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SYNOPSIS: In this new take on Abbott and Costello’s famous comedy skit “Who’s on First,” two teenage performers try, rather unsuccessfully, to rehearse a scene for their drama class. What they succeed in performing is a hilarious scene full of wit and comedic miscommunication.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(2 EITHER.)

SAM (m/f)
RILEY (m/f)

AUTHOR’S 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.
AT RISE:
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 who's 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 I 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.)
RILEY: What?
SAM: Or, "Did you hear about the guy whose whole left side was cut off? He's all right now."
RILEY: No --
SAM: Or, "I once drove my Mercedes into a tree and found out how the Mercedes *bends*.*"  

*SAM laughs again. RILEY isn't laughing.*  

RILEY: You're not funny, you know.  
SAM: Sorry ...  
RILEY: Their names aren't random puns you've heard. *(Slowly.)* Their names are Who, What, and I Don't Know.  

*Pause.*  

SAM: *(Feeling kind of stupid.)* Oh. Well, that's easy enough.  
RILEY: Now say your line correctly.  
SAM: OK. What's on first base, Who's on second base, and --  
RILEY: No, Who's on first base.  
SAM: What.  
RILEY: What?  
SAM: Yes, What.  
RILEY: No no, Who.  
SAM: *(As if RILEY is dumb -- very pedantic.)* What.  
RILEY: No, you've got it wrong. Who's on first --  
SAM: What --  

*RILEY puts his finger to SAM's mouth to stop him from talking.*  

RILEY: *(Very slowly, so SAM can understand.)* Who's on first base, What's on second base, and I Don't Know's on third base, get it?  

*SAM points to RILEY's finger which is still covering SAM's mouth. RILEY then removes it.*  

SAM: Thank you. OK. So Who's on first base, What's on second base, and you don't know the person on third base.  
RILEY: No! I think I'm going to kill you.  
SAM: I don't know why you'd do that.
RILEY: Because of the third baseman, I Don't Know.
SAM: Well if you don't know and I don't know, then you probably shouldn't kill me. (Belittling.) People might think you're crazy. (Pause. With both hands, RILEY lunges for SAM's throat, but SAM keeps him from coming too close.) Hey, hey, get a hold of yourself! You're going crazy. (RILEY stops.) Just calm down. I'm doing the best I can, OK?

RILEY gives up.

RILEY: Mary wanted to be my partner. Why didn't I just say yes.
SAM: Come on, Riley. You know you wanted to work with me.

RILEY gives SAM a look saying otherwise.

SAM: OK, so I begged you to be my partner. But we're still gonna do well at competition.
RILEY: Your Mom's not gonna be one of the judges anymore, Sam. This isn't the sixth grade. This is the real deal. (Desperate.) We have to do good.
SAM: We will, OK?
RILEY: (Threatening.) We better.
SAM: Once I get this line down, I'm sure the rest will be easy. How many more are there?
RILEY: The scene's ten pages long.
SAM: Oh ... (Matter-of-fact.) We're screwed. Definitely, screwed. (RILEY starts to cry.) Oh my gosh, you're crying, aren't you?
RILEY: No ... (Like a bad comeback.) you're crying.
SAM: No, I'm not. (HE touches below his eye.) See? No tears.
RILEY: OK, fine. I'm crying.
SAM: Don't cry. We're gonna be OK.
RILEY: We've got nothing, and the competition is tomorrow.

Pause.

SAM: Hey, I got an idea.
RILEY: Well that's never a good thing.
SAM: Hey!
RILEY: Fine, what's your idea?
SAM: Why don't we do what we just did as our scene.
RILEY: What do you mean?
SAM: I mean, let's just reenact me trying to learn the scene. It was kind of funny, right?
RILEY: Not really ...
SAM: Well, it's better than nothing, right?
RILEY: I guess. OK, let's try to redo it.
SAM: OK.
RILEY: (Back in his character.) So who's playing in the baseball game?
SAM: (Back in his character.) Well, Who's on first, What's on second, and I Don't Know's on third.
RILEY: (Breaking character; angry.) Sam! You got it right!
SAM: (Proud of himself.) Hey how about that.

Pause, as RILEY gives SAM a threatening look. Suddenly, RILEY tries to strangle SAM again.

THE END