

# Excerpt terms and conditions

This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

*Dramatic Publishing*



"...Clever, compelling and poignant ..." — *Stage Magazine*

# Samuel J. and K.



Drama by Mat Smart

# Samuel J. and K.

**Drama. By Mat Smart. Cast: 2m.** Samuel J. surprises his adopted brother, Samuel K., with a trip back to his birth country of Cameroon for college graduation, but Samuel K. has no desire to face a place and a past that abandoned him. *Samuel J. and K.* challenges the traditional definitions of family and asks if a place we've only imagined can become home overnight. "*Samuel J. and K.* scores big points as a different kind of play ... we see the strained, uncomfortable relationship between the two brothers who carry sibling rivalry to excess ... details of their individual lives are revealed only when they can be used as weapons to throw the other brother off his game." (*Berkshire on Stage*) "The love siblings share ... [is] the main issue in Smart's impressive new play. ... What comes between the brothers is an issue that has divided siblings for centuries. But the playwright manages to make the conflict seem as if it's happening for the first time." (*The Star-Ledger*) *Flexible set. Approximate running time: 90 minutes. Code: S1K.*

Cover: Williamstown Theatre Festival, Nikos Stage, Williamstown, Mass., featuring (l-r) Justin Long and Owiso Odera. Photo: Samuel Hough. Cover design: Jeanette Alig-Sergel.

ISBN-10: 1-58342-835-6  
ISBN-13: 978-1-58342-835-1



9 781583 428351 >

www.dramaticpublishing.com



*Dramatic Publishing*

311 Washington St.  
Woodstock, IL 60098  
ph: (800) 448-7469



Printed on recycled paper

# **Samuel J. and K.**

Drama by

MAT SMART



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

\*\*\* NOTICE \*\*\*

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: [www.dramaticpublishing.com](http://www.dramaticpublishing.com), or we may be contacted by mail at: THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., 311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.
---

©MMXIII by  
MAT SMART

Printed in the United States of America  
*All Rights Reserved*  
(SAMUEL J. AND K.)

For inquiries concerning all other rights, contact:  
Abrams Artists Agency  
275 Seventh Avenue, 26th floor  
New York, NY 10001 • Phone: (646) 486-4600

ISBN: 978-1-58342-835-1

## IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with  
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC., of Woodstock, Illinois.”

for Wirdzikire Richard Chilla  
and  
Mollie, Johanna, Jill and Bill Hemminger

The world premier production of *Samuel J. and K.* was at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Williamstown, Mass., (Artistic Director, Nicholas Martin, and General Manager, Joe Finnegan). It opened on July 8, 2010, at the Nikos Stage.

*Cast*

Samuel J. .... Justin Long  
Samuel K. .... Owiso Odera

*Production*

Director ..... Justin Waldman  
Sets ..... Adam Stockhausen  
Sound ..... Bart Fasbender  
Lighting ..... Marcus Doshi  
Costumes ..... Nichole J. Smith  
Stage Manager ..... Michael Rico Cohen  
Fight Director ..... Thomas Schall

*Samuel J. and K.* was developed with the support of a Jerome Fellowship from The Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis.



# **Samuel J. and K.**

## **CHARACTERS**

Samuel J.: Goes by “J.” A 29-year-old American, any ethnicity, born and raised in Naperville, Illinois.

Samuel K.: Goes by “Samuel.” A 22-year-old African-American, born in Cameroon and raised in Naperville, Illinois, since age 3.

## **SETTING**

In the United States: Naperville, Illinois.

In Cameroon: La Mare Pogué and Yaoundé.

# Samuel J. and K.

## ACT I

AT RISE: *Naperville, Illinois. An outdoor basketball court. It is a Saturday morning in May.*

*SAMUEL, 22, wears a graduation gown. J., 29, wears a suit that doesn't quite fit him anymore. They play a game of Make It, Take It. Having just scored, J. dribbles the basketball to the top of the key. Their wallets, phones and keys are in a pile on the ground.*

SAMUEL. Gift certificate for Best Buy?

J. Nope.

SAMUEL. Gift certificate for ... *(As if it were a French word.)*  
Targét?

J. Nope.

SAMUEL. Starbucks card?

J. What?—no. Not even close.

SAMUEL. That's what you got me for Christmas.

J. I was broke.

SAMUEL. If you got me a Starbucks card, it's cool.

J. I didn't get you a stupid Starfucks card for your college graduation. Please. 17-17.

*(J. bounces the ball to SAMUEL.)*

J. (*cont'd*). Check.

SAMUEL. Dude, it's OK if you did. Check.

(*SAMUEL bounces the ball back to J.*)

J. Dude, I didn't.

(*J. makes a move, SAMUEL picks it up.*)

SAMUEL. Easier to get into Fort Knox.

(*An old routine.*)

J. Say what?

SAMUEL. It's easier to get into Fort Knox.

J. Say what!

SAMUEL. I say—

J. & SAMUEL. It's easier to get into Fort Knox  
than to get past me, bitch.

J. I'm gonna

SAMUEL. Pick ya up

J. I'm gonna

SAMUEL. Stick like glue  
No matter what ya do

J. I'm gonna

J. & SAMUEL. Know which  
which way ya goin'  
before ya know where ya goin'—

*(J. makes a move, gets past SAMUEL, drives to the basket and makes an easy layup.)*

*In case J. misses the layup, both SAMUEL and J. should go as hard as they can for the rebound. If J. gets the rebound, he should go for another layup as soon as possible. If SAMUEL gets the rebound, he should reset to the top of the key and start singing the chorus of En Vogue's "My Lovin' (You're Never Gonna Get It)." SAMUEL should do a few inside-out dribbles, but when he tries to do a crossover, J. should steal the ball and go in for an easy layup. In case J. misses again, J. should always get to the rebound first and go for a layup.)*

J. *(having just scored)*. Your gold is gone, Samuel Kennedy.

SAMUEL . Yeah, yeah, yeah.

J. I make it, I take it, son.

*(J. comes back to the top of the key with the ball, SAMUEL follows. Both of them are out of breath.)*

J. *(cont'd)*. 19-17.

Check baby, check baby, one two three four.

Check baby, check baby, one two.

*(J. checks the ball to SAMUEL. SAMUEL bounces it back to J.)*

SAMUEL. Check.

*(J. holds the ball behind his head. They stare at each other, not moving, for a long time. Eventually, SAMUEL speaks.)*

SAMUEL *(cont'd)*. Was wondering if you died.

J. I didn't.

SAMUEL. Been almost three months.

J. Yeah, well.

Looks like your nose healed OK.

SAMUEL. Doctor said it was a clean break.

J. Be a shame to mess up that purty face.

*(Still not dribbling yet, J. fakes a move. SAMUEL doesn't flinch.)*

SAMUEL. Your apartment is 10 minutes away, you could've—

J. Bros before hos, right?

SAMUEL. Something like that.

J. No, *exactly* like that.

Say it.

SAMUEL. ... Bros before hos.

J. What?

SAMUEL. Bros before hos.

J. What?

SAMUEL. Bros before hos!

J. Now say it a thousand times and call me in the morning.

SAMUEL. If we get too sweaty before the ceremony, Moms is gonna kill us.

J. Like murder us.

SAMUEL. Like shoot first, not even ask questions later.

*(Beat. J. starts dribbling. SAMUEL guards him)*

SAMUEL *(cont'd)*. Gift certificate to Chili's?

J. Better.

SAMUEL. Oo, gift certificate to Outback?

J. Better.

SAMUEL. Cubs-Cards bleacher seats?

J. Better.

SAMUEL. Woo!

Tickets to Bulls-Heat?

J. Better.

SAMUEL. What could be better than King James v Derrick Rose?

J. It's better.

SAMUEL. Tickets to—

J. Nothing to do with Cubs, Bulls, Bears or any kind of broke-ass gift cards.

SAMUEL. OK, OK. *(What he really wants.)*

A new iPhone, motha fucka!

*(J. makes a move and drives to the basket. SAMUEL covers him the whole way.)*

J. Jordan! *(Attempts a ridiculous fadeaway and misses in the worst way. He yells. The ball bounces back across the court.)*

SAMUEL. You're gonna hurt yourself, old man.

*(SAMUEL runs back across the court after the ball with J. close behind. SAMUEL gets to the ball first, but J. dives and get his hands on it, too. They struggle over the ball.)*

SAMUEL (*cont'd*). Whoa, whoa, whoa—you're ripping my gown.

J. (*mocking SAMUEL*). "You're ripping my gown!"

SAMUEL. Get off me.

J. "Get off me."

Jump ball.

SAMUEL (*struggling with J.*) Jump ... ball ... my ... ass.

*(SAMUEL shoves J. onto his back and pulls the ball away from him. SAMUEL puts his knee on J.'s chest and pins him down. J. struggles to get up, but can't.)*

SAMUEL (*cont'd*). What?—you've fallen and you can't get up?  
(*Sings.*)

Old Man River, that Old Man River,  
He just keeps—

*(J. reaches into his pocket and throws out a thick business-sized envelope.)*

SAMUEL (*cont'd*). What's that, old man?

J. Your present. Now get off me.

SAMUEL (*jumps up and goes to the envelope, reading*).  
Air France.

J. Got them in the mail yesterday.

SAMUEL. You got me a trip to France?

J. Air France doesn't only fly to France.

SAMUEL. You don't have enough money for no trip.

J. Maybe I do, mabes I don't.

SAMUEL. It's gonna be a Starbucks card. A \$5 Starbucks card in an Air France envelope. *(He puts the envelope down on the blacktop. He takes the ball to the top of the key.)*

17-19. Check.

*(SAMUEL bounces the ball to J. and J. holds it.)*

J. You aren't gonna open it?

SAMUEL. I'll open it in a minute.

J. What the hell, man?

SAMUEL. Just want to finish what we started.

17-19. Check.

*(Beat.)*

Said, "chiggity chiggity check."

J. Every time I go downtown, I have to drive by Edward Hospital. And even though they've added 50 new wings and you can't really see the window to the room anymore—up on the fourth floor—I'm like "that's where I was born." Right there. A 10-minute drive from where I've lived my whole life.

Even though I'm totally sick of Naperville, I still look up there—every time—"that's where I was born"—and it feels—

SAMUEL. You gonna check that? Stop talking like a *ho*—check the damn ball, *bro*.

*(Beat.)*



J. Whatever, dude.

And b.t.dubs, you got the rebound, so I don't have to check shit.

*(J. rolls the ball away from SAMUEL. SAMUEL runs after it, picks it up and dribbles. J. guards SAMUEL hard, pressing his elbow into SAMUEL's ribs while SAMUEL drives to the basket.)*

SAMUEL. What the hell, man?

*(Near the baseline, SAMUEL spins and jumps. He gets tangled up with J. and awkwardly crashes to the ground before he shoots. SAMUEL yells out in a pain and grabs his ankle.)*

SAMUEL *(cont'd)*. Dammit!

Dammit, dammit, dammit.

*(J. grabs the ball and dribbles to the top of the key.*

*In case SAMUEL accidentally makes the basket, J. says, "Doesn't count, chump. You were out of bounds. 19-17." Then J. continues the following, as is.)*

J. C'mon, Sam.

You got a mantle full of Academy Awards, you don't need another one.

C'mon, get up. No blood, no foul.

Get up, little brother, get up.

You want to finish this game before you open my gift?—fine—let's finish this game.

C'mon!

19-17. Stop flopping around and let's finish this. First to 21.

C'mon, Sam.

C'mon, faker.

SAMUEL. I'm not faking.

J. Faker.

SAMUEL. Cheater.

J. Flopper.

SAMUEL. Chump.

J. You're the chump, chump.

SAMUEL. Chump!

J. Don't be a Jay Cutler! Get up!

SAMUEL. Moms is gonna kill you if you broke my ankle.

J. That was *all* you!

SAMUEL. If I can't walk down the aisle to get my diploma—

J. Oh, you're walking down that aisle. I bought an air-horn—  
it wasn't cheap—so you're walking.

SAMUEL. I think it's broken.

J. Walk it off, faker!

SAMUEL. First you break my nose and now you break my—

J. I'm sorry about your nose, OK? I totally lost it and I'm sorry.  
And I just needed some time—Dilenia and I needed some time.  
But I wasn't going to miss today. No way, no how.

*(Pause.)*

Whoa, did you see that tumbleweed blow by? In the suburbs? That was ka-razy.

SAMUEL. ... I'm sorry I said what I said to Dilenia.

J. Are you really?

SAMUEL. Yeah.

It's none of my business.

*(Pause. J. picks up the envelope and gives it to SAMUEL.)*

J. Happy Graduation, bro. You're doing something today that I couldn't do.

SAMUEL. You could go back and finish if you—

J. Open the envelope!

SAMUEL. Let's see if it's a \$5 Starbucks card or a \$7 Starbucks card.

*(SAMUEL rips open the envelope. J. takes a disposable camera out of his pocket.)*

SAMUEL *(cont'd)*. Since when do you take pictures?

J. Since right now.

*(SAMUEL gets the envelope open and takes out airline tickets. He doesn't smile. J.'s camera flashes as he takes a picture.)*

SAMUEL *(reading a ticket)*. You got yourself a plane ticket for my graduation?

J. There's one in there for you, too.

SAMUEL. Samuel J. Sanders and Samuel K. Sanders. Chicago to Paris.

Oo, you got us a romantic trip to Pear-ee?

*(With a lisp.)*

Is that what you meant by bros before hos?

J. Paris is just the layover.

SAMUEL. Paris to ...

*(Saying it incorrectly.)*

Yaounde?

What the hell is Yaounde?

J. *(takes a picture, saying it correctly.)* Yaoundé, bro.

SAMUEL. What is that, the Caribbean?

J. You know where it is. *(Takes another picture.)*

SAMUEL. Stop taking pictures, dude.

*(J. takes another picture.)*

SAMUEL *(cont'd)*. Does Moms know about this?

J. I wanted it to be a surprise.

SAMUEL. This is not something you should surprise Moms with.

J. Yeah, well.

SAMUEL. Moms is gonna have a heart attack.

J. Don't worry about Moms for once!

SAMUEL. This isn't like some mission to find my biological parents, right? I don't want to go if that's what this is.

J. It's whatever you want it to be.

SAMUEL. Well, I don't want it to be that.

J. ... OK.

But don't you ever wonder—

SAMUEL *(yelling)*. No, I don't! As soon as they dropped me off at a church in a plastic bucket, they stopped being my parents. As soon as Denise Jackson Sanders went to Cameroon, adopted me and brought me home, she—