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SF PERUSALS

A Plan of Action

A Play

Philip Ayckbourn

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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A PLAN OF ACTION

First performed by Quorum Theatre Company as part of a southern France schools tour 2008, with the following cast:

Roger Holmes	David Raymond
Samantha Shaw	Judi Armstrong
Liam Holmes	Gregory A. Smith
Tabitha Shaw	Becky George

Directed by Philip Ayckbourn
Designed by Lucy French

CHARACTERS

Roger Holmes, 40
Liam Holmes, Roger's 16-year-old son
Samantha Shaw, Roger's girlfriend, 40
Tabitha Shaw, Samantha's 16-year-old daughter

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The action of the play takes place in the respective living-rooms of Roger Holmes and Samantha Shaw.

Scene 1	7.20 in the evening
Scene 2	Ten minutes later
Scene 3	7.00 the following evening
Scene 4	9.00 the next morning
Scene 5	10.00 that evening
Scene 6	7.00 the following evening
Scene 7	Two hours later
Scene 8	9.00 the next morning
Scene 9	7.30 that same evening
Scene 10	9.00 the next morning
Scene 11	2.00pm, a few days later
Scene 12	7.30 that same evening

Time — the present

PRODUCTION NOTE

Scene change music should assist by being brief and punchy. This will help signify a passage of time whilst not overly interrupting the flow of the action.

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This information sheet is one of a series produced in consultation with the Joint Advisory Committee for Broadcasting and the Performing Arts. It gives guidance on the management of weapons that are part of a production, including firearms, replicas and deactivated weapons.

This sheet may be downloaded from: www.hse.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can contact HSE BOOKS, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995.

A PLAN OF ACTION

Scene 1

Roger Holmes' and Samantha Shaw's respective living-rooms. It is 7.20 p.m.

Although the action takes place more or less in the same stage space we are to believe it is taking place in separate rooms in separate houses. The invisible dividing wall between the two rooms is often quite flexible but generally SR *is the Holmes' residence and* SL *is the Shaws' residence*

There is a lounge, a chair, a mirror, and a framed photo of Roger's late wife SR. *There are also some lockable french windows.* SL *there is a lounge, a mirror and a hi-fi stereo with a remote control*

When the Lights come up Tabitha is seated SL *reading a book and Liam is seated* SR *playing a hand-held computer game*

Samantha enters SL

Samantha Well? (*She goes to the mirror and checks her appearance)* Maybe the skirt's better. What do you think? Tabby?
Tabitha Whatever, Mum. I don't care.
Samantha I do. I want your advice. Aren't you going to make an effort, put something nice on?
Tabitha What for?
Samantha For him.
Tabitha No, why should I?
Samantha To make a good impression.
Tabitha I don't want to make a good impression.
Samantha Please yourself.
Tabitha I will.

Samantha exits SL

Roger enters SR

Roger OK, Liam, nearly ready are you?
Liam No.

Roger goes to the mirror and checks his appearance

Look, can't I just stay here and watch TV?
Roger No.
Liam I don't want to spend my evening with some girl I don't even know.
Roger You'll need to meet her sometime.
Liam Why?
Roger She's pretty.
Liam I don't care. She's that woman's daughter.
Roger That "woman" has a name you know. Samantha.
Liam Poor Mum, if she could see you now.
Roger She'd be happy; happy that I've found love again.
Liam No she wouldn't, she'd be devastated.
Roger Please, Liam, we're going to be late.
Liam This is murder.

Liam exits SR

Roger dials his mobile. Samantha's mobile rings

Tabitha (*calling off*) Mum, phone.
Samantha (*off*) Can you answer it please?

Tabitha looks at the display screen on the phone

Tabitha (*calling off*) It's him.
Samantha (*off*) Answer it.

Tabitha answers the mobile phone

Tabitha (*into Samantha's mobile*) Hallo?
Roger (*into his mobile*) Hallo my sexy love bunny … Hallo?
Tabitha (*into Samantha's mobile*) It's Tabitha.
Roger (*into his mobile*) Oh ... Hallo Tabby. How are you?
Tabitha (*into Samantha's mobile*) OK.

Samantha enters SL. *She takes the mobile from Tabitha*

Samantha (*into her mobile*) Hallo.
Roger (*into his mobile*) Hallo. How's my sexy love bunny?
Samantha (*into her mobile*) She's fine. Looking forward to seeing her gorgeous huggly bear.

Tabitha Ugh!

Tabitha exits SL

Roger (*into his mobile*) I've booked the restaurant for eight.
Samantha (*into her mobile*) Lovely.
Roger (*into his mobile*) We're just leaving — hopefully. Be with you in ten.
Samantha (*into her mobile*) How's Liam?
Roger (*into his mobile*) Fine. Tabitha?
Samantha (*into her mobile*) OK. It'll be good for them to have this evening together.
Roger (*into his mobile*) Yes. I'm sure they'll like each other, eventually.
Samantha (*into her mobile*) I'm sure.
Roger (*into his mobile*) Well, see you soon. Kiss, kiss.
Samantha (*into her mobile*) Kiss, kiss, kiss.
Roger (*into his mobile*) Kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss.

They hang up

(*Calling off*) Liam, we're going. Now!

Roger exits SR

Samantha checks her appearance in the mirror

Samantha Oh … no.

Scene change music plays

Samantha exits SL

Scene 2

Ten minutes later

Tabitha enters SL *and sits in the lounge, reading a magazine*

The doorbell rings

Tabitha (*calling off*) Mum, he's here. Mum? Oh.

Tabitha exits SL

Roger (*off*) Hallo, Tabitha.

Tabitha enters followed by Roger

Tabitha She's upstairs changing. Again.
Roger (*calling off*) Liam?

Liam enters SL

Liam, this is Tabitha.
Tabitha Hi.
Liam All right.
Roger OK … Ah, yes.

Roger takes out his wallet

For food.

He gives a note to Liam

Samantha enters SL

Ah ha, here she is.
Samantha Here I am.
Roger And doesn't she look delicious?
Samantha Why thank you, kind sir.

Samantha and Roger kiss

Hallo, Liam.
Liam Hi.
Samantha Right. Plenty to eat in the fridge, darling.
Roger All taken care of.
Samantha Ah. Well, have fun you two.
Roger See you, Liam.
Samantha Bye, sweetie.

Roger and Samantha exit SL

There is a pause

Tabitha So …
Liam So … I didn't want to come, you know.
Tabitha I didn't want you to come.
Liam He forced me to.
Tabitha This is very awkward.
Liam We don't have to talk. I can just watch TV.

There is a pause

Tabitha Mum, she's not even divorced yet. It's hardly been four months since she and Dad split up.
Liam It's only been a year since my mum died.
Tabitha No offence, but your dad doesn't compare to my dad, no way.
Liam Well your mum doesn't compare to my mum. No offence.
Tabitha Well …
Liam Well …

There is a slight pause

Tabitha You are allowed to take off your coat, if you want.

There is a slight pause

So… Drink?
Liam What have you got?
Tabitha What do you want?
Liam Beer.
Tabitha No beer.
Liam Wine?
Tabitha Ah … no.
Liam Anything alcoholic?
Tabitha Sherry.
Liam Oh God, this is what hell is like.
Tabitha We could buy some beer and pizza. Watch a movie.
Liam Got anything good?
Tabitha That depends on what you mean by good.
Liam Action films, sci-fi, horror?
Tabitha No.
Liam Didn't think so.
Tabitha We could rent something, something we both want to watch.
Liam That might be difficult.
Tabitha I'm sure we could find something.

Liam OK. But remember, just because we're doing this, it doesn't mean we're friends or ever going to be friends, is that understood?
Tabitha Don't worry.
Liam We're just making the best of a bad situation.
Tabitha I agree.
Liam OK.
Tabitha OK. Let's go.

Scene change music plays

They exit SL

Scene 3

The following evening, 7.00 p.m.

Roger enters SR*, carrying a sealed envelope and talking on his mobile phone*

Roger (*into his mobile*) Right, I'll meet you at the theatre then shall I? … Right. … Yes. Kiss, kiss.

Samantha enters SL

Samantha (*into her mobile*) Kiss, kiss, kiss.
Roger (*into his mobile*) Kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss.

They hang up. Samantha checks her appearance in the mirror

(*Calling off*) Liam I'm going. There's a letter for you. By hand. I'll leave it here shall I? Liam? Ah.

Roger puts the envelope in an obvious place and exits SR

Tabitha enters SL*, carrying a book*

Samantha You'll be all right then, will you? Oh, smile, darling. You should be pleased for me. I'm happy again. Roger's a good man. He's a good man and a kind man.
Tabitha Yes, but he's not Dad, is he?
Samantha No … he's not Dad. Oh, I'm going to be late. How do I look? Right, I'll see you later, sweetie.

Samantha exits SL

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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