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SF PERUSALS

SOMETHING TO SAY

A Stage Play in One Act

by Richard Everett

SAMUEL FRENCH

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United Kingdom and World
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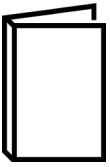
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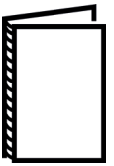
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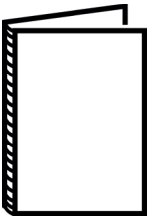
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Richard Everett is an actor, playwright and screenwriter. He is the author of six published stage plays including the much-acclaimed *Entertaining Angels*, which has had over a hundred productions worldwide. He has two hundred animation scripts to his credit as well as two feature films, three plays for BBC Radio 4, and a published collection of award-winning sketches and meditations entitled *Sound Bites*. He is a Visiting Fellow of St John's College, Durham University.

Richard also runs drama workshops for Additional Needs Adults and seminars on 'The Writer's Journey'.

More information can be obtained from his website: www.richardeverett.co.uk

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Infidelity in drama is a well-trodden path so in that respect I make no claim for originality of theme in this play. What I did want to explore was the less likely response of a partner on the receiving end of a confession of unfaithfulness from their other partner. Such confessions are not uncommon and people do it for different reasons. In the case of Maddie, I ask the question: is it because she genuinely wants a new life? Or is it because it's preferable to being found out and she somehow thinks that by confessing all to her husband she will be licensed to continue? Or, more intriguingly, is it her coded way of asking to be rescued from something she has got herself into and doesn't know how to get out of? I will leave the cast to ponder and come to their own conclusions. I think I know what I think.

What is even more interesting to me is David's reaction. When I first wrote this play for Radio 4, my literary agent said the only thing he didn't believe was the husband's instant decision to go with his wife and confront her lover. My response to my agent was the same as the note I gave the actor playing David: think of being involved in a car crash and the moment immediately after when the injured driver, oblivious to his cuts and bruises and attendant pain, has a brief window of being incredibly practical and detached. In short, just for a few moments the shock enables him to function on automatic. That is David's state of mind when Maddie ambushes him with her confession. So, keeping the lid on David's emotions is the key to playing him, and it is only in the last few minutes of the play that he starts to bleed and fall apart. If all of the preceding scenes are played with an unexpected, almost menacing calm and stillness it will make David's final surrender to his true feelings very powerful. It will also make him a more intriguing character to observe as we, with Maddie, try to interpret his odd and clinical reaction to her news. Put simply, he becomes dangerously interesting and unpredictable.

I confess that Stephan and Jane are 'feeds' to this story but their roles are indispensable. Jane needs to be caught between being the responsible listening friend giving grounded advice, and the re-awakened teenager enjoying a vicarious fantasy

through the recklessness of her best friend. Stephan needs to be somewhat bemused by the sudden intrusion into his pad on this particular evening, and how someone else's marital crisis seems to be spilling onto his living room carpet. In other words, although David addresses much of what he says to Stephan, he is really talking over Stephan's head to Maddie. One might imagine Stephan closing the door after this disturbed couple have left and asking himself 'what the hell was that?' – and then returning either to the book he was reading, or carrying on watching the TV programme he put on pause when the doorbell rang earlier.

There is some dark comedy to be found in this short piece, but the key to that is, as always, to play it for real. To date, whenever I have done an after-show q&a session with audiences, the response has been exceptionally good – as well as divided in where their sympathies lie. That to me is the greatest compliment and the most satisfying response – with tears and laughter coming a close second!

Thanks for choosing this play. I hope it makes for an interesting journey for all concerned.

Richard Everett, 2018.

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"SOMETHING TO SAY"

Something To Say was originally written for BBC Radio 4 Afternoon Drama.

It was first presented as a stage play by 3tc (Teignmouth Touring Theatre Company) on 25th May 2018 at The Ice Factory, Teignmouth, with the following cast:

MADDIE	Rebekah Hayden
DAVID	David Warren
JANE	Lydia Dockray
STEPHAN	Mason Castree

Directed by Jackie Wesley-Harkcom
Production by Philip Wesley-Harkcom

CHARACTERS

MADDIE – aged mid thirties
JANE – a friend, aged mid thirties
DAVID – Maddie's husband, aged late thirties
STEPHAN – aged mid twenties

SETTING

David and Maddie's sitting room
Stephan's house and the street outside

TIME

The present

MADDIE *and* **DAVID***'s sitting room.*

The sets throughout can be as elaborate or as abstract and spare as production resources allow using the same furniture and exits and the fourth wall suggesting a real working fireplace. There is an upstage exit to an unseen kitchen and another to an unseen hallway and front door.

The lights come up on **MADDIE** *and* **JANE** *deep in conversation over coffee, either sitting on the floor staring at the fire or at a dining table staring at their coffee mugs. A pause as* **JANE** *considers what she has just been told. Then...*

JANE What can I say?

MADDIE Nothing.

JANE I wish I could think of something to say.

MADDIE There's nothing. It just helps having someone to listen.

JANE Oh Maddie.

MADDIE I know. I feel such a fool.

JANE How old did you say he is?

MADDIE Twenty five...

JANE *reacts.*

MADDIE ... 'ish.

They both giggle.

JANE Well, at least he's legal. He is legal, I hope?

MADDIE Of course he's legal!

JANE You said "'ish", that's all.

MADDIE Come on, I'm not that stupid.

JANE Well, so long he's old enough to know what he's getting into. Is he very good looking?

MADDIE Stop it.

JANE What! I'm just asking.

MADDIE Yes. He is.

JANE Well…don't rush, that's all.

MADDIE Rush where?

JANE Into anything. I know you – just don't…rush.

MADDIE I didn't ask for it to happen, you know.

JANE No, I know. God, whoever would have thought it though?

MADDIE What?

JANE You! You're the last person!

MADDIE I'm not that unattractive.

JANE No. It's just…

MADDIE It's not a crime, Jane.

JANE I'm not saying that… Oh, I don't know Maddie – what can I say?

MADDIE Nothing. Every Mills and Boon is stuffed full of it. It's happened, I just have to deal with it.

JANE And you're sure?

MADDIE About what?

JANE Look, I don't want to pry but have you actually…you know…

MADDIE What?

JANE Done it, slept with him. You implied earlier that it hadn't got that far.

MADDIE Did I?

JANE Yes.

MADDIE Oh.

JANE Oh my God.

MADDIE I don't recall having time to actually sleep.

JANE Oh my God.

MADDIE All afternoon, on his living room sofa.

JANE Oh my God.

MADDIE I know.

JANE How wonderful.

They grin at each other like teenagers.

I'm sorry, that's not at all helpful. For God's sake, Maddie – are you absolutely sure?

MADDIE Oh yes, he has a small birthmark on his right shoulder.

JANE Come on, I'm being serious.

MADDIE I know, I know. Every time I close my eyes and say, "Come on Maddie get a grip", all I see is the pattern of his living room wall paper moving rhythmically back and forth.

JANE You've got it bad, girl – you know that?

Pause. They both sip coffee and stare at the fire again.

I have to say... I had no idea you and David were having problems.

MADDIE We're not.

JANE Well...not happy, then.

MADDIE We are.

JANE Happy.

MADDIE Yes.

JANE Sorry, I'm lost.

MADDIE *looks at her quizzically.*

Why are you screwing the kid in the pine shop, Maddie?!

MADDIE His name is Stephan, Jane – and he is not a kid.

JANE But why?

MADDIE And we're not screwing each other we're in love.

JANE You know what I'm saying. What is this actually about?

MADDIE Does it have to be about anything? It is what it is.

JANE Which is this: you walk into a furniture shop, a pretty young boy flashes a smile at you, buys you a couple of drinks...

MADDIE Coffee actually. Flat white.

JANE Flat white, how appropriate. And three weeks and a pine table later, you're flat out on his sitting room sofa getting cushion burn and watching his moving wallpaper. Pretty reckless and pretty wonderful, but it happens. Is it anything more than that?

MADDIE Yes – it's happened to me!

JANE Well, 'happened *to* you' is debatable but the bigger question is – what are you going to do about it?

MADDIE I can't pretend I don't feel what I feel.

JANE I know that and I'm not unsympathetic, truly I'm not, but if you're going to continue with it – are you going to continue with it?

MADDIE Well, yes – duh!

JANE Then here come the questions, honey – tough ones too. Like...do you want to move in with him?

MADDIE He hasn't actually asked but I think he'd like me to. He won't rush me though, he won't ask until he thinks I'm ready, he's very sensitive like that.

JANE Is he. And are you ready?

MADDIE Probably not, no.

JANE But you're thinking about it?

MADDIE Yes.

JANE *looks at her, at a loss.*

Please tell me you understand.

JANE Of course I understand. What woman wouldn't but… Oh I don't know, I really don't. Seriously though, what about David?

MADDIE What about David, indeed.

JANE Will you tell him?

MADDIE He is my husband. Deceit only makes it worse, don't you think?

JANE How do you think he'll react?

MADDIE God knows.

JANE You think he'll want you to leave?

MADDIE I doubt it – there's the children to consider.

JANE Yes, quite. You think he'll want to leave, then?

MADDIE Possibly. Maybe my marriage is over, Jane – maybe this is as far as David and I can go.

JANE I find that hard to believe.

MADDIE Really?

JANE Yes, actually – I do.

Brief pause. **MADDIE** *looks defeated.*

Come here, I want to give you a hug.

They hug. As they do…

Daft cow. I wish I could think of something to say... I tell you this though – there isn't a single married woman who hasn't, at some stage...

MADDIE *breaks off the hug...*

MADDIE Wait.

JANE What?

MADDIE Say that again.

JANE Well, I hadn't finished...

MADDIE A single married woman.

JANE What?

MADDIE Three weeks ago I was a married married woman and now I feel like a single married woman.

JANE Oh. Right. And that helps, does it?

MADDIE Don't you see?

JANE Not really, because what I was trying to say...

MADDIE That's how I feel, Jane!

JANE For goodness sake woman, will you listen for a moment?! ...There isn't a single married woman who hasn't, at some stage, either seriously considered or even just toyed with doing what you're doing.

MADDIE *tries to follow the relevance of this.*

MADDIE So, what – you're saying I'm weak now? Is that it?

JANE No! I'm saying you're not alone.

MADDIE This wasn't just a high street pass – we talked, we laughed, we connected...and then...well...

JANE He got his leg over.

MADDIE He entered my life.

JANE And who opened the door?

MADDIE Yes, I accept that.

JANE So, close it?

MADDIE It is closed – he's already inside.

JANE Then open it again and show him out?

MADDIE I'm not sure I can. Like a photograph – you can't un-take it.

Pause.

JANE What do you *want* to do, Maddie? If someone were to wave a magic wand, what would you want to happen?

MADDIE I'd like…everything to stay as it is because I don't want to hurt David or my children…and I'd like no one to mind or take the blindest bit of notice.

JANE And leave you alone in your happy world of pine shops and patterned wallpaper?

MADDIE Yes please.

JANE Well, I'm fresh out of magic wands, I'm afraid… Oh, good grief, the time – I have to collect the kids!

MADDIE Shit! I have to collect Sam!

MADDIE *exits with the two mugs to the kitchen while* **JANE** *starts putting on her coat.*

JANE Doesn't Erica do it?

MADDIE *(offstage)* It's her morning off. She goes to English classes.

JANE *(calling)* Or so she says – she's probably down at the pine shop, as we speak!

JANE *laughs at her joke then regrets it as* **MADDIE** *reappears.*

Sorry. That wasn't funny or clever.

MADDIE You've been a friend and a brick, honey – thank you.

They hug.

I suppose you'll tell John, will you?

JANE Not if you don't want me to. When will you tell David?

MADDIE Tonight probably.

MADDIE *exits to get her coat.*

JANE Well, if there's anything I can do.

MADDIE *(offstage)* You can make up your spare bed just in case!

MADDIE *reappears pulling on her coat.*

JANE I do understand hun, you know that?

MADDIE I'm glad someone does because I don't.

MADDIE *reaches into her coat pocket, pulls out a bunch of keys.*

JANE In fact...

MADDIE What?

JANE Nothing.

MADDIE Oh for goodness sake – I can't bear it when you do this!

JANE I really rather envy you.

MADDIE For God's sake woman, get a grip.

MADDIE *pushes* **JANE** *towards the door and they exit.*

Blackout. Music. Lights come up on...

The same. Evening.

DAVID *enters opening a bottle of wine. He calls to* **MADDIE** *in the kitchen.*

DAVID I'm just opening another, okay? ...Maddie?

MADDIE *(offstage)* What?!

DAVID You look stressed, I thought we'd crack open another.

MADDIE *(offstage)* Not for me! I won't be long – I'm just loading the dishwasher!

DAVID Leave it. Erica can do it in the morning.

MADDIE *(offstage)* I don't mind!

DAVID *pours himself a glass of wine.*

Beat.

He stands and warms himself in front of the fire.

MADDIE *enters.* **DAVID** *raises his glass and gestures to the wine.*

DAVID Sure?

MADDIE Um…yes, all right.

MADDIE *also warms herself.* **DAVID** *pours a second glass.*

DAVID How is Sam doing at the new nursery?

MADDIE Okay – seems to be. It's Chloe I'm worried about.

DAVID I liked her painting, by the way. For a six-year-old, very good I thought.

MADDIE I hope you told her, she was very proud of it.

DAVID Of course. So why are you worried?

DAVID *hands her the glass.*

MADDIE I don't know, she's a funny little girl. She told me today some boys in the playground had told her to take down her knickers and show her bum.

DAVID You're joking. Maddie, that's a reportable incident.

MADDIE It's all right. Further investigation revealed it was just a dream.

DAVID I'm not sure that isn't worse.

MADDIE And then she blushed and ran out of the room.

DAVID I don't blame her, I'd blush and run out of the room if I owned up to a dream like that. Cheers.

DAVID *clinks her glass.*

MADDIE Yes. Cheers.

DAVID You know what Sam said to me in the bath yesterday? He eyed me for a long time and then said: "You've got a willy, Mummy's got boobies and in the summer I'm going to have a bicycle with peggles!"

They laugh. **MADDIE** *sips her wine and sits. He remains standing.*

MADDIE Are you going to sit?

DAVID Sorry?

MADDIE I was just wondering if you were going to sit.

DAVID Where?

MADDIE Here. With me.

DAVID Probably. What do you want me to do – stand in the hall? *(Suddenly playacting)* Come my dear, let us both sit together by the fire!

He takes her hand and kisses it elegantly. She pulls it back irritated.

MADDIE For goodness sake.

He sits beside her and smiles at her affectionately.

I want to talk to you – seriously.

DAVID I can run to a serious conversation. What about?

MADDIE What about?

DAVID Yes.

MADDIE Right. Well.

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