

SAMUEL FRENCH SAMPLE PERUSAL

This sample is an excerpt - an appetiser, if you will - from a full Samuel French title.

This sample is just for you to try out, and it can't be used for performance, downloaded, printed or distributed in any way.

Take it for a whirl and see if it tickles your fancy!

For more information about licensing this or other shows, or to browse thousands more plays and theatre books to buy please visit our website.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

DIRK GENTLY'S HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY

by JAMES GOSS & ARVIND ETHAN DAVID
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY DOUGLAS ADAMS



WWW.SAMUELFRENCH.CO.UK
WWW.SAMUELFRENCH.COM

Copyright © 2016 by James Goss and Arvind Ethan David
All Rights Reserved

DIRK GENTLY'S HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY is fully protected under the copyright laws of the British Commonwealth, including Canada, the United States of America, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including professional and amateur stage productions, recitation, lecturing, public reading, motion picture, radio broadcasting, television and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

ISBN 978-0-573-11122-8

www.samuel french.co.uk / www.samuel french.com

Cover art and design by Robert Hack with Stephen Downer

FOR AMATEUR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

**UNITED KINGDOM AND WORLD
EXCLUDING NORTH AMERICA**

plays@SamuelFrench-London.co.uk

020 7255 4302/01

UNITED STATES AND CANADA

info@SamuelFrench.com

1-866-598-8449

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French,
depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *DIRK GENTLY'S HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY* is subject to a licensing fee. Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are strongly advised to apply to the appropriate agent before starting rehearsals, advertising, or booking a theatre. A licensing fee must be paid whether the title is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged.

The professional rights in this play are controlled by United Agents LLP, 12-26 Lexington Street, London, W1F 0LE.

No one shall make any changes in this title for the purpose of production. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means, now known or yet to be invented, including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, videotaping, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher. No one shall upload this title, or part of this title, to any social media websites.

The right of James Goss and Arvind Ethan David to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

For PASF in memoriam, and to SGAH, AGM, SHCR and all the teachers at Stowe School, who believed in two improbable teenagers.



A proportion of all revenue from the book sales and performance fees from this play will be donated to Save the Rhino International, of which Douglas Adams was a founding patron. Save the Rhino International's vision is for all five rhino species to thrive in the wild for future generations.

DIRK GENTLY'S



HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY

A SPOON TOO SHORT

DIRK GENTLY'S MOST BAFFLING AND
INCOMPREHENSIBLE CASE COMES TO COMICS

ARVIND ETHAN DAVID
ILIAS MYRAZIS

20

12

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF THE WORLD'S WEIRDEST DETECTIVE... CONTINUE!

ON SALE NOW!

IDW

FULL COLOR • 32 PAGES • \$3.99
WWW.IDWPUBLISHING.COM
© 2016 Completely Unexpected Productions

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the play of *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*. The light works, the gravity works. Everything else we take our chances with.

After *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Douglas Adams went on to create Dirk Gently, a detective with a belief in the fundamental interconnectedness of all things, a unique relationship with the laws of probability, and a love of cats and pizza. In *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency* (the first of two Dirk books, Douglas was working on a third, *The Salmon of Doubt*, when he died in 2001) Dirk finds himself on the trail of a gruesome murderer who is fundamentally interconnected with the works of Coleridge, quantum physics and the enigmatic study of the Cambridge Professor of Chronology. It is on this adventure that the play is based.

*

For us, it started at boarding school, and we were asked to direct the school play. Unable to find anything we wanted to put on (mainly because we were too lazy to actually *read* anything) we decided, with the careless hubris of teenagers, to adapt a novel. Not just any novel of course, but *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*, a novel with a ludicrously complicated plot which spans four billion years, at least three alternative universes; a cast comprising vampire-detectives, aliens and ghosts and an electric monk; all linked by the central theme of “the fundamental interconnectedness of all things” (hence ‘holistic’).

We were sixteen, so didn't bother to get rights clearance but just staged the thing. It was very short (about an hour) and by all accounts, amusing but utterly incomprehensible. It had a budget of forty pounds. A video recording of this production exists, but no one is sure exactly why.

Somehow, though, within the narrow confines of school cloisters, the play was a huge, popular success. As such, it was a changing point in our school careers: too clever by half, overly academic, poetry quoting, playwriting adolescents seldom win popularity contests in British boarding schools; somehow, however *Dirk's* popular appeal spread to us, and suddenly, unexpectedly, we had street-cred.

Fast-forward three years: we're undergrads at Oxford, trying to make our mark on the University drama scene. *Dirk* once again comes to mind, and a re-written, re-vamped production, rife with special effects, is born. This time, we figure we should get permission from Douglas's agents – and being the terribly gracious Ed Victor and Maggie Phillips, they give it. More surprisingly, they come to see the show, and, enjoy it so much they tell Douglas that he must see it, too – and on the penultimate night, the great man does. Even more unexpectedly: he loves it.

Later that night, over Moroccan lamb, red wine and the adrenalin from meeting one of our idols, Douglas opened and then blew away our minds with conversation about theatre and the Internet, writing comedy and science fiction, and the joy of collaborative creation. In retrospect, that night marked the beginning of our careers. It was when we started making up stories for a living.

In the years since, much to our surprise, there has come a seemingly never-ending series of requests, from across the globe, to perform the play. Somehow the global

Douglas Adams mafia had heard of the script's existence, they ferreted pirate sections across the wilderness of the Internet, and then started to email us. From Minnesota and Melbourne, from Buenos Aires and Didcot, from universities and schools, from amateur dramatic groups and Douglas fan clubs, requests kept coming. As such, the play constantly got re-written and (hopefully) improved.

More than twenty years later, and the play is being published to join the many manifestations of *Dirk Gently* now in the world: comics, multiple television shows as well as novelisations and podcasts of Douglas's lost *Doctor Who* episodes that inspired Dirk in the first place. That the two of us, whose careers started that night with Douglas, have been involved as writers, editors and/or producers of most of the versions since, is as wonderful as it was unforeseeable.

Arthur Conan Doyle wrote, about another detective, that "talent immediately recognizes genius"; our little adolescent talents recognized the genius of Dirk Gently, and we've been lucky to ride shotgun with him throughout our lives.

It is a remarkable thing for one author, and one fictional character to have such a lasting and direct effect on so many for so long – for whilst our story might be one of the most extreme cases of Douglas Adams's influence, fourteen years after his death, it is increasingly clear how much today's generation of science fiction and comedy writers and filmmakers owes him.

Such positive influence is something we would have liked to have thanked Douglas for in life. Denied that chance, perhaps this public acknowledgement makes small recompense.

Douglas's response, though, might be predicted: a modest shrug of his giant shoulders and the riposte that it wasn't him we should thank, but just the "fundamental interconnectedness of all things..."

Arvind Ethan David & James Goss

Arvind Ethan David is a producer and writer of film, television, theatre and comic books. In addition to the multiple manifestations of *Dirk Gently*, he is best known for his collaborations with David Baddiel on the film and musical versions of *The Infidel*. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, and their (entirely alive, if utterly insane) cat, Olive.

James Goss has written novels, plays and audio dramas, but only *Dirk* haunts him. It's younger, funnier, and it's always going to more interesting places than him. In an effort to settle the score, he's novelised two Douglas Adams television scripts – *City of Death* and *The Pirate Planet*. He's making sure that, like him, they stay firmly on the shelf.

PRODUCTION NOTES

When you have a play with a time span of four billion years, a cast that includes ghosts, aliens and Cambridge dons, and a study that travels through space/time at the drop of an abacus, you have to be a little inventive.

Here are a few suggestions for its staging. Feel free to interpret them according to your means and whims.

Screen

Some of the more out-there scenes greatly benefit from having the resources of a screen and a projector. What you project on the screen depends rather on your budget and available skills. Here are three points on the spectrum:

1. Produce a series of short animated sequences, incorporating your live action cast – you'll find your animators get very excited by the "beginning of life" and "time travel" sequences.
2. Using slides, photographs, drawings, e.g. of an alien space craft, a huge explosion, a close up of a salt cellar in a pot, a horse in a bathroom.
3. If no screen, then lighting, loud noise and smoke.

This text throughout assumes the full, FAT experience.

Set design

Set design also provides something of a challenge when your locations range from prehistoric earth, the inside of a bubble of stasis and a horse-filled bathroom. Sorry about that. Again, the screen is helpful, but however designed, the set should include spaces which can serve as:

1. **Reg's study** – a cosy sofa, lamp, and chair scenario, with a coffee table, prominent on which is an abacus. A hatch leads to a kitchen, a staircase leads to a bathroom.
2. **Dirk's office** – two desks (Dirk's and his secretary Janice's), chairs, a light, hat-stand, and telephones.
3. **Susan's flat** – a cello (or other suitable musical instrument) and a sofa plus an old-fashioned answerphone.
4. **Richard's flat** – living room and computer-filled study, linked by a staircase which is partially blocked by a (firmly wedged) sofa.
5. A large central area which passes for halls/roads/cars/breathing space.

Conjuring tricks

This is a play in which close-up magic plays an important part. In an ideal world, all the conjuring tricks from Reg and Dirk should be properly and expertly performed using skill, charm and extreme legerdemain. Unless you are lucky enough to have Neil Patrick Harris in your cast, some boning up on basic sleight-of-hand techniques may be necessary.

Use of music

The relationship between music (in particular the music of Johann Sebastian Bach), mathematics and the natural world is central to the plot of the novel. Dramatic imperatives, sadly, have made this rather less so in the play. Nevertheless, the choice of music is important, and we have indicated appropriate pieces at various points in the text.

Further, it is important that the actress playing Susan Way is an accomplished classical musician. In both novel and play script, she is a cellist. If casting limitations rule this out, a violinist, a harpist, a pianist or even a flautist will all do as well, as long as music choices are made intelligently. Hell, if she's *really* good, she can play the bongos. References to musical instruments in the dialogue and stage directions should be adapted accordingly.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DIRK GENTLY – *a holistic detective*

JANICE PEARCE – *Dirk's secretary*

"REG", Professor Urban Chronotis – *Regius Professor of Chronology,
University of Cambridge*

RICHARD MacDUFF – *a coder*

GORDON WAY – *a (late) tech magnate*

SUSAN WAY – *a musician, Gordon's sister*

MICHAEL WENTON-WEAKES – *A (fired) magazine editor. Possessed.*

SERGEANT GILKS – *A plainclothes police detective*

***PERKINS** – *A policeman*

***ALBERT ROSS** – *Editor, Fathom Magazine*

SARAH ANDROYD – *a little girl*

***MARVIN ANDROYD** – *her father*

***WATKIN** – *a don*

***GORDON'S HOUSEKEEPER**

***WAITRESS, *BRIDE, *GROOM, *WEDDING GUESTS, *DONS,**

***GHOSTS, *ALIENS, etc**

HORSE

** Denotes parts which are easily doubled up*

ACT ONE

Scene One, Scene Two, Scene Three, Scene Four,
Scene Five, Scene Six

ACT TWO

Scene One, Scene Two, Scene Three, Scene Four,
Scene Five, Scene Six

ACT THREE

Scene One, Scene Two, Scene Three, Scene Four,
Scene Five, Scene Six, Scene Seven, Scene Eight, Scene Nine

EPILOGUE

Scene Ten

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

On screen: Animation Title Sequence – Like Star Wars, but done with blu-tac and felt tip pens.

“Douglas Adams’s

DIRK GENTLY’S

HOLISTIC

DETECTIVE

AGENCY...”

DIRK *stands in darkness.*

He is dressed entirely in a long dark blue leather jacket, a red hat which fails to harmonise with it, and a suit which fails to harmonise with either: somehow he makes it cool. He is lit as he strikes a match. He speaks with an accent so British it could be Eastern European.

DIRK That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! Those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of paradise.

DIRK begins to move, talking as he goes, a spotlight follows him.

It's beautiful is it not? It's Coleridge. Samuel Taylor. Poet. Ever wonder what – or who – was going through his mind when he wrote it? And what, if you will forgive, does it mean? Not the most exciting of mysteries, you might think, yet things are seldom what they seem. And little questions sometimes have big answers.

DIRK, at the bottom of the stairs, makes a grand gesture with his arms. As he speaks, lights up on DIRK's office, stage right. Office sounds inter-mingling with more out-of-this world ones: howling wind, whirring photocopier, the screech of a hawk, the clattering of a typewriter, the neighing of a horse, the ringing of a telephone...

Welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen. These are the offices of Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency – Dirk Gently, owner and proprietor, at your service (*pause*). Thank you for asking; the term “holistic” refers to my belief in the fundamental interconnectedness of all things.

I do not concern myself with such petty things as fingerprint powder, tell-tale pieces of pocket fluff or inane footprints. I see the solution to each problem as being detectable in the pattern and web of the whole.

It is an oft-repeated cliché, ladies and gentleman, that the flapping of a butterfly's wings in the Sahara may precipitate a tsunami in South Wales – but precious few have realised how many lives would be saved if that butterfly's frivolous flapping could be stopped. Such is my burden: such is my destiny.

Some of the events which you are about to see may strike you as fantastical and tangential – chalk that up to your rough-and-ready understanding of the physical world. Everything matters.

Dance with me to the waltz of causation. In time you will understand many things. Even my expenses. Which are necessary and non-negotiable.

On screen:

CAPTION: FOUR BILLION YEARS AGO... FRIDAY.

A desolate, alien landscape gradually appears – the camera pans across rocks and boulders. The sky is bleak and forbidding. Nothing is living here.

This time there will be no witnesses, except for you and me. This time there will just be the dead earth, a rumble of thunder, and the onset of that interminable drizzle from the north-east by which so many of the world's most momentous events seem to be accompanied.

With an even grander gesture, DIRK sweeps off, stage right.

On screen: The sky crackles with clouds, and there is rain. As the haze clears we begin to hear garbled radio instructions in an alien tongue. We see a spaceship, perched on a cliff edge.

The stage is suddenly flooded by bizarrely dressed characters, clad in a strange cross between space-suits and scuba diving kit. They are shouting from 'Kubla Khan' with some urgency.

The stage is flooded by smoke. A low, keening, electronic whine builds.

On screen: The spaceship lifts itself off the ground, and hovers in a gathering electrical storm. There is a growing sound of tortured engines, building ominously. The ship hovers over the ground, distorts, and the whining noise oscillates. There is a blaring explosion which whites out the screen.

On stage: The chants cut off abruptly and there is darkness and silence.

SCENE TWO

A bell tolls.

*On screen caption: Senior Common Room, Thursday evening,
Four billion years later. St. Cedd's College, Cambridge.*

A number of formally clad guests at a pre-dinner drinks. They include: MARVIN ANDROYD, a BBC Radio producer, SARAH ANDROYD, his eight-year-old daughter, numerous Professors (DONS, in Cambridge speak), including WATKIN, and a WAITRESS who moves amongst them, dispensing drinks.

DIRK enters, unnoticed by the party. Most of his lines in this scene are directed to the audience. During these monologues the rest of the stage action freezes, coming back to life when he finishes. Except where specifically indicated by the text, DIRK is invisible to the other characters during this scene.

DIRK St. Cedd's College, Cambridge. Founded in the year something or other, by someone I forget in honour of someone whose name for the moment escapes me.

WAITRESS St. Cedd, sir?

DIRK takes a drink from the tray.

DIRK Do you know, I probably think it was. One of the duller Northumbrian saints, His brother Chad was even duller – has a cathedral in Birmingham if that gives you some idea. My old college, as it happens, though my memories of my days there are not entirely uncomplicated.

Enter RICHARD stage left. He is wearing a coat and dinner suit. He is cold. He is waiting for someone. PROFESSOR REG CHRONOTIS, enters stage right similarly but far more shabbily dressed. They see each other. Pause. And recognise each other.

REG Ah, Young MacDuff! How splendid.

On screen: Close-up surveillance photographs of Professor Urban Chronotis, from a variety of angles.

DIRK Professor Urban Chronotis, Regius Professor of Chronology.
I only met him once during my time at St. Cedd's...

RICHARD Professor! *(they shake hands)*

REG Dear fellow. I am so glad you could come. Grateful of company for special college dinners. One always hopes it will aid the digestion. Never does, of course.

RICHARD Umm.

REG Come, come, Richard. May I call you Richard? I've always believed it is the privilege of tutors to patronise their graduates.

They join the main party. All freeze.

On screen: Surveillance shots of **RICHARD**.

DIRK Richard MacDuff was my roommate eight years ago. He was a credulous fellow, who, if the truth were known, I selected specially for his credulity. A credulous roommate is invaluable if one wishes to become infamous. You see, Richard was kind, well, gullible enough to believe every rumour that I had occasion to deny about myself. More importantly, he never attempted to find out what the source of these rumours was – if not my own outraged denials.

It started innocently enough. A cult of personality is a useful thing to have within the confines of a small college. It was easy enough to strenuously deny that my family came from the smarter end of Transylvania. Painfully simple to make clear that I had not inherited any psychic powers whatsoever from my mother's side. It was absolute nonsense that there were any bats of any kind within the family tree, and the reason for my hanging upside down from the rafters at all hours was an inherited back complaint.

On screen: College yearbook shots of **DIRK**. *He appears ghoulish, drinking blood from a skull, in dark prayer over a black candle, and dangling upside-down. Beaming.*

REG ...of course, whenever I'm called on to tutor – one hesitates to say teach – I take the wise precaution of removing all the books on my reading list from the libraries...

The party all freeze.

DIRK By means of a whole chain of such strategically deployed denials of the most exotic and exciting rumours, I was able to create, and deny, the myth that I was a mystic, telepathic, clairvoyant, psychosassic vampire bat.

WAITRESS (*proffering drinks*) Red or white, sir?

DIRK Red, of course. (*Takes wine. Drinks with toothy relish*) Psychosassic was my own word, and I strenuously denied that it meant anything at all. Nevertheless, there was a time when it was advantageous for people to think that it did. But that was eight years ago.

REG (*to RICHARD*) Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Poet. I expect you've heard of him. Favoured son of the college, despite his fondness for recreational pharmaceuticals. This is his dinner. Well, not literally of course, it would be cold by now. Here have some salt. (*He takes salt from side table*)

All freeze.

DIRK One night eight years ago, MacDuff heard me talking in my sleep. (*Takes a pillow from a passing tray, and mumbles into it*) 'The opening up of trade routes to the mumble mumble burble was the turning point for the growth of empire in the snore footle mumble... Discusssszzzzz' Well, finalists will snatch at any hope, even believing that someone can clair-audiently predict exam papers, simply because they claim – sorry, deny – to come from the smarter end of Transylvania, are denied to be psychosassic, and refute sleep talking about Schleswig-Holstein and Derrida.

What was the harm in that? It cheered me up to be wined and dined at great expense in the hope that in my drunken slumbers I would become verbose about, say (*into pillow*) "The tectonic... murmur... of the... gurgle... bottle fly... snore.". News, however, spread quietly, discreetly, and like wildfire. Until, to conclusively deny everything, I was forced to write, under hypnosis, a set of Finals papers, only because it would once and for all scotch the whole silly – immensely, tediously

silly – business. The papers would be locked away, and only examined after Finals. The entire project was of purely academic interest. No money would change hands. No money whatsoever. But that was before my mother developed a need to undergo extensive dental surgery. In Transylvania.

The party unfreezes.

REG (*offering a heavy silver salt cellar*) Go on, have some salt.

RICHARD Er – thank you, I think I'll wait.

REG Go on, take it.

REG *performs an over-flamboyant and none-too-subtle piece of close-up magic: as RICHARD goes to take the salt cellar, it vanishes.*

Good one, eh? Magic tricks are still my special hobby. Irritating, I know, but next on my list for giving up after smoking and leeches.

The party freezes.

DIRK Whereas my special hobby was pseudo-clairvoyance. My special talent, like the Professor's own, proved to be far, far rarer...

SARAH (*the little girl*) *has been bored for a considerable amount of time. She unfreezes and runs up to DIRK. She kicks him smartly on the shin. The party unfreezes.*

REG So, Richard, a glowing career in personal computers... for the famous Gordon Way, yes? If I can remember, and I very much doubt I can, did you not have a computer when you were here?

RICHARD Yes, as a matter of fact I did. That's actually why I never handed in an essay.

REG Really? Nowadays computers have made undergraduates sickeningly efficient. They even hand their essays in "on the cloud", so one can no longer claim to have lost them. Most regrettable. So, how were you refreshingly able to use your computer to avoid writing essays?

RICHARD I was teaching it how to play "Three Blind Mice".

REG For three years? Splendid, I really must suggest it to a few of my students.

RICHARD Well, it'd be child's play now. What we called a computer then was really a kind of electric abacus, but...

REG Oh, now don't underestimate the abacus. In skilled hands it's a very sophisticated calculating device. Furthermore, it requires no power, can be made of any materials, and never goes "bing" in the middle of an important piece of work.

RICHARD *looks round the room and notices SARAH, the little girl.*

RICHARD By the way, who's that?

REG Who's what?

RICHARD The girl. The very, very little girl. Is it some new maths professor?

REG Do you know – I haven't the faintest idea. Never known anything like it. How extraordinary.

SARAH *has been misbehaving for some time now, and is currently crawling about on the floor pulling on the trailing gowns of the DONS.*

MARVIN Stop that!

SARAH *stops, pauses and then starts again, blowing a raspberry at her father's back.*

REG Poor child, there isn't a don in this room who doesn't behave exactly like that inside. Pity you didn't bring your computer with you. It might have cheered up the poor young lady. A quick burst of "Three Blind Mice" might have done much to relieve her spirits. *(to SARAH)* Hello.

SARAH Hello!

REG Which do you think is worse? The wine or the company?

SARAH *laughs.*

I think you're wise not to commit yourself at this stage. Myself, I'm waiting for the actual meal before I make any judgements. They've been boiling the carrots since the weekend, but I fear it may not be enough. The only thing that could possibly be worse than the carrots is Watkin. He's the man with the big nose standing over there amongst those other men with big

noses. My name's Reg, by the way, come over and kick me when you have a moment.

SARAH You're funny.

***SARAH** kicks **REG** and runs away. **DONS** turn round and stare at her. All freeze.*

DIRK The exam papers I produced under hypnosis, I had pieced together simply by doing the same minimum research that any student doing exams should do; studying previous exam papers and making intelligent guesses. I was pretty sure of getting a strike rate that was sufficiently high to satisfy the credulous and sufficiently low for the whole exercise to look perfectly innocent. As indeed, it was.

The party unfreezes.

RICHARD ...Working for Gordon Way's quite interesting. Gordon's better and worse than the press make him out to be. I like him a lot, actually. Like any driven man he can be a bit trying at times, but I've known him since the start. He's fine. But driven men are very enthusiastic. It's just that it's not a good idea to let him have your phone number.

REG What? Why's that?

RICHARD When he has ideas he has to talk them out to whoever will listen. Or, if the people themselves are not available, which is increasingly the case, their voicemail will do just as well. He's the only person who still uses my landline. He just rings it up and talks to it. He's had an old-fashioned answering machine installed at all his closest friends' homes. He has one secretary whose sole job is to collect tapes from people he might have phoned, transcribe them and give him the edited text the next day in a blue folder.

REG A blue one, eh?

RICHARD Ask me why he doesn't simply use a recorder?

REG I expect it's because he doesn't like talking to himself. There is logic there, of a kind. So tell me, where does young MacDuff fit into all this?

RICHARD Well, I head up multi-platform strategy.

REG Hmmmn. Sounds like you get paid a lot of money for “Three Blind Mice”.

RICHARD Well, it's looking after all sorts of things that catch Gordon's eye. For instance he's just made me a Contributing Editor of his new magazine.

REG Yes, didn't he buy *Fathom*? A proper printed magazine. Obviously he has decided to patronise the arts, and I do mean patronise. An interesting choice for a tech magnate.

All freeze.

DIRK What led to my taking my last, rather hurried gaze, at St. Cedd's, from the window of a police car was that all the papers I sold turned out to be the same as the papers that were actually sat. Exactly the same. Word for word. To the very comma. It was at this point that I began to suspect that all things could be connected. And that even a simple trick could have the most serious consequences...

DIRK *exits. The party unfreezes.*

SARAH Please Daddy, can I now?

MARVIN Later.

SARAH This is already later, I've been timing it.

MARVIN Well...

SARAH We've been to Greece. It was beautiful. I think that Greece is the most beautiful place in the whole world. I found a pot!

Takes a dirty, small, Greek pot from her bag to a politely unenthusiastic reaction from the crowd.

MARVIN Probably nothing, you know the way it is. Everyone who goes to Greece for the first time thinks they've found a pot, don't they? Ha. Ha.

Nods of assent. The pot is passed half-heartedly around.

SARAH (to **WATKIN**) You look clever – you should know.

WATKIN My dear girl, it looks about 200 years old, at the most. I would think. Very rough. Very crude example of its type, utterly without value of course.

SARAH *is crushed by this.*

REG (*to RICHARD*) Sour lot. (*To SARAH*) Young lady, would you care to regard this simple salt cellar? (*Produces salt cellar, and beckons SARAH over*)

WATKIN Not again you old fool!

REG Regard this simple hat.

SARAH You haven't got a hat. (*On the edge of tears*)

REG Oh, a moment please.

REG *exits to get a hat. DIRK watches him go.*

DON 1 The only thing I ever discovered in Greece was the sublime fiction of Greek ferry timetables. Wonderful fantasy.

Chorus of agreement.

DON 2 Better than Yeats.

REG *re-enters with a hat.*

REG Regard this simple salt cellar, regard this woolly hat. I put the salt cellar in the hat, thus, and it is gone!!

Salt cellar vanishes.

SARAH That wasn't very good.

REG Ah, but wait... Young lady, you are clearly an enchantress of prodigious powers. (*He grasps pot*) I bow to you! May I show these people what you have wrought?

SARAH *nods. Uncertainly.*

With a flourish, REG smashes the pot, revealing the salt cellar embedded in it.

SARAH *is amazed. Even the DONS are a little impressed. A hush falls.*

DIRK *watches, intrigued.*

WATKIN (*steps forward, importantly*) Ladies and gentlemen, tonight is a special night in the annals of our college. The Coleridge

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Please visit our website to buy the full script, apply for a license to perform this show (if it's available), or to explore hundreds of similar titles.

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

or, in the US www.samuelfrench.com

To be the first to know about new books, licensing releases, and enjoy other theatre-related larks, do follow us on our spangley social media channels.



Samuel French London



SamuelFrenchLtd