

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

SAVING JASON

An addictive comedy

by Peter Quilter

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

samuelfrench.co.uk

Copyright © 2016 by Peter Quilter
All Rights Reserved

SAVING JASON 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 978-0-573-11354-3

www.samuel french.co.uk

www.samuel french.com

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 *SAVING JASON* 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 Samuel French Ltd, 52 Fitzroy Street, London W1T 5JR.

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 Peter Quilter to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PETER QUILTER

Peter's plays have been produced in over forty countries around the world and translated into thirty languages. He has had three successful shows in London's West End, a hit run on Broadway, and has twice been nominated for the Olivier Award – for Best New Play and Best New Comedy.

His first international success was the comedy, *Glorious!* – the true story of Florence Foster Jenkins, the worst singer in the world. The play premiered at the Duchess Theatre in London's West End (starring Maureen Lipman) and has since been seen by over two-million people in theatres across five continents.

Peter is also the writer of the acclaimed Judy Garland musical drama *End of the Rainbow* which had its world premiere at Sydney Opera House, followed by productions in several major European cities. In 2010/2011, the show played a sold-out run in the West End before transferring to Broadway in 2012. The show played one hundred and seventy-six performances at the Belasco Theatre, had a rave review in the *New York Times*, and received three Tony Award nominations.

Peter's other work includes the popular two-actor comedy *Duets*, the drama *4000 Days* (premiered at the Park Theatre in London) and the Chekhovian comedy, *The Actress*.

Official website for Peter Quilter – www.peterquilter.net

AUTHOR'S NOTE AND INTRODUCTION

We all have difficult or eccentric people in our families. And this is a play about a family who perhaps has more than its fair share...! The inspiration for the play came from a teenager in my own extended family who was teetering on the edge of delinquency and causing a lot of heartache. Trying to work out how to handle the situation was incredibly frustrating and it got me thinking about what actions you might take, however bizarre or extreme, to knock some sense into the little bastard. This is essentially the story of *Saving Jason*. A misguided family making some mad decisions on how to try and deal with an insane problem.

I would love to spend the next paragraph telling you about all the lessons we learned from the world premiere production at London's brilliant Park Theatre. But this introduction is being written before the show even opens, so I have no wise words of wisdom for you. But if you venture to the Samuel French webpage or to my own website – www.peterquilter.net – you'll be able to read what the critics said about the show and that will no doubt give you some ideas and guidelines.

In practical terms, there's only one set, so that's easy. Some clever lighting is needed for one of the sequences, and it would be good to have use of a high-quality sound system as quite a lot of recorded music is used to set up the period and the atmosphere. There'll be a bit of clearing up needed after each performance as a small buffet gets destroyed during the show. But that means there should be plenty of half-broken sandwiches around if anybody feels peckish...! The show is set in 1996, so please have some fun with that, in terms of the costumes, the set, etc. The only other things you need are a great cast and a dynamic director.

Jason is aged seventeen in the play. I hope you will be able to find a talented young actor for the role. If the best actor around looks a bit older, then that's ok – just delete any references in the play to his actual age. There are plenty of twenty-year-olds still living at home and causing trouble, so allow yourselves a bit of flexibility.

You can also be flexible about some of the language. I hope you're sitting down, relaxed and with a nice cup of cocoa as I

tell you this...the swear word “c***” is used on several occasions. Now don’t panic! It is used mostly for comic effect. But having said that, I do realise that some companies (and their audiences) are not yet comfortable with the word. So please be assured that you CAN change it. Just find a suitable replacement word that is a little milder but still carries a punch. I’m not going to provide you with a list of alternatives, as at some point my mother will read this introduction and will despair of me. But please just use your judgement and imagination. But if you think your audiences can handle it – then go for it!

I hope you will have a good, creative and laughter-filled time with *Saving Jason*. The play tackles serious subjects in a comedic way and, if you get the balance right, that should make for a very compelling night at the theatre.

Peter Quiller
2016

Other plays by PETER QUILTER
published by Samuel French

4000 Days

The Actress

Boyband

The Canterville Ghost

Curtain Up!

Duets

Glorious!

Just the Ticket

The Nightingales

USE OF COPYRIGHT MUSIC

A licence issued by Samuel French Ltd to perform this play does not include permission to use the incidental music specified in this copy. Where the place of performance is already licensed by the PERFORMING RIGHT SOCIETY (PRS) a return of the music used must be made to them. If the place of performance is not so licensed then application should be made to the Performing Right Society, 2 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG (www.mcps-prs-alliance.co.uk).

A separate and additional licence from
PHONOGRAPHIC PERFORMANCE LTD,
1 Upper James Street, London W1F 9DE (www.ppluk.com)
is needed whenever commercial recordings are used.

Saving Jason was first performed at the Park Theatre, London,
on 7 November 2016 with the following cast:

(in order of appearance)

LINDA – **Tor Clark**
TREVOR – **William Oxborrow**
DEREK – **Cory Peterson**
ANGELA – **Julie Armstrong**
MARY – **Paddy Navin**
JASON – **Jacques Miché**

Director – **Steven Dexter**
Set and Costume Designer – **Andrew Riley**
Associate Designer – **Hilla Bar**
Lighting Designer – **Alex Drofiak**

Producers – **Daniel Krupnik** and **Amanda Holland**
in association with **Park Theatre**

PARK

THEATRE CAFE BAR

For Park Theatre

Artistic Director | Jez Bond

Executive Director | Rachael Williams

Creative Director | Melli Bond

Development Director | Dorcas Morgan

Artistic & Executive Assistant/Assistant Producer | Amy Lumsden

Finance Manager | Marlaina Darmody

Sales & Marketing Manager | Dawn James

Box Office Interim Manager | Androulla Erotokritou

Box Office Supervisors | Natasha Green, Bessie Hitchin, Joshua Oakes-Rogers, Katy Shearstone, Alex Whitlock

Venue and Volunteer Manager | Naomi Dixon

Duty Venue Manager | Barry Card and Rochelle Clarke

Technical Manager | Sacha Queiroz

Building and Theatre Technician | Andre T.

Creative Intern | Lorna Heap

Cafe Bar General Manager | Tom Bailey

Bar staff | Gemma Barnett, Grace Botang, Michael Byrne, Calum Budd-Brophy, Amy Conway, Robert Czibi, Nicola Grant, Philip Honeywell, Lasse Marten, Joshua Oakes-Rogers, Olivia Onyehara, Sara Pau, Emma Petrusson, Katy Shearstone and Sam Williams.

Public Relations | Arabella Neville-Rolfe and Nick Pearce for Target-Live

President | Jeremy Bond

Ambassadors

David Horovitch
Celia Imrie
Sean Mathias
Tanya Moodie
Hattie Morahan
Tamzin Outhwaite

Associate Artists

Mark Cameron
Olivia Poulet
Sarah Rutherford (Writer in Residence)
Charlie Ward

Trustees

Andrew Cleland-Bogle
Nick Frankfort
Robert Hingley
Rachel Lewis
Mars Lord
Sir Frank McLoughlin
Nigel Pantling (Chair)
Jo Parker
Leah Schmidt (Vice Chair)

**With thanks to all of our supporters,
donors and volunteers**

*The author would like to dedicate this play with love to
Christopher Gedge and Dougal Gedge*

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

LINDA In her 40s or 50s. The mother of Jason. A sensitive and caring woman, but with a rather wild past. Carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders but battling through.

TREVOR *(her husband)* Linda's husband, also 40s or 50s. Jason's father. Trying hard to cope with the pressures of the world, but generally failing.

DEREK 40s or 50s. Married to Angela and the uncle of Jason. Always trying to put a smile on things which is not easy given who he is married to.

ANGELA *(Linda's sister, Derek's wife)* 40s or 50s. Derek's wife, Linda's sister, Jason's aunt. Somewhat erratic and eccentric in her behavior, taking far too many pills and causing far too much trouble.

MARY *(A neighbour, in her early seventies)* A sweet woman, who is the neighbour of Linda and Trevor. In her 70s or 80s. Occasionally bewildered but can equally be as sharp as nails.

JASON The 17-year-old son of Trevor and Linda. A rebellious, edgy teenager who is delving heavily into the world of drugs and midnight raves.

SETTING

The year is 1996.

There is only one set – the living room of the home of Trevor, Linda and Jason.

A buffet table downstage, next to the kitchen exit. A large sofa at upstage centre, facing the audience, a couple of chairs, a dining table along the stage right wall. A large drinks cabinet with a spacious, doored wine cupboard underneath along the stage left wall. A system for playing music CDs. The front door at downstage right and an exit to the kitchen and garden at downstage left. A practical window to the street at upstage right.

ACT ONE

We hear the Oasis track – “WONDERWALL”.

Lights slowly rise on the scene. The living room of a family home in suburbia. A buffet table has been erected. It is early afternoon. An enormous bag of crisps is on the sofa. LINDA enters. She is dressed mostly in black and carries a tray loaded with salad rolls and sandwiches. She lays out food, napkins, large empty crisp bowls and small plates. TREVOR now enters, carrying two bottles of wine, plus a cheap wine box. He is also dressed mostly in black. As the scene progresses, they will continue to bring in food and set up the buffet and drinks. The music fades out.

TREVOR I picked out a nice dry white and a full-bodied red. Plus something cheap for your sister.

LINDA You're already being mean to her and she hasn't even arrived yet.

TREVOR When it comes to being mean to your sister, I like to plan ahead.

LINDA I would have thought that today of all days –

TREVOR I know, I know. Look, I'm not actually trying to be unpleasant. I'm simply being practical. I brought that lovely Italian red to her birthday and she poured it into the casserole. Why would anybody do that?

LINDA Angela likes adding alcohol to all her meals. It's become a bit of a hobby. At least it diverts her from her other activities.

TREVOR *puts the bottles on the table.*

...Maybe they're not even coming? You can't rely on them for anything these days. Even at Christmas they were late. I had to re-heat their turkey in the microwave.

I don't know what Baby Jesus would have felt about that. He'd have thrown all his toys out of the pram.

TREVOR Linda, you're not making sense.

LINDA I'm nervous. Either I ramble or I throw up. Take your pick.

TREVOR Well if those are the only choices on offer...? But don't you worry about Derek and Angela. I'm certain they'll be here. I know they're not reliable on most occasions, but they wouldn't let us down over something as important and solemn as this.

LINDA I'm an emotional wreck. Look at me. I'm going to fall apart at the slightest thing.

TREVOR If it gets too intense – you can simply leave the room for a moment. Go into the garden.

LINDA It's raining!

TREVOR If you're falling apart, you'll hardly be bothered about getting wet...!

LINDA I'm not sure that's helpful, Trevor.

TREVOR Well, I don't know what to say.

LINDA Then don't say anything.

TREVOR Just – try your best. This isn't going to be easy for either of us. So let's be supportive to each other, operate as a team.

LINDA A team, yes. Been a while since I was in one of those. There was the netball team at school. But we never bloody won anything.

TREVOR Linda –

LINDA You need a star player. That's what teams have who win things. And that's our problem – we don't have a star player, do we? We both just stand there in these situations while the other side runs circles around us.

TREVOR Not anymore! Today we end all that.

LINDA Do we? It would be simpler to go to the nearest bridge and throw ourselves off it!

TREVOR Don't be silly. And besides, it would be a waste of a very good buffet.

LINDA Oh, it's not a very good buffet. It's the opposite of a very good buffet. I bought everything in the village – at that post-nuclear supermarket. It's cheap. But by God they punish you for that. And I forgot the ham. It's never the same without ham. But there's been so much to think about. And it's awfully hard waking up every day with all these anxieties following you around...

She starts to get upset. TREVOR comforts her.

TREVOR It'll be fine. Everything will be fine... And you can easily cook some mini quiches.

LINDA It's not the bloody buffet I'm upset about!

TREVOR I know – I was only...trying to be helpful, take your mind off it. Don't worry, it will all go smoothly. It will be simple and effective and – tomorrow, you'll wake up with a clear head.

LINDA I have to survive today first.

TREVOR You will. And however you handle this on an emotional level, everyone will understand.

LINDA I don't think Mary next door understands. She was having another of her vague moments when I spoke to her yesterday. She's so sharp most of the time. But on other occasions recently, you find you're talking to her when suddenly her eyes kind of glaze over. It's as though in the blink of a second, she's not there anymore. I hope she's getting the right treatment. Anyway – I put a note under her door. Explained everything in detail. Otherwise when she gets here, it's all going to be a right old muddle. We shouldn't have invited her.

TREVOR It needs to be more than the usual four of us. That would be a very poor turnout. And you do have to create the right atmosphere. She could be very helpful after the service, a balancing influence, you know... Plus, most importantly, Jason always liked her. And I feel that having someone here who he –

LINDA I still think it was the wrong thing, that's all. Maybe the whole thing is wrong – I'm very concerned about all of it.

TREVOR So you keep saying! Let's get through it, can we? Face what's happened. Take *action*.

LINDA And you honestly think things will be better afterwards?

TREVOR I don't know anything for sure, do I. But I hope so.

LINDA You don't know? But I thought you knew everything? Isn't that why we sold the encyclopedias?

TREVOR Are you being sarcastic or paying a compliment?

LINDA Take your pick.

TREVOR Then I'll take it as a compliment.

LINDA Good for you! You kicked sarcasm's ass.

TREVOR You really are in a very unusual mood.

LINDA Am I having a breakdown? Is this what it feels like?

TREVOR You really want to bring that up now?

TREVOR *crosses the room and collects a framed photo of a young man, JASON, aged about fourteen and in his school uniform. He stands it on the buffet table.*

...I'm going to stick our picture of Jason here. By the sandwiches.

LINDA Why?

TREVOR So that while your sister and her husband are attacking the buffet like raptors, they can be reminded of what today is really about. (*Looking at the photo*) Reminded of what we've all lost... Don't let them eat until after the service. I mean it. I don't want anybody stuffing their faces until the ceremony is completely over with.

LINDA I'll make sure of that. You should put this medal with it.

LINDA *goes to a drawer and takes out of it a running medal on a ribbon; she gives this to TREVOR and he drapes it over one corner of the framed photo.*

...He was always a very fast runner, whether in competition or not. He never knew where he was going. But he wanted to get there quickly.

TREVOR (*looking at the table*) Where are the crisps?

LINDA Oh...! I thought I'd brought them in. Where did I –?

She spots them on the sofa – an absolutely enormous bag of crisps. She empties some of the crisps into the bowls.

...They were extremely good value, these crisps. But they taste incredibly odd. I'm realizing there's no such thing as a bargain these days. I blame the government for that. There's hardly anything around now that hasn't been fucked up.

TREVOR Linda! Do we need to use that word?

LINDA It's just a word, Trevor. It's not going to bite you. (*She offers him a crisp*) Try one.

TREVOR *eats a crisp.*

TREVOR I don't know why you're always so against politicians. They are, in my opinion –

TREVOR *pulls a face, reacting to the very weird taste of the crisps.*

LINDA See – I told you.

TREVOR Surely these aren't even made of potato?

LINDA Shall I throw them away?

TREVOR There's no time to get any more. Unless you want to see if George at the corner shop has some?

LINDA His name isn't George. His name's Masoud. He's from Iran.

TREVOR So why does everyone call him George?

LINDA Because George was the name of the previous owner of the shop. He was an old, fat white man. He died seven years ago and was replaced at the shop by a young, slim Iranian with a beard. But nobody noticed. We really need to start

looking *up* occasionally. But I'm not too concerned about the crisps. Serve them plenty of wine and they won't notice.

TREVOR Not your sister – she's not getting plenty of anything wet. I don't want Angela drunk, not today. You know how she gets when she mixes things with her pills. And that goes for you too, Linda. Make sure you have a bottle of lime cordial to hand – and soda water. I don't want to be fighting a war on two fronts.

LINDA You don't have to worry about me.

TREVOR That would be nice if it was true.

LINDA Yes, that would be nice...

TREVOR *busies himself with the wine glasses.*

I can just imagine Jason's face looking at this buffet. Salad rolls – the end of civilization as we know it! It's our own fault. Our generation spoiled our children. From day one giving them the idea there were a series of *options* at dinner time. They virtually choose from a menu. It's ridiculous. But I know why we give in to them. It's because our own parents were so hard on us. So we're being over-kind now, trying to balance the books. And it's not turning out at all well, is it...? We should have had a second child. Tried a different approach. Everyone has more than one of everything. In case the first one breaks. We were so stupid.

TREVOR We are not stupid. It was the right decision at the time.

LINDA Doesn't stop it being the wrong decision now.

TREVOR I do not – I will not – feel stupid or guilty, or anything else. I am not to blame. He did this to himself. I didn't choose his friends, make his choices. I gave him no reason to do any of it. All you can accuse me of is caring for him and loving him, putting a roof over his head, and giving him seventeen years of my life. And this is my reward!

TREVOR *goes to the drinks cabinet and pours himself a brandy.*

LINDA Should I bake those mini quiches?

TREVOR Oh fuck the mini quiches!

A car is heard pulling up in the driveway. LINDA goes to the window and looks out.

LINDA It's Derek and Angela. They're here!

TREVOR Ah. Well, that's good.

LINDA We haven't put out the cards! The "in memoriam" cards.

LINDA goes to the drawer to fetch the cards.

I'll put them by the door.

LINDA lays the "in memoriam" cards out on a small table as

TREVOR heads for the door.

...Wait! Give me the brandy.

TREVOR Why?

LINDA Trevor – it's a funeral! You don't welcome people to a funeral swigging a brandy.

TREVOR Yes, yes, of course you're right. *(Giving the brandy to her)*
Pour it back into the bottle.

LINDA Whatever you say.

LINDA drinks the brandy in one gulp.

TREVOR Linda!

The doorbell rings.

Don't you do that! Not a single drop – we agreed!

LINDA I had to! I needed some courage.

TREVOR Well that's it now. Any more courage you need will have to come from the bottle of lime cordial... So – are you alright? Shall I let them in?

LINDA Yes and no.

TREVOR *(pausing)* Which was the yes for, and which was –?

LINDA Open the fucking door!

TREVOR This isn't starting at all well.

TREVOR *opens the door to DEREK. He is also dressed all in black.*

DEREK Hello there.

DEREK *shakes TREVOR's hand.*

You look smart. The old black suit. Haven't seen you in that since...? (*Thinking*)

TREVOR Since my mother died.

DEREK Yes, that's right – Ding! (*Realizing*)... Sorry to bring that up. Oh shit. Shall I go out and come in again?

DEREK *heads back out the door, but TREVOR calls him back.*

TREVOR No, you're alright. I'm really very grateful to you for being here.

DEREK Of course. Wouldn't miss such an important occasion. Sorry you're having to go through this.

LINDA Take one of these, please.

LINDA *hands DEREK one of the "in memoriam" cards.*

DEREK Hello, Linda. How are you holding up?

LINDA I'm not. I've already started drinking.

DEREK Oh, don't be so hard on yourself. Nothing wrong with a little drop of sherry.

TREVOR She had a whole glass of brandy.

DEREK's face registers concern.

DEREK A brandy? Well that's – ...Still, no need to – (*Looking at the card, changing subject*) This is a nice photograph.

TREVOR It's from when Jason was about fourteen.

DEREK Yes – I see that. He looks so innocent.

LINDA I know. It now seems impossible that he ever was. The card has a lovely poem printed on the inside. His grandmother wrote it for him when he was born.

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