

Exit Pursued by a Bear

By

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EXTRACT

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(Cley is doing some physical warm-up exercises. Sam is fixing a curtain. Fiona enters.)

Fiona: Right. Everyone here? Ready? *(pause)* I said is everyone –

Sam: I heard you. I'm still trying to get the curtain back up ... The curtain? The one that fell down when you and Cley decided it would be good for Hamlet to climb up it and look down?

(Cley starts doing increasingly loud voice warm-ups.)

Fiona: Cley? Cley!

Cley: What? I'm busy.

Fiona: Meeting. Now.

(Cley and Sam gather round.)

Fiona: Right. Things we need. Item one. A bear.

Sam/Cley: A bear?

Sam: You must be reading it wrong.

Fiona: Nope. It's on my list. See? (*shows list*)

Cley: But what if it upstages – I'm not being upstaged by a bear! The audience is supposed to be concentrating on the actors. The *human* actors. And in particular the pro – pro -ta- go - nist.

Sam: Who in this case just happens to be you, we know.

Cley: Are you absolutely one hundred percent certain that 'a bear' is in the script?

Fiona: Haven't you read it?

Cley: Only my lines. And certainly no stage directions. Efficiency, Fi.

Fiona: It's in the script. Look. (*shows script to Cley*)

Cley (*reads*): "Exit pursued by a bear."

Sam: Oh well done.

Cley: Exit. Pursued by a bear. Pursued. (*pause*) But who -? (*pause*) Is that me who's being pursued by the bear, then? The king. I could do that exiting being pursued rather well. (*enacts being pursued by a bear*) Don't you think?

Fiona: No, Cley, it's not you.

Cley: No? Why not?

Fiona: It's - (*checks*) It's – Someone called Antigonus.

Sam: Auntie who?

Fiona (*sighs*): So. Ideas for sourcing the bear. (*long pause*) Animal Rescue, I think. You can go there tomorrow, Sam.

Cley: Just imagine a poor unwanted bear, being dumped by some callous person who just got the bear to show off at parties and didn't think the implications through. Poor, poor bear. (*pause*) Fi - Look, I can see the dramatic potential here, but what if the bear steals the show? When people are actually coming to see – well – I don't like to be immodest, but -