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SF PERUSALS

The Right Honourable Lady

A play

Francis Beckett

Samuel French — London
www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk



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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY

First presented by First Draft Theatre Company at the Hen and Chickens Theatre, London, in a different version in 2005.

Nicola	Clareine Cronin
Sally; the chief whip	Katy Balfour
Flavia	Ali Lane
Stephen	Peter Rae
Miranda	Claire Louise Oliver
Dr Patricia Marks	Caroline Langston

Directed by Joanna Turner

Subsequently presented as published here by Player Playwrights on 4th February 2008

Nicola	Lindsay McGill
Griff; the chief whip	Christopher Prior
Flavia	Lexie Howe
Stephen	Rexie Barnes
Miranda	Nicola Hollinshead

Directed by Francis Beckett

CHARACTERS

Nicola Macdonald PC MP, Secretary of State, 30s or 40s
Griff, the chief whip, 40s or 50s
Flavia, journalist for the *Daily Trumpet*, 20s
Stephen Harling, university lecturer, 20s
Miranda, editor of the *Daily Trumpet*, 30s

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action alternates between Nicola's flat and the *Daily Trumpet* newsroom. Scene 7 takes place in a university lecture theatre, and Scene 11 in a secondary school classrom.

Scene 1 Nicola's flat
Scene 2 The newsroom
Scene 3 Nicola's flat
Scene 4 The newsroom
Scene 5 Nicola's flat
Scene 6 The newsroom
Scene 7 A university lecture theatre
Scene 8 Nicola's flat
Scene 9 The newsroom
Scene 10 Nicola's flat
Scene 11 A secondary school classroom

PRODUCTION NOTE

The stage is divided into two. One side is set as Nicola's flat; the other side as the *Daily Trumpet* newsroom. The action shifts from side to side, by means of lights cross-fading between the opposite sides of the stage. For Scene 7, a lectern is placed at the front of the stage. No additional scenery is required for the classroom setting in Scene 11.

Also by Francis Beckett, published by Samuel French

Money Makes You Happy

Scene 1

The action opens in Nicola's flat

Nicola sits in an easy chair, reading papers from a red box. There is another chair opposite and a table with a telephone on it. Griff and Flavia stand at one side, talking. Flavia holds a microphone

Griff Right, you know the rules. One question, that's it. Get your soundbite, then go, or that's the last time you get within spitting distance of a minister.

Flavia You're a bastard, aren't you, Griff?

Griff Flattery will get you nowhere. Go on then.

Flavia sits down opposite Nicola and holds out the microphone

Flavia You ready, Nicola? OK. Secretary of State, is there any connection between Omnicom.com giving your party one million pounds, and your department awarding Omnicom.com a fifty million pound contract for government IT support?

Nicola The Prime Minister's made it absolutely clear that this government is against corruption. Have we completely erased all the problems? No. Are our politics cleaner under this government? Yes. You know, these stories aren't what the people out there want to read about, whatever you people in the media think. They want us to be getting on with the things that matter to them, with making their lives better. Schools. Hospitals. Are schools and hospitals perfect? No. Is this government making great strides to make them better? Yes.

She returns to her red box

Flavia But isn't ——

Griff One question, we said.

Flavia Come on, Griff, that wasn't an answer and you know it.
Griff You know the game. One more question and your access to ministers is over. O-V-E-R. Over.
Flavia OK. OK. Lovely, perfect, so grateful. Nicola, maybe we could have lunch ——
Nicola Lunch is good ——
Griff You were going, right?
Flavia Want to fix it now?
Nicola Darling, do you mind doing it through my private office, only I never know what they might have put in my diary.
Flavia I tried that last time we said we'd have lunch. They weren't exactly helpful. Maybe if you had a word with them, said you want to meet me ——
Griff You heard, do it through the private office.
Flavia You know I'm leaving the BBC ——
Griff Sure, sure, going to the *Daily Trumpet*. What a rag. Now fuck off.
Flavia Bye, Nicola.
Nicola Bye. Call me now. Don't forget.

Flavia exits

Griff I'm off home too, right, had just about enough. No more hacks you want me to bark at?
Nicola Griff…
Griff What?
Nicola Griff, she's the third reptile this week who's tried to draw me out on Omnicom.com. I don't like the feel of it. It feels like last Spring.
Griff Last Spring we lost three cabinet ministers and if Marilyn hadn't pulled out all the emotional stops, we'd have lost a Prime Minister too. We're not letting that happen again. Don't you worry. Bye now.

Griff exits

Nicola is left alone with her papers and her red box

Stephen enters behind her

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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