.

SAM

Then you need to get rid of them.

ALEX

Me? Why me?

Same gestures to his 'outfit'.

SAM

I can't go out to a room full of kids like this. You need to get rid of them.

ALEX

You should never have befriended him in the first place.

SAM

He's a good kid.

ALEX

He's a fully grown man. He's older than us for god sake.

SAM

You're so judgemental. Just get rid of them for me. She's going to be here any minute.

ALEX

And when she does get here.

SAM

Make her stand outside the bathroom door. I'll perform in the shower like I always do. She'll hear me, fall in love with my wit and charm and boom.

ALEX

And boom?

Sam nods.

SAM

And boom.

ALEX

That's your plan.

The sound of the doorbell echoes out. Sam excitedly grabs a hold of Alex and pushes him out of the bathroom.

SAM

That's her. Go, go, go.

ALEX

This plan is insane.

SAM

I come up with my best stuff in the shower. She needs to hear my best stuff. So she's got to hear me in the shower. I don't see what's so crazy about that.

ALEX

Of course you don't see it, that's because you're crazy. But I'm sane, so I get to tell you that this is insane.

SAM

Just go. All those favours you owe me, well I'm cashing them in.

ALEX

Cashing them all in?

SAM

All of them.

Alex shakes his head but allows Sam to hurry him out of the bathroom.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - FRONT ROOM - DAY

The sound of the doorbell echoes out again. Alex enters the front room.

He sees the children stagger about, acting drunk. Kevin is pouring out more booze.

Alex sees this and is at a loss.

ALEX

Oh my god.

Alex watches as Kevin fills more paper cups with the bottle of vodka.

Alex rushes over, Kevin pours some of the vodka into a cup. A child attempts to take it. Alex snatches it from him.

KID

Hey, that's mine.

The kid tries to take the paper cup back from Alex.

ALEX

No.

KID

Give me my cup.

Alex drinks the vodka inside the cup, then hands the empty cup down to the kid.

ALEX

Here.

The kid starts crying.

Alex grabs a hold of Kevin.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

KEVIN

Me? You're ruining my study group.

ALEX

You're giving booze to children.

KEVIN

It's a study group. We all need to unwind. School is six hours a day five days a week. Do you know what six times five is?

ALEX

Do you?

KEVIN

Like seventy.

ALEX

Not even close.

KEVIN

Seventy hours a week dog.

ALEX

It's not seventy.

KEVIN

We kids need to unwind.

ALEX

You should be in prison.

Kevin tries to pour out more drinks for the waiting kids. Only for Alex to snatch the paper cup and drink all the vodka left.

The doorbell rings again.

Alex is now drunk.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Right. All you kids. Go home.
Before, before, before, you're all
in big, big, big trouble.

Alex sees each of the kids holding onto one of those paper cups.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You've given them all something to
drink.

KEVIN

We're trying to relax.

Alex rushes around the room, snatching the paper cups from each of the kids, drinking what's inside. Downing each and every paper cup. Making sure they're all empty.

The doorbell rings again.

Kevin looks at all the empty paper cups scattered on the floor. Shakes his head, depressed.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
You've ruined my study night.

Alex goes to the front door, opening it up he yells at the kids.

ALEX
All of you out.

On the other side of the door is Karen. Alex is now really feeling the effects of the vodka.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(to Karen)
Yeah? What do you want?

Karen is shocked.

KAREN
It's you.

ALEX
Me?

KAREN
From the bar the other night.

ALEX
Oh yeah. Are you coming in or not?

She peers in and sees the room full of kids. Then comes back to a very drunk Alex.

KAREN
Have I got to the right place? I'm looking for Sam?

ALEX
(shouting)
Sam! Sam! Sam!

Sam now appears in the front room. Dripping wet from the shower and holding the towel tightly around his waist.

He looks at Alex, furious.

SAM
I told you to bring her to the shower.

ALEX
Well excuse me.

SAM
Are you drunk?

ALEX
Yes.

Sam turns to Karen.

SAM
(pleading)
I wanted you to hear me in the
shower. Will you come?

KAREN
Who are all these children?

SAM
They're not mine.

KAREN
(points at Alex)
And him.

Sam shrugs.

ALEX
(to Karen)
For your information lady, I have
keys to this place.

Karen's scared. Forces a smile.

KAREN
I've got to go.

She turns on her heels and makes a run for it. Watching her
go Alex slams the front door closed behind her.

ALEX
Well. You tried.

Alex let out a long deep breath, looking around the front
room.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Yeah, but I can kind of see why she
was freaked out though.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Sam's in the shower. Washing his hair.

SAM

So what's the deal with toasters?
Like, you never see them being used
in suicides anymore. When I was
growing up, everyone took the
toaster in the bath with them if
they wanted to kill themselves. Now
it's just boring old rope, or
pills.

Sam comes to a stop. He turns off the water. Sticks his head
out of the shower.

SAM (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Is any of this sounding funny?

Kevin calls back to him from the other side of the closed
bathroom door.

KEVIN

(O.S)

Sorry MR Rice.

Sam grabs his towel and steps out.

SAM

Damn it, I really thought the
shower was going to make the
difference.

KEVIN

(O.S)

You're funny MR Rice. You've just
got to find your thing.

SAM

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm getting
advice from kids now.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Drunk, Alex is passed out on the sofa. Sam, now dressed,
stands over Alex with Kevin beside him.

KEVIN

So what do you want to do about
him?

SAM

Leave him.

KEVIN

If you want I could give you a hand
throwing him outside?

SAM

That's very sweet of you to ask,
but I think we best leave him.

KEVIN

And the girl?

SAM

I think I've traumatised her enough
for one evening.

A beat.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about your study group.

Kevin shrugs.

KEVIN

There's always tomorrow.

Sam nods.

SAM

Yeah, that's a great point.

KEVIN

Are you feeling a little bit better
now?

Sam thinks about this, weighing up how he actually feels in
his head. Turns back to Kevin.

SAM

Got anymore booze.

Kevin removes a small bottle of vodka from his back pocket.
Holding it out for Sam with a smile.

Sam happily takes it.

SAM (CONT'D)

You kids today, you grow up so
fast.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END