

Handles

SSAA, spoken solos, piano

Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press

Handles

You say you can't, just can't,
Just can't get a handle on a woman.
You don't know what she'll do or say;
Surprises are her nat'ral way, this woman.
Not solely governed by her mind,
Her heart will not be left behind –
And so you tell me that you can't, just can't,
Just can't get a handle on a woman?
But before you give in to outright despair about this
Impossibly hopeless, futile, cataclysmic, and not so very great scenario,
Let me tell you something that you might not know:

There are some handles on this woman.
I got 'em here and here and here.
There are some handles on this woman.
They ain't about to disappear.
Handles, handles, handles:
Seems I get another every year.

Some of them were made for earrings to dangle on,
Some of them were made for bangles to bangle on,
Some of them were made for tattoos to tangle on,
Twang, twang, twang!
Some of them were made for combin' and braidin',
Some of them were made for skippin' and wadin',
Some of them were made for bodacious bumpin' –
Every one was made for something!

Wink and wiggle, dance and dandle,
If I jiggle that's no scandal,
If you need a helpin' handle,
Call me up; I'll understandle!

Handles, handles!
I've got more than one or two.
Handles, handles!
To sing about them's not taboo!
Handles, handles, handles:
They will always be right here for you.

Some of them were made for good friends to cry on,
Some of them were made for lovers to lie on,
Some of them were made for babies to latch on,
(Don't know why you're being so slow to catch on!)
Some of them are feisty. Some of them are fizzling.
Some of them are sweet. Some are sizzling.
All of them are miracles to behold!
(Gonna have more when I get old.)

Handles, handles!
They're doubly-dimpled by design.
And if a-someone takes advantage –
Whoa, whoa, whoa! – I've got a topnotch bottom line.
Make no mistake:
These handles are completely mine all mine!

Firm or floppy, flat or flexed –
I never know what they'll do next.

Unique right down to every fold.
After me, they broke the mold!

Every wrinkle, every scar –
Beautiful is what they are.

So don't go telling me you can't get a handle on a woman.

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(♩ = 120-132) Swing 8th note rhythms

Musical score for the first system of "Handles". It features four vocal staves (S I, S II, A I, A II) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked as "Swing 8th note rhythms" with a quarter note equal to 120-132 beats per minute. The piano part begins with a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, marked *mp*. The vocal parts enter in the fourth measure with the lyrics "You say you".

Musical score for the second system of "Handles". It continues the vocal and piano parts from the first system. The vocal parts enter in the fifth measure with the lyrics "You don't know". The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, marked *p* and *mp*. The lyrics for the vocal parts are: "can't, just can't, just can't get a handle on a wo-man.".

9

S I *gliss.* what she'll do or say; sur - pris - es are her na - tu - ral way, — this wo - man. Glance at your neighbor. (Maybe roll your eyes) Look back at the audience

S II *gliss.* what she'll do or say; sur - pris - es are her na - tu - ral way, — this wo - man. Glance at your neighbor. (Maybe roll your eyes) Look back at the audience

A I this wo - man. Glance at your neighbor. (Maybe roll your eyes) Look back at the audience

A II this wo - man. Glance at your neighbor. (Maybe roll your eyes) Look back at the audience

sfz *mp* solid, smooth bass line

8th

13

S I her heart will not

S II Not sole - ly gov - erned by — her mind, — her heart will not

A I Not sole - ly gov - erned by — her mind, — her heart will not

A II her heart will not

lightly *marcato*

18 *f* *mp*

S I be left be - hind. And so you tell me that you can't, just can't, just

S II be left be - hind. And so you tell me that you can't, just can't, just

A I be left be - hind.

A II be left be - hind.

f *p*

22 **Suddenly rich, sensual**

S I can't get a han - dle, can't get a han - dle on a

S II can't get a han - dle, can't get a han - dle on a

A I *mp* can't get a han - dle, can't get a han - dle on a

A II *mp* can't get a han - dle, can't get a han - dle on a

p

Red.

Straight rhythm

25 **rallentando** *melodrammissimo molto*

S I wo - man, a han - dle on a wo - man? But be - fore you give in to

S II wo - man, a han - dle on a wo - man? But be - fore you give in to

A I wo - man, a han - dle on a wo - man? But be - fore you give in to

A II *Opt. lower octave:* wo - man, a han - dle on a wo - man? But be - fore you give in to

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

melodrammissimo molto *melodrammissimo molto* *melodrammissimo molto* *melodrammissimo molto*

p

Ped. *Ped.*

30 **rallentando, adding rubato as desired (or...er...needed)**

S I out - right de - spair a - bout the im - pos - si - bly hope - less, fu - tile, cat - a - clys - mic, and not so ve - ry great sce -

S II out - right de - spair a - bout the im - pos - si - bly hope - less, fu - tile, cat - a - clys - mic, and not so ve - ry great sce -

A I out - right de - spair a - bout the im - pos - si - bly hope - less, fu - tile, cat - a - clys - mic, and not so ve - ry great sce -

A II out - right de - spair a - bout the im - pos - si - bly hope - less, fu - tile, cat - a - clys - mic, and not so ve - ry great sce -

Ped. *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.* *Ped.*

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...AND SOME OF IT WAS EVEN MINE.

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40

A

(♩ = 100) Straight rhythm (Not swung) *

S I

S II

A I

A II

han-dles on this wo-man: I got 'em here and here and here. There are some

han-dles on this wo-man: I got 'em here and here and here. There are some

mp

* What will happen if you swing the rhythm or rush the tempo here? Nothing bad really...until you reach Rehearsal Letter B.

At that point your tongues will get completely tangled. Consider yourself warned.

44

S I

S II

A I

A II

They ain't a - bout to dis-ap - pear. han-dles on this wo-man: They ain't a - bout to dis-ap - pear. han-dles on this wo-man:

mp

48 *mf*

S I
Han-dles, han-dles, han-dles: Seems I get a - no - ther ev' - ry year.

S II
Han-dles, han-dles, han-dles: Seems I get a - no - ther ev' - ry year.

A I
Oh,

A II
Oh,

mf

p

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

Exclaimed with delight:

51 *mf*

Solo 1
Oh look, here's another one!

Solo 2
mf
Congratulations!

Solo 3
mf
Oooh, can I see?

S I

S II
p
Oh

A I

A II
p
Oh

p

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

B

Handles (SSAA, spoken solos, piano) - Choral Score

S I

S II

A I

A II

mp

Some of them were made for ban - gles to ban - gle on,

Some of them were made for ear - rings to dan - gle on,

*

S I

S II

A I

A II

mp

Some of them were made for tat - toos to tan - gle on --

twang,* twang twang!

mp

twang,* twang twang!

Ped. Ped.

* Twangin' tip: Give us a good gnarly diphthong here, and then go straight to the "ng."

58

S I

S II
Some of them were made for comb - in' and braid - in',

A I

A II
Some of them were made for skip - pin' and wad - in',

*
Ped.

60

S I
Some were made for bo - da - cious bump - in', Ev' - ry one was made for some - thin'!_

S II
Some were made for bo - da - cious bump - in', Ev' - ry one was made for some - thin'!_

A I
Oh, bo - da - cious bump - in', Ev' - ry one was made for some - thin'!_

A II
Oh, bo - da - cious bump - in', Ev' - ry one was made for some - thin'!_

Ped.

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68

S I help - in' hand - le, Call me up; I'll un - der - stand - le!

S II help - in' hand - le, Call me up; I'll un - der - stand - le!

A I If you need a Call me up; I'll un - der - stand - le!

A II If you need a Call me up; I'll un - der - stand - le!

72 **D**

S I *mf* Oh han - dles,

S II *p* Han - dles, han - dles, *mf* Han - dles,

A I *p* Han - dles, han - dles, *mf* Oh I've got more than one or two! Han - dles,

A II *p* Han - dles, han - dles, *mf* Han - dles,

76

S I *mf* Han - dles,

S II *p* Han - dles, han - dles, *mf* Han - dles,

A I *p* Han - dles, han - dles, *mf* Han - dles,

A II *p* Han - dles, han - dles, *mf* To sing a - bout them's not ta - boo!_____

The musical score for measures 76-79 features four vocal parts (S I, S II, A I, A II) and piano accompaniment. The vocal parts enter with the lyrics 'Han - dles, han - dles, Han - dles, Han - dles, Han - dles, Han - dles, To sing a - bout them's not ta - boo!'. The piano accompaniment provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines in both hands. Dynamics range from piano (*p*) to mezzo-forte (*mf*).

80

S I Han-dles, han-dles, han-dles: They will al-ways be right here for you.____

S II Han-dles, han-dles, han-dles: They will al-ways be right here for you.____

A I Oh,_____ They will al-ways be right here for you.____

A II Oh,_____ They will al-ways be right here for you.____

ped. *ped.* *ped.* *ped.* *ped.* *ped.* *ped.*

The musical score for measures 80-83 continues the vocal parts with the lyrics 'Han-dles, han-dles, han-dles: They will al-ways be right here for you.' and 'Oh, They will al-ways be right here for you.'. The piano accompaniment includes a section marked 'ped.' (pedal) under the bass line, indicating sustained chords. The score concludes with a key signature change to one sharp (F#) and a common time signature.

83 Spoken: *mf*

Solo 4 That's right. My handles are never gonna let you down!

S I *p* Oh

S II *p* Oh

A I

A II

ped. *ped.* *ped.* *ped.* *ped.* *ped.*

86 **E**

S I

S II

A I *mp* Some of them were made for good_ friends to cry on,

A II *mp* Some of them were made for lov-ers to lie on,

mp

88 *mf*

Solo 5 Don't know why you're be- in' so_ slow to catch on!

S I Some of them were made for ba - bies to latch on.

S II

A I

A II

Red. *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *

90 *mp*

S I Some are siz - zle - ing,

S II *mp* Some are fiz - zle - ing, Some are siz - zle - ing,

A I Some of them are fei - sty, Some are sweet,

A II Some are sweet,

mp *Red.* *Red.* *Red.* *Red.*

92 *mf*

S I All are mir - a cles to be - hold.

S II All are mir - a cles to be - hold.

A I *mf* Gon - na have more when I get old.

A II Opt. lower octave: *mf* Gon - na have more when I get old.

mf

Red. Red. Red. Red. *

94 **F**

S I Oh han - dles,

S II Han - dles, han - dles, Han - dles,

A I Han - dles, han - dles, They're dou-bly dim-pled by de-sign,* Han - dles, And if a -

A II Han - dles, han - dles, Han - dles, And if a -

* Do put in a little extra effort on the final "n" of the word "design," in order to help the audience understand this great lyric!

Handles (SSAA, spoken solos, piano) - Choral Score

16

98

S I I've got a top - notch bot - tom line.

S II whoa, whoa, whoa, I've got a top - notch

A I - some - one takes ad - van - tage I've got a top - notch

A II - some - one takes ad - van - tage whoa, whoa, whoa, I've got a top - notch

101

S I — Make no mis - take: these han - dles are com - plete - ly mine all

S II bot - tom line. Make no mis - take: these han - dles are com - plete - ly mine all

A I bot - tom line. Make no mis - take: these han - dles are com - plete - ly mine all

A II bot - tom line. Make no mis - take: these han - dles are com - plete - ly mine, all

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III **Optional Repeat *** Spoken:

Solo 7

Finger Snaps

S I

S II

A I

A II

** I'd be selfish to keep all this fun to myself!*

Sure, if your ensemble wishes to invent some "Handles Couplets" of your own, go ahead and add or substitute one or two during this optional repeat. -E.A.

115

Solo 7

Finger Snaps

- nique right down to ev' - ry fold, Af - ter me they broke the mold!

117

Finger Snaps

S I

S II

A I

A II

Han - dles, han - dles,

Han - dles, han - dles, han - dles, han - dles,

Han - dles, han - dles, han - dles, han - dles,

Han - dles, han - dles, han - dles, han - dles,

120

S I
Han - dles,

S II
han - dles,

A I
han - dles,

A II
han - dles.

mp

Ped. Ped.

122

Tutti

3. Ev' - ry wrin - kle, ev' - ry scar -- Beau - ti - ful is what they are.

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

124 **Very slowly and freely, with heavy swing.**

f

S I *f* So don't tell me that you

S II *f* So don't tell me that you

A I *f* So don't tell me that you

A II *f* So don't tell me that you

f

127

div.

S I *gliss.* *gliss.* can't get a handle on a wo - - man.

S II *gliss.* can't get a handle on a wo - - man.

A I *gliss.* can't get a handle on a wo - - man.

A II *gliss.* *gliss.* can't get a handle on a wo - - man.

div.

Piano: ad lib. to your heart's content!