

**"DRESS BLUES"**

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**A Ten-Minute Play**

**by**

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## DRESS BLUES

### Cast of Characters

- CHRISTOPHER:** Age 30's A gay, chic and charming owner of a high-end women's designer clothing shop on Newbury Street in Boston.
- MRS. SIMMONS:** Age: 50's A very rich and slightly overweight, high-society lady who spends much of her time and money trying to keep her roving-eyed husband from running off with some young intern.
- NICHOLAS:** Age 30's CHRISTOPHER'S more flamboyantly gay partner. He has a cutting wit which gets him into trouble sometimes. He also has a caring side which is less often seen.

**DRESS BLUES**

**SETTING:** THE PEAK OF CHIC BOUTIQUE: A dress shop on Boston's Newbury Street.

**TIME:** Friday, August 30, 2019. 5 P.M.

**AT RISE:** *CHRISTOPHER is on the phone*

**CHRISTOPHER**

No, thank **you**, Mrs. Banks. And again, if you decide on that little knit number, just ring me up. I will send it right over. Okay then...have a wonderful holiday weekend! Bye-bye.

*(HE crosses to stage-left calling off-stage to the unseen the dressing room)*

And how are you doing in there Mrs. Simmons?

*(HE takes a deep breath)*

How's that Gaultier working out? Mrs. Simmons? Mrs. Simmons. Are you all right in there?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

*(From off-stage)*

Oh Christopher, I just don't know.

**CHRISTOPHER**

Can I help? Can I see? Mrs. Simmons? What's the problem?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Everything. I just don't think it suits me properly.

**CHRISTOPHER**

That is exactly what you said about the first twenty-eight dresses you tried on today. They can't all not suit you! Now, come out of there and let me see.

*(MRS. SIMMONS enters wearing an age-inappropriate, ill-fitting, blue dress and moves onto a small platform in front of an imaginary three-way mirror. CHRISTOPHER is shocked at the sight of HER, and before HE can stop himself, HE shudders)*

Ugh! Oh my!

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Oh, I know. It's just awful...isn't it?!?

**CHRISTOPHER**

Oh! No, no, no...it's not awful. No, you misread me. No...it is...what? It is stunning! Really! Simply stunning.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Really? And the fit?

**CHRISTOPHER**

The fit!?! As if it were cut and sewn for you. It is so you! Yes! In fact, it is screaming your name. Mrs. Simmons... Mrs. Simmons...buy me! Buy me!

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Ohhhhh....I'm just not sure.

**CHRISTOPHER**

Well, I'm completely sure. Never have I been so sure! Mrs. Simmons, have I ever led you astray? And I never would...

*(NICHOLAS enters flamboyantly not seeing MRS. SIMMONS)*

**NICHOLAS**

Lucy, I'm home! Let's go! I hear 495's a mess all the way...

*(HE sees MRS. SIMMONS)*

...to Hyannis. Oh, I didn't realize you had a customer...and so close to closing time on the last Friday of the last weekend of the summer.

*(Now HE really sees HER in the dress)*

Whoa!!! Uh-oh! I think we all know that's not working!

**MRS. SIMMONS**

What did he say?

**CHRISTOPHER**

Nothing. Nicholas! Behave! Mrs. Simmons, this is our newest sales associate.

**NICHOLAS**

Sales associate?!? Who are you calling a...?

**CHRISTOPHER**

This is Mrs. Simmons...one of our most loyal customers! And I was just telling her how fantastic she looks in this dress.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

But I'm not so sure.

**NICHOLAS**

I can understand that.

**CHRISTOPHER**

And so, we are at a stand-off, you see. And you Nicholas, are the deciding vote. So...what do you think?

**NICHOLAS**

Well, do *we* have it in her size?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

What!?!?

**CHRISTOPHER**

Ha! Ha! What a joker that Nicholas is. Such a kidder.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

That was a joke? So why am I not laughing?

**NICHOLAS**

No, I'm sorry. I was joking. Chris, are we near ready?

**CHRISTOPHER**

I've just got to do the closing paper work and...

**NICHOLAS**

Well, off you go. As your new sales associate...I can certainly service Mrs. Simmons...

**CHRISTOPHER**

May I leave you in the capable hands of Nicholas?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Well, I really prefer working with you...

**CHRISTOPHER**

I will be right in the back if you need me.

*(SHE stares at the mirror as CHRISTOPHER exits)*

**MRS. SIMMONS**

I don't know. I had one like this...years ago...in fuchsia.

**NICHOLAS**

Really?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

The fuchsia one was even skimpier... even more bare. But back then, I had a different body type. I was younger back then..

**NICHOLAS**

Well then, we clearly can't go back to the fuchsia.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

I don't even know where I'd wear this dress.

**NICHOLAS**

Oh, so many places. It's so versatile. From day into night... and back into day...if necessary.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

And tell me again...what do you call this color?

**NICHOLAS**

Blue.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

No, no. He called it something else. That other boy who was helping me... what's his name?

**NICHOLAS**

Christopher! And he is *not* a boy. He owns this joint!

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Yes, Christopher. Could you ask him to come out?

**NICHOLAS**

Oh, no, I'm afraid he is tied up right now.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

But he has another name for it.

**NICHOLAS**

Another name for what?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

For this color! This extraordinary color that you just so carelessly called "blue".

**NICHOLAS**

The problem is... he's doing some closing paperwork... and we've got a two-hour drive ahead of us and we...

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Paperwork!? Young man, you do realize that I am a customer.

**NICHOLAS**

Yes! The price tags dangling from the garment gave it away.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

And as a customer... I am demanding that he tear himself away from his paperwork. I want to know the name of this color.

*(Pause)*

Young man, do you know who I am!?!

**NICHOLAS**

Yes, you are Mrs. Simpson.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Simmons! Do you know how much money I have spent...

*(CHRISTOPHER enters)*

**CHRISTOPHER**

WHOA! What's going on here? What seems to be the problem?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Oh, Christopher! Thank God you've come back! The problem is...your newest sales clerk just called this.. "blue".

**CHRISTOPHER**

He didn't!?!

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Yes, he did! Can you imagine that?

**CHRISTOPHER**

No! But I'm sure he didn't mean...

**NICHOLAS**

Oh yes, he did.

**CHRISTOPHER**

Nicholas! Here, at The Peak of Chic Boutique, we call this magnificent shade... "Cerulean Blue".

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Yes! That's it! "Cerulean Blue"!

**NICHOLAS**

Cerulean Blue. I'm sorry. I won't forget in the future.

**CHRISTOPHER**

Okay, thank you. So, are we good here now?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Yes, go do your paperwork. We are nearly finished here.

**CHRISTOPHER**

*(As he exits)*

Okay, thank you. Call me if you need me. Okay? Thank you.

**NICHOLAS**

So, what do you think? Are you going to take the dress?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

It is pretty. But I don't know. Where does it come from?

**NICHOLAS**

Paris. All of the garments in this shop come from Paris.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

No, I meant... where does the name "cerulean" come from?

**NICHOLAS**

CHRISTOPHER!?!?

*(CHRISTOPHER enters)*

Mrs. Simpson...

**CHRISTOPHER**

Simmons!!!

**NICHOLAS**

Mrs. *SIMMONS* would like to know Cerulean's etymology. Its origins. Where does the word come from!?!?

**CHRISTOPHER**

Oh! I believe is from the Latin word caeruleus, meaning a "dark blue...almost a midnight blue-green", which in turn derives from "caerulum", the diminutive of caelum, meaning "heavenly sky".



**MRS. SIMMONS**

Well, it is a pretty color. Okay then, thank you. You can go and finish your paperwork. We'll manage here.

**CHRISTOPHER**

Very well then.

*(CHRISTOPHER exits)*

**NICHOLAS**

It is a great color for you. It brings out your eyes.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Yes, but I was really looking for more of a Gentian blue!

**NICHOLAS**

Bummer.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

But...you think this brings out my eyes? Ugh! Even so... I don't think I ought to buy it.

**NICHOLAS**

But why not? It's perfect.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

It's just with all of the distress in the world...ISIS... the border...Trump. I mean what a mess the world is in.

**NICHOLAS**

Yes, but we can't just stop living our lives. I mean we have to go on! We must go on and buy things...things that meet our fancy...things that bring out the Cerulean in our eyes! Otherwise... ISIS has won.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Well, maybe so...but what if Stephen doesn't like me in it?

**NICHOLAS**

Stephen? Who is Stephen?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Mr. Simmons. My husband. What if he doesn't like me in it?

**NICHOLAS**

Why wouldn't he? Do you really think he won't...?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

There's no predicting what Mr. Simmons may or may not like. It is most likely he won't even notice what I'm wearing.

**NICHOLAS**

How is that possible?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

On the rare occasion when he does notice me... he rarely approves. But mostly, he looks right through me. At times, I think I'm invisible. And it is only getting worse. So, no, I won't buy it today...but I will think about it.

**NICHOLAS**

Okay. Do you want us to hold it for you?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

No, that's all right. You needn't hold it.

**NICHOLAS**

But what if you decide you do want it and it's gone...?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

No, I'm not really going to think about it.

*(SHE begins to cry)*

I just said I was going to think about it, so you didn't think it was your poor salesmanship that lost the sale.

**NICHOLAS**

Oh my God! Mrs. Simmons! Are you crying? Why are you crying? Was it my poor salesmanship?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

No, no, Not at all. Look, I am a fifty-two-year-old woman.

**NICHOLAS**

So, what!?! Fifty-two is the new... forty-nine!

**MRS. SIMMONS**

No, I've got to start facing the facts. I'm no kid any more. I've got a disinterested husband with a roving eye who works in an office crawling with young, sexy, Millennials, all looking to fast-track their careers! But look...he's going to do what he's going to do. I can't stop that. I just don't want to lose his...

**NICHOLAS**

Love? Admiration? Respect?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Ha! Those were lost years ago. Today I'd settle for an occasional kind remark. A caring glance at the breakfast table. A hug as he heads off to work.

**NICHOLAS**

Oh dear Mrs. Simmons...

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Look...I realize time and gravity are working against me. And so... despite it all...or maybe because of it all...I really must try to make myself look as young and as attractive as I possibly can... regardless of how foolish it may make me feel in the process!

**NICHOLAS**

But in the process, you can't lose who you are. At some point you have to stand up for yourself. You know... "I am what I am" kind of thinking.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Easier said than done.

**NICHOLAS**

And most importantly, you are going to have to say, "Hey Stephen, you are damned lucky to have me, you rat, and I deserve better!"

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Young man...Nicholas... I do appreciate your concern... I really do...but I'm afraid you couldn't possibly understand what...

**NICHOLAS**

No, I do understand. I spent every day of my youth trying to disguise who I was in order to be accepted. I too dressed in clothes that I didn't belong in. I too said words that should have never come from this mouth. But then one day, I realized...I was not living *my* life. I didn't like this fictional character I'd created. I finally decided to be me. To wear what I felt good in. To say what was on my mind. And it was hard. And some friends walked away.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

And now?

**NICHOLAS**

And now... today, I have no regrets. I'm glad to be who I am.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

That's wonderful.

**NICHOLAS**

And if you'd give it a chance, you'd be happy to be you.  
And if your husband can't accept it...then it is his  
problem...not yours.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

You're very wise. Let me think on it. No...let me work on it.  
I hope to get there...eventually.

**NICHOLAS**

You will! I know you will!

**MRS. SIMMONS**

But as far as the dress goes...

**NICHOLAS**

Hey, you gave it your best shot. If it's not working...let it  
go. There will be others.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

I so want to believe that that's true.

**NICHOLAS**

Come here, Give me a hug.

**MRS. SIMMONS**

Aww...you are such a sweet boy.

*(CHRISTOPHER enters and sees THEM hugging)*

**CHRISTOPHER**

Whoa! How are we doing here?

**MRS. SIMMONS**

We are doing just fine, Christopher.

**NICHOLAS**

Yeah, Christopher...we're good.

**(BLACKOUT)**

**(END OF PLAY)**