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

SF PERUSALS

THE RULE OF THREE

by Agatha Christie

SAMUEL FRENCH

samuelfrench.co.uk

The Rule of Three: Afternoon at the Seaside; Rats; The Patient
Copyright © 1961 by Agatha Christie Limited. All Rights Reserved.
'AGATHA CHRISTIE' and the Agatha Christie Signature Mark
are registered trademarks of Agatha Christie Limited. All Rights Reserved.

THE RULE OF THREE 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 978-0-573-10019-2

www.samuelfrench.co.uk
www.samuelfrench.com
www.agathachristielimited.com

FOR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED KINGDOM AND WORLD
EXCLUDING NORTH AMERICA
plays@samuelfrench.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 THE RULE OF THREE 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.

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.

For all enquiries regarding motion picture, television, and other media rights, please contact Samuel French.

The right of Agatha Christie to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

MUSIC USE NOTE

Licensees are solely responsible for obtaining formal written permission from copyright owners to use copyrighted music in the performance of this play and are strongly cautioned to do so. If no such permission is obtained by the licensee, then the licensee must use only original music that the licensee owns and controls. Licensees are solely responsible and liable for all music clearances and shall indemnify the copyright owners of the play(s) and their licensing agent, Samuel French, against any costs, expenses, losses and liabilities arising from the use of music by licensees. Please contact the appropriate music licensing authority in your territory for the rights to any incidental music.

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

If you have obtained performance rights to this title, please refer to your licensing agreement for important billing and credit requirements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Afternoon at the Seaside 7
The Rats 49
The Patient 77

Afternoon at the Seaside

CHARACTERS

BOB WHEELER
NOREEN SOMERS
ARTHUR SOMERS
GEORGE CRUM
MRS. CRUM
A MOTHER
A YOUNG MAN
BEACH ATTENDANT
MRS. GUNNER
PERCY GUNNER
THE BEAUTY
INSPECTOR FOLEY

SETTING

The beach at Little-Slippyng-on-Sea, a summer afternoon.

AFTERNOON AT THE SEASIDE was first presented by Peter Saunders at the Duchess Theatre, London on December 20, 1962. The performance was directed by Hubert Gregg, with sets by Peter Rice. The cast was as follows:

BOB WHEELER . . . . . David Langton
NOREEN SOMERS. . . . . Betty McDowall
ARTHUR SOMERS . . . . . Michael Beint
GEORGE CRUM. . . . . Robert Raglan
MRS. CRUM . . . . . Mabelle George
A MOTHER . . . . . Vera Cook
A YOUNG MAN. . . . . John Quayle
BEACH ATTENDANT . . . . . John Abineri
MRS GUNNER . . . . . Margot Boyd
PERCY GUNNER . . . . . Raymond Bowers
THE BEAUTY . . . . . Mercy Haystead
INSPECTOR FOLEY . . . . . Robin May

(The beach. A summer afternoon. Voices are heard offstage singing, "I do like to be beside the seaside," rather out of tune. Three bathing huts can be seen. The name of each hut hangs above the door, they are labelled as follows: Bide-a-Wee, Mon Désir and Ben Nevis. The doors of Mon Désir and Ben Nevis are closed but Bide-a-Wee is open and shows itself full of equipment. In front of it, in two canvas chairs, sit **MR.** *and* **MRS. CRUM**. **MR. CRUM** *is elderly, fat and outwardly submissive to* **MRS. CRUM**, *who is fifty-two, loquacious and generally censorious. She is knitting and he is trying to read the local afternoon paper. Behind the huts is a pier walkway leading offstage. Farther down there is also a beach telescope for viewing the bay. In front of each hut is a short set of steps leading down to a beach covered with an assortment of litter, banana skins, empty cigarette cartons, odd bathing towels and a shrimping net. On the beach,* **MRS. SOMERS** *and* **BOB WHEELER** *are sprawled on the sand in bathing dresses.* **NOREEN SOMERS** *is a good-looking, rather blowsy woman of thirty-odd with enormous vivacity.* **BOB WHEELER** *is about the same age, a terrific wag and sure to be the life and soul of any gathering. A heap of clothes lay where they have undressed.* **MR. SOMERS** *is sitting in a deck chair wearing an overcoat and scarf, with a heavy stick propped by him. He looks grey and tired.* **NOREEN SOMERS** *is adorning a large and handsome sand castle with cockle shells. Offstage a small child is heard bawling*

at the top of his voice and dogs are barking intermittently. **BOB** *removes a bucket from the top of the sand castle.)*

BOB. There you are.

NOREEN. There's a clever boy.

BOB. A fairy castle for the girl of my dreams.

NOREEN. Better not let Arthur hear you.

BOB. He's asleep.

NOREEN. Just as well.

BOB. Girl of my dreams, I love you.

(He takes a sweet from a chocolate box and eats it.)

Honest, I do.

NOREEN. Hey, that was my last soft centre.

(She throws the box on the sand. **BOB** *picks it up and takes it to the bin.)*

BOB. Ay, ay. Keep Britain tidy.

(An aeroplane is heard flying overhead, followed by the barking of a dog.)

NOREEN. Any more shells?

*(***BOB** *picks up a shell.)*

BOB. Here you are, Noreen. Here's a beauty.

(A **MOTHER** *enters on to the beach and calls offstage.)*

MOTHER. Ernie! Ernie! Stop it, I say!

*(***BOB** *turns to her.)*

No, not you. I'm talking to my son. Leave that dog alone – it'll bite you!

*(***BOB** *hands* **NOREEN** *the shell.)*

NOREEN. Ta, ever so.

(A beach ball bounces on, followed by a **YOUNG MAN**. *He clambers over the group for the ball then exits.)*

YOUNG MAN. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

MOTHER. Ernie!

BOB. Never a dull moment at the seaside, that's what I always say.

MOTHER. Why don't you go and have a paddle? Look at Bert, he's paddling. Why don't you go and paddle too?

CHILD. *(Offstage.)* Don't wanna paddle – wah!

MOTHER. Bring you to the seaside I do to enjoy yourself and what happens? You bawl your head off.

CHILD. *(Offstage.)* Don't want to – wah!

MOTHER. Well, I'm going to enjoy myself if it's the last thing I do.

CHILD. *(Offstage.) Waaah!*

MOTHER. Oh, shut up!

(She makes to exit.)

BOB. Kids, eh?

(She turns and looks at **BOB**.*)*

MOTHER. What!!!

(She stalks away.)

NOREEN. First time I went to the seaside I yelled my head off. Said the sea was wet and the sand was dirty. You never enjoy a thing first time you do it.

BOB. That's right. Goes for other things than the seaside, eh Norrie?

NOREEN. Now Bob, steady! You'll shock Arthur here.

*(***BOB** *looks at* **MR. SOMERS**, *who does not react at all.)*

BOB. Couldn't shock old Arthur. Nothing shocks Arthur, does it Artie?

*(***MR. SOMERS** *merely smiles in a tired way.* **NOREEN** *takes a bathing cap from her beach bag.)*

NOREEN. Oh, well, I'm going in for my second dip. Come on, Bob.

BOB. Too bloomin' cold.

NOREEN. Slacker!

BOB. Women don't feel the cold.

(He eyes her.)

Too well covered.

NOREEN. You give over. *(Rising.)* I'll race you to the jetty.

BOB. Right. On your marks. Get set.

(He runs offstage.)

NOREEN. Hey, you cheated!

*(***NOREEN** *runs off after him.* **MR. SOMERS** *rises, puts down his newspaper and picks up his stick. He makes his way up the short steps on to the pier then exits along it.* **MRS. CRUM** *watches them with disapproval.)*

MRS. CRUM. I must say George, that Little-Slippyng isn't what it was.

GEORGE. Little-Slippyng slipping, eh?

MRS. CRUM. Quite a different class of people nowadays. I've a good mind not to come here next year.

GEORGE. Ar…

MRS. CRUM. Talking and screaming and making those very doubtful jokes! Just as though they were alone on the beach.

GEORGE. Needn't listen, my dear.

MRS. CRUM. What did you say?

GEORGE. Said you needn't listen.

MRS. CRUM. *(Sharply.)* Don't talk nonsense, George.

GEORGE. No, my dear.

MRS. CRUM. And that one with all the jokes isn't even her husband. It's the other one she's married to.

GEORGE. How do you know?

(The beach ball comes flying on to the pier, followed quickly by the **YOUNG MAN**.*)*

MRS. CRUM. Well, really!

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

SF **PERUSALS**