

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO

A COMEDY DUET

by
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Notes: The scene should have a relatively fast pace, just like an Abbott and Costello sketch. And let's just say the character of SAM isn't the sharpest tool in the shed.

Two teenage actors (or actresses) are rehearsing a scene. THEY are doing their best Abbott and Costello impressions.

SAM: Well, Riley, I'm going to New York with you. You know Bucky Harris, the Yankee's manager, gave me a job as coach for as long as he's the manager.

RILEY: Well, Sam, if you're the coach, you must know all the players.

SAM: I certainly do.

RILEY: Well you know I've never met the guys. So you'll have to tell me their names, and then I'll know who's playing on the team.

SAM: Oh, I'll tell you their names, but you know it seems to me they give these ball players now-a-days very peculiar names.

RILEY: You mean funny names?

SAM: Strange names ...

RILEY: Strange names, huh? Like what?

SAM: Well, let's see who we have on the bags. We've got ...

(SAM's Abbott impression starts to break.)

Umm ... we've got some good players on the bags.

RILEY: (trying not to break character) Some good players, huh?

SAM: Yeah.

RILEY: (trying to get SAM to remember his line) Do these good players have names?

SAM: (completely losing his character) Umm ... no?

RILEY: (completely breaking character now) Sam! What are you doing?

SAM: Nothing.

RILEY: Then don't mess around.

SAM: OK, sorry.

RILEY: OK, let's try again.

SAM: Um, maybe we should --

RILEY: (back in his Costello character) Well you know I've never met the guys. So you'll have to tell me their names, and then I'll know who's playing on the team.

SAM: (hesitantly getting back in his Abbott character) Oh, I'll tell you their names, but you know it seems to me they give these ball players now-a-days very peculiar names.

RILEY: You mean funny names?

SAM: Strange names ...

RILEY: Strange names, huh? Like what?

SAM: Well, let's see who we have on the bags. We've got ... (breaking character; hoping HE's saying it right) Tom on first base, Dick on second base, Harry on third base --

RILEY: Sam, that's not right! Don't you know the script?

SAM: Well ... kind of.

RILEY: What do you mean, kind of?

SAM: Well, I only had a chance to memorize the first page.

RILEY: Oh gosh. You at least read the rest of the script, right?

SAM: Well ... that's an interesting question.

RILEY: (angry) Sam ...

SAM: (shamefully looking away) Sorry.

(RILEY gives SAM a dirty look.)

I tried! But I had so much homework. Mrs. Miller must think we have nothing better to do than memorize all the countries that fought in the Mexican-American War.

RILEY: Are you serious? There were only two countries that fought in the Mexican-American War.

SAM: Well, memorizing two countries is twice as hard as memorizing one country.

RILEY: Mexico and America.

SAM: Yep, those are the two. I've got them memorized now.

RILEY: Sam, I had time to do all my homework and memorize the script.

SAM: Well, sorry, I guess I'm a little slower than you.

RILEY: You got that right. Listen, the competition is tomorrow. We don't have time to mess around.

SAM: I know ...

RILEY: OK, try to remember this: Who's on first --

SAM: (*confused*) Who?
RILEY: What's on second
SAM: What?
RILEY: I Don't Know's on third.
SAM: I don't know about this --
RILEY: So you got it?
SAM: Uh ... sure. I should be able to figure it out.
RILEY: OK. (*back in his Costello character*) Strange names, huh? Like what?
SAM: (*not really back in his Abbott character*) Well, let's see who we have on the bags. We've got ... somebody on first, second, and third. (*completely breaking character*) Was that good?
RILEY: (*not happy*) No, it wasn't.
SAM: But does it really matter whose on the bases?
RILEY: Yes, it does.
SAM: Why?
RILEY: Because that's the whole joke.
SAM: Baseball's not really very funny. If we need to talk about a funny sport, I think we should talk about (*over-enunciating*) luge. (*laughing*) Now that's just a funny word.

(SAM stops laughing when HE sees RILEY isn't laughing.)

RILEY: We're going to talk about baseball because that's what the script says we should talk about, OK?

SAM: (*thinking RILEY is a party pooper*) OK.

RILEY: So Who's on first, What's on second, and I Don't Know's on third, OK?

SAM: Wait, so you're saying you don't know their names, either?

RILEY: (*getting very frustrated*) No, I do know their names. What I just said, are their names.

SAM: So they all have the same name?

RILEY: (*confused*) No.

SAM: But they're all What You Just Said.

RILEY: That's right.

SAM: OK.

RILEY: So say it then.

SAM: What You Just Said is on first, What You just Said is on --

RILEY: No!

SAM: (*unsure*) What / Just Said is on first?

RILEY: No! That's not right at all.

SAM: OK, That's Not Right At All is on first.

RILEY: No, he's not!

SAM: Is he on second?

RILEY: No!

SAM: Well make up your mind, why don't you?

RILEY: (*extremely frustrated*) Gosh!

SAM: Maybe I should just look at the script.

RILEY: Good idea!

SAM: Do you have it?

RILEY: No. Because we were supposed to be off-book today. Don't you have it?

SAM: (*scared to say it*) No ... I thought you'd have it.

(RILEY just grunts.)

OK, just say it again and maybe I'll understand this time.

RILEY: Last time. Who's on first, What's on second, and I Don't Know's on third.

SAM: Well I don't know their names either, so if you'd just tell me them, we can do the scene.

RILEY: Don't you get it? I am telling you their names. Their names are puns. Who's on first, What's on second, and I Don't Know's on third.

(Pause.)

SAM: (*as if a giant light bulb went off in his head*) Ohhhhhh. I get it. Their names are puns.

RILEY: Yes!

SAM: A play on words.

RILEY: Yes!

SAM: Oh, why didn't you just say that?

RILEY: I was trying to.

SAM: Oh, I know some good ones.

RILEY: (*confused*) What do you mean?

SAM: Like, "I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it *hit* me." (*starts laughing*)

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