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Games and After Liverpool

James Saunders

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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A Note on
"AFTER LIVERPOOL".

"After Liverpool" is not a play but a suite of pieces, to be performed by one or more actors and one or more actresses. The order in which the pieces are played is not specified. Using a musical analogy, the script gives some themes, within and between which any number of variations are possible.

James Saunders.

M How do you do?
W How do you do?
M We haven't met. My name is.
W How do you do?
M How do you do? I'm a friend of.
W My name is.
M How do you do? I come from. I live with.
W I was born in.
M How interesting.
W Not really.
M I work at. I go to. I drive past. I walk up.
W That must be a bore.
M Not really. I get up. I run over. I fly past. I come across. I knock back. All grist to the mill.
W I put over. I take from. I take out, I take out, I take out.
M Tiresome.
W Not really.
M I put on. I put off, I hang up, I run down, I take, from, I. I saw you across the room. I wanted to meet you.
W Well, here we are.
M And now we know each other.
W Not really.
M Not really.

M Favourite colour.

[M Red.
[W Blue.

M Favourite flower.

[M Rose.
[W Tulip.

M Favourite sport.

[M Football.
[W Tennis.

M Favourite food.

[M Fish.
[W Steak.

W I like my steak.

[M Medium rare.
[W Rare.

M Favourite wine.

[M White.
[W Red.

W Favourite holiday place.

[M Normandy.
[W Brittany.

[M Scissors.
[W Stone.

M Do you like Brahms?

She shakes her head

M What about student power then?

W You mean sit-ins and so forth?

M Well yes, for instance, what about student sit-ins?

W But of course one can't consider these things in isolation.

M No no, that goes without saying. But you think they have a case?

W Don't you think they have a case?

M I suppose everybody has a case if you think about it.
W I suppose they do.
M Has a case or is a case.
W Hm?
M If they don't have a case they must be a case.
W The students?
M Well, anyone.
W That's true.
M Black power, white power, student power.
W Tyrone Power.
M No, I'm serious.
W I'm sorry.
M It's all right. I'm sorry.
W I'm sorry.
M What about the students then?
W Fuck the students.
M Hm?
W Yes, I think they have a case, after all if one looks at the situation in perspective it is a bit of an anomoly in this day and age, after all, it is a third of one's life one's considering, a third of one's life from the age of five till at least the teens, imposed upon one, by law or economic necessity, after all, one should have some say, obviously, after all . . .
M Listen. I want.
W Hm?
M Do go on.

M Was I good?
W What do you mean by good?
M Did you enjoy it?
W I always enjoy it.
M Yes, but.
W Yes but what?

M You always enjoy it?
W Yes, I think so.
M With anyone?
W I don't do it with anyone.
M With anyone you do it with.
W One way or another, yes.
M You always enjoy it the same.
W Of course not the same.
M I mean equally.
W No, no, some times are better than others.
M Some people.
W Some people at some times are better than other people at other times.
M Well?
W What is it you want to know?
M You don't give much away, do you?
W What do you want me to say?
M Did you enjoy it . . . ?
W I told you, yes.
M I haven't finished.
W I'm sorry. Go on. Did I enjoy it.
M Did you enjoy it—more . . . .
W Than what?
M Than before.
W I haven't done it with you before.
M With the others.
W Did I enjoy it with you more than I enjoyed it with the others.
M If you like.
W Not if I like. It's your question.
M All right then.
W So that's the question you want answered. Did I enjoy it more with you than I enjoyed it with the others.
M Look, if you don't want to answer.
W Who said I don't want to answer.
M Then why don't you?
W I'm trying to. But I have to know the question.

M Well now you know it. I don't see that it's such an unreasonable question.

W I didn't say it was.

M Well?

W More than *any* of the others?

M More than—!
I ask a simple question. . . .

W I'm asking a simple question. Do you mean did I enjoy it with you more than I enjoyed it with any one of the others?

M Oh, let's forget it.

W Why?

M You obviously don't propose to answer it.

W I do propose to answer it. I just want to get the question straight. You're the one who won't answer *my* question.

M What question?

W Do you mean more than *any* of the others?

M How many were there anyway?

W There you are, you won't answer. How can I answer you if you won't answer me?

M You're not answering *me*, are you?

W I asked first.

M *I* asked first. A simple question. . . .

W Of which you don't want the answer.

M Then why did I ask?

W All right, I'll tell you. I didn't enjoy it very much.

M With me.

W Mm, I didn't enjoy it much with you. I enjoyed it, but not much. Neither did you, did you?

M No. You were too stiff.

W You weren't stiff enough.

M So now we know.

W We knew all along.

M Do you love me?
W Why do you ask?
M Why don't you answer?
W Why do you want to know?
M Why do you never answer my questions?
W Why are you always asking questions? Why do you have to verbalise everything?
M Why do you never say what you feel? Why do we always quarrel?
W I love you. Do you love me?

W One of the things I like about being with you is that I don't feel obliged to talk all the time. It's easy to be silent with you. Being silent with you, close but not touching, eyes closed, not communicating with any of the five senses, just knowing you're there, feeling you're there, something else takes over, difficult to put into words because words belong to the five senses and this is something else. Something other. An awareness. It's hard to describe it. A feeling that you are somewhere inside me, I am somewhere inside you. Outside the senses, beyond time and space, outside ourselves. I can't put it into words. But it's there. Do you feel that?
M Hm?
W Do you feel that.
M I'm sorry, I wasn't listening.

W Listen. I want to ask you something.
M Go on.
W Do you see me merely as a sexual object?
M Is this serious?
W Yes.

M I object to merely for a start.

W Do you see me only as a sexual object.

M I haven't thought about it.

W Then think about it.

M Why do you ask?

W I just wondered.

M Why? What have I done?

W Never mind.

M Hm?

W Forget it.

M What's the matter?

W Oh, it's hopeless.

M What's hopeless?

W We never answer each other's questions. Have you noticed? We just add more questions.

M I suppose you mean I do.

W We both do. We put up great barriers of questions that never get answered. We cover ourselves with questions we don't want answered. It's not communication, it's—ping-pong.

M I thought we were getting along all right.

W We are not getting along all right. In bed we are getting along all right.

M That's something.

W Yes, that's something.

M You think we don't communicate?
That's a question.

W No. We don't communicate. We do not communicate.

M News to me.

W It's not news to you.

M When did we stop communicating?

W We never started.

M Oh.

W Oh.

M So what do you. . . .
So what do you propose we should do about it?

W Go to bed?

M No.

W Really?

M You're very bitter suddenly.

W Am I?

M You know you are.
Why?

W I don't know.

M And why do you want to pass it on to me?

W I don't know.
No, don't touch me. That's the easy solution.

M I didn't mean it as a solution.

W Didn't you? To cut a disagreeable conversation short?
Because words won't do it?

M I'm not sure, quite, what's worrying you.

W That's what's worrying me.

M Look. . . .

W Don't touch me. Please.
It's not quite true that we never communicated. We used to communicate. Desire, and desirability, that's what we trafficked in. I find you desirable, do you find me desirable, I want you, do you want me.

M Used to?

W We don't need to any more, do we? It's understood.
The desire comes easy, the bed comes easy, the language has lost its purpose, who needs it? We're left with a game we play between fucks.
I want us to use language together—as we use our bodies together. Is that unreasonable?
Come on . . . Let's go to bed.

W Do you love me?

M Yes. Do you love me?

W Yes. Do you love me?

M Yes. Do you love me?

W Yes. Do you love me?

M Yes. Do you love me?
W Then why do we keep asking?

W Do you want an apple?
M Yes, please.
W Here you are.
M Is that the only one?
W Yes. Go on, have it.
M No no. I wouldn't dream of it.
W Go on.
M What about you?
W Don't worry about me.
M Don't you want one?
W Look, I'm offering it to you, aren't I?
M I don't want it if you want it.
W I thought you said you did want it.
M Not if you want it. Not the last one.
W The last one tastes the same as all the others. Whether I want it or not.
M Of course it doesn't. Look, do you really expect me to sit here eating the last apple knowing you might like it yourself? Do you? Honestly, you have such a low opinion of me.

W Do you want an apple?
M Are you having one?
W Do you want an apple?
M I'll have one if you do.
W Why if I do? Do you want one or not?
M All right, let's both have an apple.

W There's only one apple.
M Only one? You have it.
W But I don't want it.
M I wish you wouldn't bother me with your problems.

M Are there any apples?
W Yes, there's one left.
M Only one?
W Yes.
M I'll leave it then.
W Have it.
M No, I won't take the last one.
W Why not?
M Someone might want it.
W But you want it.
M Not really.

W There's one apple left.
M Oh?
W You'd better have it.
M Why me?
W I don't want you feeling aggrieved because I've taken the last apple.
M Don't be ridiculous. If you want it, have it. If you don't, leave it where it is.
W All right.
M You're really going to eat it are you? The last bloody apple.

Hungry for More?

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