



# DRY POWDER

BY SARAH BURGESS



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.



DRY POWDER  
Copyright © 2016, Sarah Burgess

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of DRY POWDER is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for DRY POWDER are controlled exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, LLC, 11 Madison Avenue, 18th floor, New York, NY 10010. Attn: Scott Chaloff.

**SPECIAL NOTE**

Anyone receiving permission to produce DRY POWDER is required to give credit to the Author as sole and exclusive Author of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the "Additional Billing" section of production licenses. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

**SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS AND RECORDINGS**

Dramatists Play Service, Inc. neither holds the rights to nor grants permission to use any songs or recordings mentioned in the Play. Permission for performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in this Play is not included in our license agreement. The permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained for any such use. For any songs and/or recordings mentioned in the Play, other songs, arrangements, or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

DRY POWDER was originally produced in New York City by the Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director). It was directed by Thomas Kail, the scenic design was by Rachel Hauck, the costume design was by Clint Ramos, the lighting design was by Jason Lyons, and the original music and sound design were by Lindsay Jones. The cast was as follows:

RICK ..... Hank Azaria  
JENNY ..... Claire Danes  
SETH ..... John Krasinski  
JEFF SCHRADER ..... Sanjit De Silva

## CHARACTERS

RICK

45–60. Founder and President,  
KMM Capital Management.

JENNY

30–40. Managing Director,  
KMM Capital Management.

SETH

is exactly Jenny's age. Managing Director,  
KMM Capital Management.

JEFF SCHRADER

35–45. CEO,  
Landmark Luggage.

## NOTES

### Language

/ indicates where the next actor should begin speaking.

> indicates that the actor speaking should continue without stopping for or reacting to the next actor's lines.

### Performance

Disregard the notion that most American private equity people and most American CEOs are Caucasian. It is my strong preference that these four characters be played by actors of any race or ethnicity.

Seth, Rick, and Jenny process information very quickly. Let them interact at a fast pace.

Audience members who aren't well versed in the language of private equity should feel like they have been dropped into a world they don't fully understand. A quick pace will help to establish that feeling. In fact, a slow pace could cause an audience to feel as though they are supposed to comprehend all of the finance terminology, when that is not necessary, nor is it my intention.

Regarding Jenny's apologies: For Jenny, "I apologize" is not a sincere statement of apology. It's instead a phrase she has learned to say by observing the interactions of other people. In her mind, it's a cost-free way to negate bad feeling toward her and move the conversation to a more productive state. She likely says it the same way every time and without emotion.

# DRY POWDER

## 1

*Friday.  
KMM Capital Management. Midtown Manhattan.  
Rick reads something on his phone.  
Jenny enters Rick's office.*

JENNY. You wanted to see me?

RICK. Yes.

JENNY. Is this about Landmark Luggage? I saw you stop into Seth's meeting. I have some thoughts on that.

RICK. Are you speaking to a finance class at NYU?

JENNY. Oh. Yes. In two weeks.

RICK. Why are you speaking to a finance class at NYU?

JENNY. Remember that consultant we brought in on American Saddle? Baljeet Nair? Orthopedic shoe, skin issues.

RICK. No.

JENNY. He teaches finance undergrads at NYU now. He asked me to come in and speak to them.

RICK. About what?

JENNY. He said to talk about whatever I want.

RICK. You will not say whatever you want.

JENNY. Why not?

RICK. What are you planning to say?

JENNY. I only have a rough draft at this stage.

RICK. Let me hear it please.

JENNY. What?

RICK. Please let me hear what you're going to say to a roomful of college kids with video recording devices while I am getting eviscerated daily because of this goddamn layoff announcement.

JENNY. Oh. Wait are you serious?

RICK. Yes Jenny.

JENNY. Why would we do that with our time?

RICK. Because they're going after our LPs now—that's all our investors.

JENNY. Of course they're protesting, that's what unemployed people do.

RICK. Well they're doing it outside the Beckwith office today. Howard just had his coffee slapped out of his hand.

JENNY. They're just a bunch of socialists and whack jobs.

RICK. The media isn't portraying them as whack jobs.

JENNY. Of course not.

RICK. The media is portraying me as an unprecedented asshole.

JENNY. But who takes the *New York Times* seriously?

RICK. The Earth. The entire Earth.

JENNY. I meant: who in our world.

RICK. They were outside the Snyder office too. Did you know that? Gene's car got surrounded.

JENNY. Is he okay?

RICK. I talked to Gene, he's fine. It's very clever, harassing our LPs like this—they're going right after our money. It's a good thing the Gjertsons are based in Oslo.

JENNY. Our past two funds were top quartile. Legitimately top quartile. Our LPs aren't going to abandon us because some jealous reporters made fun of your party elephants.

RICK. Elephant. There was one elephant.

JENNY. Thought I saw two.

RICK. Why does everyone think there were two?

JENNY. Were there mirrors in the ballroom?

RICK. Fucking elephant. I should've talked her out of it. She had to have an engagement party that tied thematically to the wedding.

JENNY. There'll be elephants at your wedding?

RICK. No just because it's in Bali.

JENNY. There are elephants in Bali?

RICK. Yes Jenny. I have a home there. I engage in philanthropy there.

JENNY. Okay.

RICK. I should have cancelled the goddamn party.

JENNY. Yeah. Successful people don't deserve engagement parties. We should all just move to caves.

RICK. It is painfully obvious that you don't understand how serious this is.

JENNY. No, I understand. I'm sure the protests are annoying our LPs, and I'm sure the *Times* article was upsetting for Katie.

RICK. Yes.

JENNY. But you've worked seventy hours a week for thirty years. You've earned every cent of your wealth. You're allowed to have any kind of party you want.

RICK. That's not the issue, Jenny. The issue was having the party on the exact day of the layoff announcement.

JENNY. The layoffs were inevitable. It's not your fault ShopGreat allowed itself to be commandeered by unions.

RICK. That is also not the issue. This is about timing and perception. And boy, do you not have talent in either of those areas.

JENNY. It's not a lack of talent. It's being rational. I don't waste time trying to prevent outcomes I can't change.

RICK. I could have changed the outcome.

JENNY. How?

RICK. I could have listened to Seth. He told me to cancel the party. But you advised me not to. Which is hilarious, because you don't even enjoy parties.

JENNY. Sure I do.

RICK. No you don't.

JENNY. It was very fun.

RICK. I don't want to hear any more about the party.

JENNY. I apologize.

RICK. And on top of this unbelievable nightmare, Xu Wei called again.

JENNY. He did?

RICK. Wanted us to fly to Hong Kong. Can you imagine if that got out in the press?

JENNY. How much?

RICK. He wanted to commit fifty-five million. I told him the fund's closed.

JENNY. I mean fifty-five million's / fifty-five million.

RICK. I said Wei, do not call here again. You are an international joke. And particularly right now, I do not need to be doing business with a corrupt asshole like you.

JENNY. Oh, wow, you said that?

RICK. I wasn't quite that polite.



JENNY. Was he upset?

RICK. I don't want him calling anymore.

JENNY. I heard Lakeshire's taking a commitment from him.

RICK. Of course they are. They're classless. Everyone knows where his money comes from.

JENNY. Can we talk about Landmark Luggage? What's the price?

RICK. We will talk about that later.

JENNY. I bet it's seven hundred million at least. I had one of my analysts take one of Seth's analysts out for bibimbap so he could pump him for data on Landmark's assets. Did you know Landmark owns a jet and a huge building in downtown Sacramento?

RICK. So it'll be easier to raise debt.

JENNY. Okay but even if it's highly leveraged, I'm not seeing this as worthwhile.

RICK. It looks like an intriguing opportunity. You know how good Seth is at finding unique deals.

JENNY. I don't know that that's how I'd put it.

RICK. Oh you don't? How about this? When it comes to bringing me targets, he's about a thousand times more effective than you are. Now tell me what you're going to say at NYU.

JENNY. My notes are in my office.

RICK. Then go get them.

*She goes.*

*Rick dials someone on his phone.*

*(On phone.)* Sam did you hear back from the *Times*?

...

Did you not tell me yesterday that you had contacts there?

...

I don't care, do your job.

*He hangs up. Jenny returns.*

JENNY. You want just bullet points or...

RICK. I want you to read the whole thing.

JENNY. It's not a cohesive unit yet.

RICK. Just read it.

JENNY. Okay. So. Out there, that's the class. You're like one of the students. Okay.

*She reads from her notes.*

I want to first extend a thank-you to Professor Nair for having me

come talk to you guys today. So great to see your shining faces. Professor Nair says this class is mostly seniors. That means this May you enter the real world.

(*To Rick.*) And then I'll say something like welcoming them to the real world.

RICK. Okay.

JENNY. So then I'll segue to the wisdom I want to share with them.

RICK. You don't need to explain what you're doing.

JENNY. Okay.

(*Delivering her speech.*) You guys are finance majors. That tells me you're prudent. Let me give you some advice about the life you have chosen. As you probably know, I'm a managing director at KMM Capital Management. Our firm was in the news recently. / Because we—

RICK. Our firm is currently in the news, one.

JENNY. This is two weeks away, so I'm projecting into the future.

RICK. And two: Don't bring that up.

JENNY. It ties into my point. I want to / talk about—

RICK. Okay, okay just keep going, keep going.

JENNY. Well now I've lost my train of thought.

RICK. This is trying my patience.

JENNY. You wanted to hear what I had so far.

RICK. Yeah. Sometime today please.

JENNY. (*Finding her place in her notes.*) Oh, okay.

Our firm was in the news recently. Because we had the audacity to perform our function.

Not that it's surprising. It's an Us versus Them situation right now.

Ever notice when one of us splurges on a party at a cost of say, five percent of our annual income, it's shameful. But when one of them splurges on a party at that *same relative cost*, it's fun.

RICK. You will not say that.

JENNY. Okay I'll cut that. Yeah it's a rough draft.

RICK. Go on.

JENNY. Ever notice when we get together in a private meeting among peers, it's an evil cabal. But when they get together in a private meeting among peers, it's a labor union.

RICK. No.

JENNY. Okay I'll cut that.

*The speech.*

You guys need to know: The game is rigged against us. Why? Because

# DRY POWDER

by Sarah Burgess

3M, 1W

The same week his private equity firm forced massive layoffs at a national grocery chain, Rick Hannel threw himself an extravagant engagement party, setting off a publicity nightmare. Fortunately, Seth, one of Rick's partners, has a dream of a deal to invest in an American-made luggage company for a song that will rescue his boss from the PR disaster. But Jenny, Rick's other partner, has an entirely different plan: to maximize returns, no matter the consequences. The game is on in this gripping, razor-sharp play about the price of success and the real cost of getting the deal done.

*"DRY POWDER [is] a sharp play by Sarah Burgess about the precarious intersection of politics and modern finance. With biting wit and shrewd insight, Burgess pulls back the veil on private equity and gets to the bottom of why it is so especially loathed."*  
—**TheaterMania.com**

*"... lacerating... nuanced... Burgess conveys not just the language of the high-stakes game she depicts—financial jargon is woven nimbly into the snappy dialogue—but also the differing mindsets of its players... extraordinarily timely."*  
—**Time Out (New York)**

*"The equity traders in Sarah Burgess' frighteningly funny play... converse in the private jargon of the financial industry. ... [DRY POWDER makes] this dry subject enthralling and horrifying."*  
—**Variety**

*"Burgess's play is a parable, really, a story from the finance-sector's point-of-view about why money so often trumps humanity in a capitalist society. It's funny, sleek and well-told. ... It may not be the world we want to live in, but DRY POWDER says it's the world we have."*  
—**WNYC**

ISBN 978-0-8222-3538-5



DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.

9 780822 235385