

# Surprise!

Junior (Adam) is “primed” and ready to take over the business. Or so he believes. Anyway, while Dad is off making some deal in Costa Rica, he gets to play CEO. His “sparring partner” and Head of Advertising, Francine has had just about enough of his arrogance, sexism, and generally adolescent behavior. Fortunately, she is set to take a little vacation cruise. When she returns, she - - - and Dad have more than a little news. Surprise!

2M, 1F

**Great Stage Publishing**

# Surprise!

*a One Act Play*

by  
**Elaine Edstrom**

**Great Stage Publishing**

# **SURPRISE !**

A short play in 2 scenes  
by  
Elaine Edstrom

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*World Premiere at UpStage Theatre, Houston TX*

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# SURPRISE !

## Cast

- ADAM MORGAN: An early 30's, suave, smooth business man who is totally enamored with himself. He has just recently been appointed temporary CEO by his father who runs the business conglomerate while Adam Senior is seeing to business opportunities around the world.
- FRANCINE EVANS: In her early to mid 40's, the head of the Advertising Department for Morgan International. She has been with the company for several years and worked her way up from the secretarial pool. She has fended off amorous men for years—including Adam.
- ADAM MORGAN SENIOR: He built Morgan International into a very successful business and still looks to expand business. He is a very fit man in his early 50's.
- INTERCOM VOICE: This is Peggy—the CEO's secretary. She has been with the business also from the beginning and knows everything about everyone!

## The Scene:

The entire action takes place in the Executive Office of Morgan International. There is the usual large desk with a chair behind it and one in front of it for visitors. The intercom and a multi line phone are on the desk. There is a window behind the desk looking down on the bustling city. Scene Two is one month later than Scene One.

# SURPRISE!

## A Short Play

SCENE 1:

AT RISE: ADAM is seated behind the desk and is  
Talking on the phone.

ADAM

Look Benson, I don't care WHAT the Board says, just pay the female off! *(Pause)* No, I haven't consulted dear old Dad and I don't intend to. *(Short pause)* Why? Why? Because he's off chasing down some cockamamie business deal in Costa Rica. And need I remind you that he left me in charge here as acting CEO? *(The intercom buzzes)* Hold on Benson. *(He flips the intercom switch and barks):* WHAT???

INTERCOM

Miss Evans is here Mr. Morgan.

ADAM

What the devil does SHE want?

INTERCOM

She has an appointment with you, sir.

ADAM

Well she will just have to wait until I finish this call. *(He flips off the intercom and back to phone)* Benson, you've been the Company lawyer for years; surely you've paid off sexual harassment charges before. You know what to do. *(Pause)* NO Benson! I am NOT admitting anything! Just make sure that female drops the suit and knows she won't get another cent from me or this company. OK? *(Pause)* OK! And incidentally Benson, she was a lousy lay! *(He hangs up phone and flips intercom.)* Send in Miss Evans Peggy. *(FRANCINE enters & ADAM says with a touch of sarcasm he thinks is wit.)* Well! Miss Francine Evans! As I live and breathe! To what do I owe the honor of a visit from the High Priestess of Morgan International's advertising department? Having trouble with your minions that you want me to fix?

FRANCINE

*(Matter-of-factly—these two have sparred before and they have a history)*  
Knock off the sarcasm Junior, it doesn't become you!

ADAM

Ohhhh! Touchy today aren't we? What's the matter Francie? Your sex life not up to par these days?

FRANCINE

*(Sweetly)*

Are you reverting back to the game playing sexist pig you used to be? It doesn't fit your new image as temporary head of this company, Adam...and I don't find it amusing. You should be past playing the sexy stud by now.

ADAM

Well, excuse me, Miss Prim and Proper, but most women find me quite the "sexy stud". Given a chance I could make your toes curl with some of my hot sex games!

FRANCINE

*(With an exasperated sigh)*

Forget it! You tried that in England and it didn't work then! I'm still not interested in young boys.

ADAM

Aha! The old "age difference ploy!" You only have a mere decade or so on me, Francie, and I sure as Hell don't give a rats-ass about that! *(He leers at her)* I adore older women.

FRANCINE

*(Resignedly)*

*(Sigh)* I'd hoped that your time in the London and the Tokyo offices might have matured you a bit. I can see I was wrong.

ADAM

London was OK—especially the year you were there for me to try to seduce.

FRANCINE

"Try" being the operative word here, Junior! And from the string of broken hearts you've been leaving around the world, you obviously weren't bored when I left.

ADAM

I'm flattered you've kept up with my love life.

FRANCINE

It wasn't hard, your reputation as a woman chaser is legendary at Morgan International! And even here, in the home office, you seem to enjoy hitting on every female around!

ADAM

*(Smiling)*

I beg to differ! *(He flips intercom open)* Peggy, have I ever hit on you?

INTERCOM

I beg your pardon?

ADAM

Have I ever made improper advances to you?

INTERCOM

*(Laughter)*

No and you'd better not! You know perfectly well that I've known you since you were a kid coming in to see your dad!

ADAM

Thank you Peggy! *(Turns off intercom. Smugly)* I rest my case!

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FRANCINE

*(Chuckling)*

When are you going to grow up??? You know Peggy doesn't count—besides being in her 50's, she's your dad's right arm girl and she'd tell him if you tried anything with her. But I'm sure all those other affairs aren't just rumors!

ADAM

OK! So I've played the field! Those years in the Tokyo office, were the most tediously boring years of my life. I had to do something to keep my sanity But I did learn something useful there.

FRANCINE

What?

ADAM

*(Smugly)*

Japanese women know their place—in the work place and in bed. *(A slight pause and then the zinger:)* Too bad American women don't know theirs.

FRANCINE

You are disgusting!

ADAM

*(Sitting back in his chair)*

So was Tokyo! *(Stands & crosses to look out window)* I put in eight long years kowtowing to every man-jack in that office. Taking orders instead of giving them. Brown-nosing the S.O.Bs whenever I wanted something pushed through. *(Turns to look at FRANCINE)* But I did it because I was good at my job and I knew that, when the time came, I could run this whole damned consortium as well as--if not better than--my father.

FRANCINE

Well, with Daddy gone, you now have the chance to prove yourself, don't you?. *(ADAM starts to interrupt & FRANCINE holds up her hand)* OK! Truce! As much fun as this has been, can we stop the sniping and get to the real reason I am here?

ADAM

*(Crosses back to his chair & sits)*

Fire away when ready, Gridley

FRANCINE

*(Dryly. She sits in chair facing ADAM)*

Very funny.

ADAM

*(Shrugging)*

Hey! I try!

FRANCINE

*(All business now)*

As you may—or may not—know, at our Christmas party last year, I won a first-class trip on a Morgan cruise ship to anywhere I wanted to go.

ADAM

I heard something to that effect. *(Leering)* Looking for a bunkmate?

FRANCINE

*(Sweetly)*

In your dreams, Romeo.

ADAM

Nuts! And here I am all hot to trot!

FRANCINE

*(Ignoring him)*

I've decided on the Panama Canal cruise.

ADAM

You're kidding, right? Francie, THAT sounds positively boring. I thought only Senior Citizens wanted to see the Canal—why not the Caribbean or Bermuda ...or Alaska. They'd be much more your style.

FRANCINE

Adam,. It IS my choice to make!

ADAM

OK! No skin off my nose if sailing with Seniors turns you on! So! When will you go?

FRANCINE

During my three week vacation.

ADAM

Which is?



FRANCINE

Starting next week. My assistant, Tony, has his instructions and my department will know how to reach me in an emergency.

ADAM

So now you are asking my permission to go?

FRANCINE

*(Patiently)*

No! I'm simply informing you of what I told your father last month—before he left you in charge. I'll be on the American Patriot out of LA.

ADAM

*(Smugly)*

You know you will be surrounded by blue-haired ladies with false teeth and bad breath and oversexed bald old men with roving hands toddling around in walkers. The food will be geared to soft pap so they can swallow it and you will probably have some inside cabin on the below-the-water-line deck. Mark my words, it will be a lousy trip!

FRANCINE

*(Standing)*

Well, aren't you the epitome of cheerfulness and optimism?

ADAM

Francie, my love, you really should take a nice romantic cruise—you aren't getting any younger you know. You should be thinking of how to meet a prospective husband instead of a father!

FRANCINE

Good by, Adam! *(She starts out)*

ADAM

Ten to one you have a lousy trip!

FRANCINE

You've got a bet, Junior! *(She exits)*

ADAM

*(Calling after her as she leaves)*

You'll be sorry you took this cruise, you'll see! *(She shuts the door)* Ah, yes! I do love to get her goat! It just makes my day! *(Phone rings; he answers)* Adam Morgan *(Pause)* She WHAT? What do you mean she turned down the offer? *(Pause)* Paternity suit? Benson, you idiot, DO something to earn that ridiculous retainer we pay you. Get rid of that female. *(Pause)* No, Benson, she is NOT pregnant! There is no WAY she could be. *(Pause)* Of course I'm sure—I always use protection. She's lying, Benson. Pay the woman off! *(He hangs up, goes to the bar and pours himself a drink as the lights dim on Scene 1.)*

SCENE 2: 1 month later

ADAM

*(On the phone again)*

OK, Charlie, we'll meet at the club for a quick breakfast and tee off at ten. *(Pause)* No, Dad won't be joining us—he's looking at a business proposition in Costa Rica *(Intercom buzzes)* Hold on a minute, Charlie. *(He flips the intercom button)* Yes, Peggy

INTERCOM

Reliable Florist is on Line two with a question and Miss Evans is back and would like to see you. She says you owe her ten dollars.

ADAM

*(Smiling)*

She does, huh? I'll take the call first and then send her in. *(He switches off the intercom)* Sorry, Charlie, but I have to go. Important client just came in. See you at the club Thursday. *(He hangs up and takes line 2)* This is Mr. Morgan *(Pause)* That's right, two dozen THORNLESS red roses! What's the problem? *(Pause)* Well, you can cut off the thorns before you send them can't you? *(Pause)* Fine! Oh! And enclose a card that says "thanks for the memorable night. I'll call you soon" and sign it "Rabbit Man" *(Pause)* Yes, you heard correctly, "Rabbit Man"! Thank you. *(He hangs up and flips on intercom)* Send in Miss Evans, Peggy. *(FRANCINE enters and ADAM leans back in his chair)* Have a seat, Francie and tell me all about your glorious Viagra Vacation Cruise.

FRANCINE

*(Sitting)*

You owe me ten bucks, Junior!

ADAM

So I hear! Convince me!

FRANCINE

It was a wonderful trip, the food was divine, I had a lovely cabin on the upper deck that opened onto a balcony. Not one of the ladies had blue hair or bad breath and I was not overwhelmed by oversexed bald men with roving hands!

ADAM

What? No flirting with one of the passengers? No hugs and smooches under the tropical moon?

FRANCINE

*(Smiling smugly—the cat that lapped the cream!)*

I didn't say that!

ADAM

Don't tell me you fell for some aging Lothario and had one of those quickie shipboard romances? How pedestrian.

FRANCINE

I didn't say that either! *(Intercom buzzes. ADAM flips it on)*

ADAM

Not NOW Peggy...I'm busy and.....!

INTERCOM

*(Interrupting)*

It's Mr. Benson on line one and he...

ADAM

*(Interrupting. Barking)*

I said NOT NOW, Peggy! *(He flips off intercom and says to FRANCINE: )* WHAT HAPPENED?

FRANCINE

*(Smiling)*

I met up with an old friend who....

ADAM

*(Interrupting. Scathingly)*

...who just HAPPENED to be aboard your cruise ship....come on, Francie, that's the oldest con in the world!

FRANCINE

...who JOINED the cruise at Cabo Santa Elena. *(Intercom buzzes. ADAM flips it on)*

ADAM

Peggy! I DON'T want to be bothered right now!

INTERCOM

Mr. Benson says he simply must speak with you.

ADAM

*(Very patiently—for him!)*

Tell Mr. Benson that I will call him back, Peggy. That can't be too hard to do. *(He flips off the intercom)*

FRANCINE

You really shouldn't talk down to Peggy like that, Adam.

ADAM

Forget Peggy! Explain to me this "old friend" you just "happened" to meet up with halfway thru your cruise!

FRANCINE

*(She's really enjoying this!)*

It really is none of your business, Junior, but you'll have to know sooner or later I guess...so, he's someone I've known and admired for years. We dated a few times but I never knew how much he cared for me...until we had a few nights under the tropical stars....what more can I say????

ADAM

*(About to blow a gasket)*

Cut to the chase, Francie. Did you have sex with this guy?

FRANCINE

And you want to know.....because?????

ADAM

Because we're old friends Francie. And you need protection from creeps.

FRANCINE

*(With raised eyebrows)*

Oh really!

ADAM

Out with it, Francie. DID. YOU. HAVE. SEX. WITH. THE. CREEP?

FRANCINE

THAT, mon ami, is none of your business either...but I will admit this: *(She holds out left hand showing an engagement ring)* we're engaged and he's in the outer office with Peggy.

ADAM

You WHAT? He's WHERE? *(Intercom buzzes. ADAM flips it on and barks: )* WHAT?????

INTERCOM

Mr. Benson absolutely insists it's urgent that he speak with you NOW. He's still on line one.

FRANCINE

You'd better take that call, Junior. I'll step out and, when you're through, my fiancé and I will come in. *(She throws him a kiss and exits. ADAM sits dazed then presses the phone line)*

ADAM

*(With a sigh)*

What is it Benson? What's so blasted urgent that you can't wait ten minutes? *(Pause)* Not HER again! Didn't you paid her off? *(Pause)* Paternity suit? Again? What's with this broad? *(Pause)* What do you mean she'll go to court with proof the kid is mine? *(Pause)* DNA? Impossible! She can't be pregnant enough for the kid to be born so how can she have a DNA test done? *(Pause)* Amnio-what? *(Pause. Holds head)* Omigod! Benson, you have to do

ADAM (Continued)

something. Find out how much we have to pay her to get rid of her...and before Dad gets back!  
(*He hangs up and stares out*) Christ Almighty! What a Snafu this is!

FRANCINE

(*Enters & stands in doorway*)

Are you all right, Adam? You don't look like you feel so good.

ADAM

That's the understatement of the year!

FRANCINE

Well, I have a surprise that will make you feel much better.

ADAM

Such as?

FRANCINE

Meet my fiancé. (*She steps aside to reveal ADAM SR.*)

ADAM

(*Startled. Stands quickly*)

Dad? DAD!???

SENIOR

Well, Francine, it looks like we got back just in time!

ADAM

Dad! What are you doing here? You're in Costa Rica on a business deal.

SENIOR

I WAS in Costa Rica. The deal closed...and very successfully for us, I might add.

ADAM

(*To FRANCINE*)

You two are engaged? Why didn't you tell me?

FRANCINE

I did.

ADAM

I mean sooner. That your fiancé is my father? (*Sputtering*) That.....that....that...

FRANCINE

We wanted to surprise you...

SENIOR

But, instead, it seems we are the ones that are surprised!

ADAM

I don't understand

SENIOR

*(Pointing to the intercom)*

You forgot to turn off the intercom.

ADAM

*(Collapsing in chair)*

You heard my conversation with Benson?

FRANCINE

Loud and clear!

ADAM

Omigod! Look Dad, I can explain...it's just a little problem I'm having.

SENIOR

*(Crossing to beside ADAM)*

Oh, I intend to hear what you have to say, son, but right now I think I have a solution to your "problem".

ADAM

*(Looking up, hopefully)*

You do?

SENIOR

Now that I'm back at the helm, you can move on.

ADAM

*(Standing)*

Not back to Tokyo, Dad!

SENIOR

No! I have a better plan. How does Costa Rica sound?

ADAM

You're kidding!?

SENIOR

I am not kidding. The deal I closed there was for a winery. It includes the vineyards, the winery and a distillery where they make the most exquisite brandy.

ADAM

You want me to run a winery?

SENIOR

I want you to learn the business...and when you do, you can take over the management of the distillery. You will be paid a good salary and, if this DNA test proves you ARE the father of that child, a portion of your salary will be withheld and sent to the mother for child support. Unless, of course, you decide to marry her.

ADAM

Never! She's a conniving gold digger!

SENIOR

Be that as it may, she just may be the mother of my grandchild and, if so, she will be provided for by you.

FRANCINE

It's a perfect answer to your situation, Adam.

ADAM

*(Sarcastically)*

Oh thanks! MOM!

SENIOR

*(Grabbing his son)*

Enough!

ADAM

Sorry! It's just habit to flail Francie a bit.

FRANCINE

It's OK. I understand

SENIOR

There's a small bag on Peggy's desk containing a bottle of the Costa Rica brandy. Would you mind getting it, son? You can taste our new product and we can drink to new ventures *(looks lovingly at FRANCINE)* for all of us.

ADAM

Sure! *(Starts towards door)* Costa Rica, eh? Tropical nights, hot señoritas, salsa music.....oh, I can get used to that! *(He exits)*

FRANCINE

Aren't you going to tell him bout the winery, dear?

SENIOR

*(Smiling broadly)*

He'll find out soon enough. Let it be a surprise.

FRANCINE

And what a surprise! Just wait till he arrives there and finds out that the winery is in the Costa Rica mountains, miles from civilization...in a monastery, no less. Surrounded, not by hot señoritas, but by Franciscan monks. I'd hate to hear what he'll say then!

SENIOR

*(Chuckling. Sits behind desk)*

I'm sure he'll have a few choice words to say, my dear. Quite a few choice words!

FRANCINE

You know, sweetheart, I think I feel sorry for the good monks...they'll have to put up with his tantrums.

SENIOR

Oh, I'm sure they'll be able to cope. And a year or so with the monks in the Costa Rican mountains should help cool his ardor...at least a little bit. Don't you think?

FRANCINE

*(Coming around and sitting in his lap)*

Sweetheart, sometimes I think you are positively Machiavellian!!!

SENIOR

I am. When necessary! *(They kiss as lights go down)*

*(End of Scene; End of Play)*