

synopsis & dialogue sample for

Trophy Wife

an extramarital affair

by

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A DARK SCREWBALL ABOUT ALTARS AND EGOS.

Ingredients:

Take 3 ladies (stirred); add 2 gentlemen (shaken); pour into a single sleek sitting room set; and garnish with clothes as stylish as you can stand. Sip carefully.

Trophy Wife is an update of the sparkling comedies of the 1930s that lampoons modern divorce and old-fashioned romance. It's the story of a madcap heiress torn between the love she hates and the security she covets.

Kate knows that she was born to be a world-class trophy wife... her quarry: married men. Because any man who's single must have something wrong with him. She needs stability and divorce is the one thing you can count on. Her terminally chic aunt has coached her and groomed her and unleashed her on an unsuspecting Manhattan. No marriage is safe, no man immune.

No fool Kitty! Determined to make her way in the world, Kate has booked a church and bought the dress, and gone hunting for a society groom who needs a divorce. Time is running out: her aunt has a lunch date with cancer and the trust fund is dwindling. Kate's just a few steps from being alone in the world.

What happens when she meets the perfect guy for her, only to find out he's (*god forbid!*) a bachelor? No dice. If she wants to get in touch with her inner golddigger, she needs to break up a social register marriage. Kate knows better than to sacrifice her home-wrecking career for something as stupid as love.

To win her, Mr. Right might have to marry elsewhere to give her the divorce she craves. And even if he claims his prize, will she just dump him once she's taken him for everything he's got?

Trophy Wife is a social-climbing comedy about playing for keeps, winning the game, and losing your mind: a contemporary screwball about committing your loved ones to the institution of marriage.

Characters

Kate: The Bride-to-be. (aka Kitty) Golden and calculating. A trust fundee at wit's end who reads the social register like the Koran. Winning, not whiny. 24.

Peter: The Bachelor. An emotional piñata that Kate's hit too hard. "Right ring, wrong guy." An extremely eligible young-urban-psychopath with an obsessive fantasy life. 30's.

Dinah: The Roommate. A chemically-enhanced painter with an accidental career and a scratch-and-sniff love life. Everyone's designated drinker. Late 20's.

Oodge: The Aunt. A Social X-ray. Terminally chic. Believes martini olives count as a vegetable. Chainsmokes perfumed cigarillos. Has a lunch date with cancer in July. Late 60's.

Tigger: The Houseboy. A sociopathic stray with a glossy coat. Catch-your-breath handsome. A kinky Samaritan with a knack for other people's messes. Late Teens - Early 20's.

Place: A sleek Deco apartment on the Upper East Side of Manhattan designed within an inch of its wife. Glossy surfaces and exquisite indirect lighting. A gleaming trap for the unwary married man.

Time: Valentine's Day to a June Wedding. As long as it takes to find a husband who can afford to keep Kate. Over the few months that her trust fund will last.

SCENE 1: Lights up on an agitated & pacing **PETER**. Offstage, a girl hums "Sailor Beware" (Whiting/Robin 1935). **HE** checks the ring. **KATE** enters: a golden cloud looking for a sky in which to hang herself. **PETER** kneels.

PETER

Will you marry me, Kate?

KATE springs to her feet & steps on him.

Owwww! Oh God, that really hurt. Oww.

KATE

Kitty sorry. Ow. I heard a crunch. Ow. What are you doing down there? Are you all right?

PETER

It doesn't matter. I have another one. You didn't answer my question.

KATE

Peter. We just met. I'm not just some tramp, some slit, some harlot who'll elope to Atlantic City and take vows in a Howard Johnson's with fried clams on toothpicks and a Cuban waitress playing the bridal march on a lute. Just because I'm naïve doesn't mean I don't know that I'm naive. Marriage is very important to me. Now especially. If we were to get married there would be caterers, fittings, bribes. So if you want to reconsider asking what you just asked, go ahead and reconsider cause Kitty is not some fried clam floozy.

PETER

Whatsay we tie the knot and run to Kennedy and charter a plane to Katmandu? Or just get married right on the plane!

KATE

It would cost you a fortune.

PETER

So? I have money.

KATE

Good answer. What is that? What is this?

PETER

A ring. The ring. Her ring.

KATE

Whose ring?

PETER

Your ring. I always carry it just in case and I couldn't be certainer. You're the one. It's you.

KATE

Who? Stop. Who? Before we go further, I mean. Oh! Peter! There's so much of it. And that's an 18th century platinum claw mounting with tapered-baguettes and a channel set band.

PETER

Think hard. Will you? We could be Asia-bound in under an hour.

KATE

It's the most exquisite ring I've ever seen, Petey-pete. How are you going to break the news to your wife?

PETER

I just did. I'm waiting for an answer.

KATE

She'll want a settlement.

PETER

Who?

KATE

Your wife.

PETER

That's you. Say yes. I've been making lots of money for you to spend.

KATE

Me? Me! Where's your wifey-wife? Aren't you married now?

PETER

Not yet. Confirmed bachelor. Singularly single. Legibly eligible.

KATE

Are you sure? I don't believe you. Don't move. Are you teasing?

PETER

Does this mean you will? I'll call for a car to Kennedy.

KATE

But you're wearing a wedding band.

PETER

It's my brother's. Was my brother's. He died. I wear it to sorta ward off evil spirits. Ohhhhh. You thought that I- Ohhhhhhhhh, God, I'm sorry, I should have said.

KATE

You had a band so I thought-

KATE is pulling HERSELF together.

PETER

I promise. I'm not married. How could I propose to you if I was married? Kate?

KATE

I need to think.

PETER

If I were married would we have done this?

KATE

Done what? What have we done?

PETER

Rumba at the Rainbow room. Rosalind Russell retrospective.

KATE

Right. Silly Kitty. You're not married. Fa-la.

PETER

You make me laugh. Your movie idea was terrific.

KATE

It was your idea. You have to be at work pretty soon.

PETER

Whenever. Don't worry. You haven't answered my question.

KATE

Maybe Kitty should lie down. I had a really nice time tonight.

PETER

I'm still having a nice time. I'm not trying to push you but-

KATE

Kitty's sleepy. Kitty needs a nap. Kitty had a nice time.

KATE hunts for his things.

PETER

Umm. Okay. Right. Sure. I guess. I left. I lost my trench-coat somewhere over. There. And my other loafer.

KATE

Just pull yourself together.

PETER

I had a spectacular time tonight. The movie. Plans. Everything.

PETER kisses HER tentatively.

KATE

Kitty ditto. Kitty kitty!

PETER

God, you make me crazy! You wanna have dinner tomorrow night?

KATE.

Kitty no know. I think I'm having dinner with Dinah.

PETER

How 'bout brunch? In say five hours? I'll come back.

KATE

Kitty's brunching with Aunt Oodge. Call me. Or I'll call you.

PETER

I mean it. My whole life, I've been seeing you arrive alone at cafes or trying on gloves, sometimes stepping off a train eating a pear. Smiling goodbye to someone else's children. With your arm stretched out to hail a cab, crying. People turned to watch you with me. And I've always wondered where you were going. Don't go running off before I come back, okay?

KATE

I'll try.

KATE walks HIM to the door.

PETER

What about my shoe? I lost it near the chaise.

KATE

Sweet dreams. Oh. You forgot this. It's raining. Nighty-bye.

KATE hands HIM his umbrella & closes the door on HIM there disheveled & stunned. SHE curls up on the couch, pulls the phone to her, dials & yowls into it.

KATE

Oodge? Oodge. Miserable. Not fair. No! Of course he proposed. Yes. It would've been a beautiful divorce. Guess! Worse. No: he isn't married. A bachelor. Could you die? He wanted to practice on me. I am insulted! Does Kitty look like a first wife? I refuse to be devoted and dumpy and divorceable! Kitty does the divorcing! Kitty is flashy and clever and thin! What does he take me for? He was single!?! Goddammit.

LIGHTS DOWN.

SCENE 2: OODGE sitting in warm light: a chic suited lady in her late 60s, smoking furiously. DINAH painting & drinking.

DINAH

Puking is easy. Just whoosh and you're getting reacquainted with someone you just met.

OODGE

I can't stop, though. I'm seasick *in perpetua*.

DINAH

We can take a break if you need.

OODGE

No, no. I'm not getting any better than this.

DINAH

And we're lucky to have this light.

OODGE

Darling, I have this dream that I'm a buffet: Caterers are walking around with little silver trays with all my biopsies on *petit four*. And the smart set nibbling on my lungs and my kidneys and my uterus talking through clenched teeth. Oh! Oh dear. Here it comes.

OODGE heads quickly for the bathroom.