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The Form

A Play in One Act

N.F. Simpson

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION



**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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THE FORM

Produced at the Arts Theatre Club, London, on the 21st January 1961, and subsequently at The Criterion Theatre, on the 13th February 1961, with the following cast of characters:

(in the order of their appearance)

MR WHINBY	<i>Richard Briers</i>
MISS HAVIOUR	<i>Wendy Craig</i>
MR CHACTERSON	<i>Emlyn Williams</i>
MISS ONGEW	<i>Alison Leggatt</i>

Directed by DONALD McWHINNIE

Settings and lighting by BRIAN CURRAH

The action of the Play passes in a small office

Time—the present

THE FORM

SCENE—*A small office.*

The furnishings are very simple. There are four desks. No. 1, down L, is used by Mr Whinby; No. 2, LC, is used by Miss Haviour; No. 3, RC, is used by Miss Ongew; No. 4, down R, is used by Mr Chacterson. Each desk has a chair above it. There is an additional chair L of the desk No. 4. There is a table up C with a card index on it and there are hatstands up R and up L. In addition to the usual desk equipment, desks numbers 2 and 3 have typewriters and desks numbers 1 and 4 have intercom units. A bowler hat hangs on the hatstand up L. Office buzzers are located down L, down R and up R.

When the CURTAIN rises, the desks and areas LC and L are lit. The desks and area RC and R are in darkness. MR WHINBY is standing C. He is aged about twenty-three. He lacks charm, but has a natural gaucheness which would do instead provided he were willing to make a go of being the failure nature intended him to be. He wears an ordinary grey Burberry and no hat. MISS HAVIOUR, is younger but more mature, and possesses a quietly mocking feminine intelligence which enables her to see through Whinby while at the same time taking a perverse liking to him in spite of the irritation he causes her. She is seated at desk No. 1, down L. She is busy sorting index cards. There is a pause then WHINBY moves behind Miss Haviour and looks over her shoulder. MISS HAVIOUR looks up. WHINBY smiles nervously at her, and MISS HAVIOUR returns to her work. WHINBY moves C. MISS HAVIOUR hums a tune. WHINBY stops abruptly then sits in the chair above desk No. 2. There is a pause. MISS HAVIOUR stops humming. WHINBY rises and moves below desk No. 2 and prepares to tell a joke to MISS HAVIOUR who looks up in anticipation. This "dries" WHINBY stone dead.

MISS HAVIOUR. Oh, dear! *(She returns to work)*

(*There is a long silence then WHINBY backs two paces up LG and indicates the bowler hat on the stand up L*)

WHINBY. Whose is that?

MISS HAVIOUR (*without looking up*) What?

WHINBY. Over there.

MISS HAVIOUR (*with the briefest of glances*) Mr Chacterson's.

(*There is a pause*)

WHINBY. And who's Mr Chacterson?

MISS HAVIOUR. You should know. You've come here for an interview with him.

WHINBY. Oh. Calls himself Chacterson, does he? (*He pauses*) What's the idea behind that, then?

MISS HAVIOUR. There's no idea behind it at all, as far as I know. It happens to be his name.

(*There is a pause*)

WHINBY. Doing it for a bet, I suppose. (*He smiles. The smile fades. After a pause*) Is that it?

MISS HAVIOUR. I've told you once—it's his name.

(*There is a pause*)

WHINBY. How long is he going to be?

MISS HAVIOUR. He's through there in his office, I expect. He'll ring when he's ready.

(*There is a pause*)

WHINBY. What's his hat doing, then? Out here?

MISS HAVIOUR. Just hanging there.

(*There is a pause*)

WHINBY (*moving to R of her*) Isn't there anything I can be filling up? While I'm waiting? A form or something?

MISS HAVIOUR. There isn't anyone to give you a form until Mr Chacterson arrives.

WHINBY. I thought he'd arrived.

MISS HAVIOUR. Yes—well, if he has he'll ring when he's ready.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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