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SF PERUSALS

PICKLE JAR

by Maddie Rice

SAMUEL FRENCH

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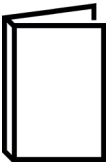
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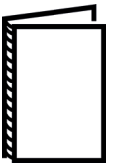
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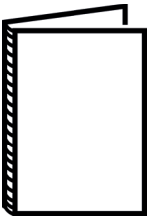
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Maddie is an actress and writer.

As a writer, she has worked with Soho Theatre Writers' Lab. *Handy*, a sitcom she wrote in collaboration with Kate Kennedy, is currently being made into a pilot by RTE.

As an actress she has performed in *Fleabag* (Soho Theatre/UK/AUS tour), *Villain* (King's Head Theatre), *All My Sons* (Regents Park Theatre), *Henry V* (West End), *Every Blank Ever*, *I Live with Models* (Comedy Central), *Who Killed Laura Kitchens?*, *Call the Midwife* (BBC).

She also writes and performs as a member of comedy groups zazU and Lead Pencil.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Pickle Jar is a story created by its characters. I didn't set out to write a play exploring these themes and the eventual story emerged before the subjects became commonplace in current affairs.

I began by writing down stories that I found funny or emotive and the world and its characters grew out of these.

I was always fascinated by responsibility and our society's perceptions of culpability and blame, especially relating to people in public service – hence my choice to make MISS a teacher.

At the time I had also been thinking a lot about how people, in particular women, would often rather blame themselves than others, especially when it relates to sexual or romantic conduct. I think this is an interesting character trait to explore as, while it can be damaging, it comes from an empathetic need to see people as good.

Humour is a useful tool in storytelling and coping with what life throws at us, and I've tried to reflect that in this play and the way MISS makes her way through it. Enjoy!

Maddie Rice
July 2018

Pickle Jar was first presented by Fight in the Dog and United Agents at the Underbelly, Edinburgh Fringe on 2 August 2018.

CAST

MISS – Maddie Rice

Voices by Dave Bibby and the students of Musical Youth London.

Directed and Developed by Katie Pesskin
Set and Costume Design by Alice Hallifax
Sound Design by Ciaran Clarke
Lighting Design by Mark Dymock
Stage Managed by Russell Rosewood

Front cover photography by Amelia J Dowd
Front cover artwork by Anneliese Nappa

CHARACTER

MISS – the narrator. A teacher in her late twenties.

This was originally written and performed as a play for one actress.

The other characters can be played by the actress playing **MISS**, played by other actors or recorded as voice overs.

SCRIPT NOTES

[ ] Text in square brackets is something that is thought but not said.
– Dashes indicate an unfinished thought.
/ Slashes indicate an interruption.
Speech in bold is directed at the audience.

The setting for this play should be somewhat abstract and reflect the emotional state of the narrator.

This text went to print in rehearsals and may differ from what made it to the first performance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Katie Pesskin for her constant ideas, encouragement and belief-

Thank you for making this with me.

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For Katie

Very dramatic thriller music plays.

Stark light comes up in a spotlight on a woman. She is terrified.

MISS Do I know you?

I'm sure you are very nice but I don't know you, do I?

Are you looking for directions or something?

I'm in a hurry to get home.

Can you back off, please?

No. No.

MISS *acts as if someone is trying to kiss her.*

Get off!

I said no.

I am calling the police. Right now!

She backs away.

Trust you? No. I don't trust you because you are a stranger. A complete stranger!

Leave me alone! Get away from me! Leave me ALONE!

She falls to the ground as if she has been pushed and lies dead on the floor.

Beat.

She jumps up enthusiastically, suddenly out of character.

The lights change. We are in the classroom. She takes out her phone, taps it and the thriller music cuts.

Ok. So, girls, what do we think was the message of that?

Come on? This is meant to be fun. I was trying to make it come off the page a bit more.

Any questions?

Not one question?

You can ask me anything. Anything you like.

Yes. Finally. A hand. Thank you, Carly.

CARLY Do you have a boyfriend, Miss?

MISS Carly Hancock! How is that relevant?

CARLY You said we could ask anything, Miss.

MISS Very funny. And how does whether I have a – a partner or not matter to form time?

CARLY Well, if you aren't getting any then we have to deal with the stress.

The **GIRLS** *fall about laughing.*

MISS ...Alright then, if you want to talk about boyfriends so much then maybe we could do the next session on love and we could all read out love poems we've written?

The **GIRLS** *groan.*

Didn't think so.

Can anyone tell me what today's PSHE was about?

Please!

GEMMA Stranger danger.

MISS Thank you, Gemma. We got there in the end.

Stranger danger. Trust *no one*!

No, I'm joking.

I know this may sound trivial to you girls but after what happened in the village with the man...with his...

I think it's worth talking about/

CARLY *(pointing at the window)* /Look, Miss! A stranger.

MISS What? Oh, Carly. That's Mr Ellis.

The **GIRLS** *chant and whistle.*

V/O GIRLS Stranger danger! Stranger danger!

MISS Girls, stop. Claire. Sit down. Rachel. No. Girls! Hang on. Sorry, Jack.

MISS *opens the window.*

MISS Girls! Enough!

MISS *sticks her head out the window.*

Sorry. What were you saying?

MR ELLIS Umm – I – I like your cardigan.

MISS Oh. Thank you. It's – uh – it's reversible.

Was that all?

MR ELLIS Yeah. Sorry. I wasn't actually expecting you to open the window.

Hiya, girls.

MISS Sorry about this, Mr Ellis, everyone is a bit excitable today. I'll see you in the staffroom.

She closes the window.

Right, where were we?

GEMMA Nice cardigan, Miss!

Beat.

*(***MISS** *addressing the audience)*

Yes. I was wearing this cardigan.

I need to dress like a teacher. Because I am a teacher!

Anyway, it's not a *cardigan* cardigan. It doesn't do up and it's long and it's not from M&S. So...

I like it, to be honest. I'm wearing it now and I'm not teaching, am I?

There really isn't anything wrong with it!

Sorry. I don't know why I'm being so... It's...

I've been sitting up on the mound opposite the school for ages. I've bought a tree and I need to find a place to/

MISS*'s phone rings. It is a song by Justin Bieber*.*

Mairead.

Not now, Mairead.

She cancels the call and puts her phone away.

The kids love that song.

Mairead's my housemate. We met teaching at Lincoln Hill and we've lived together ever since. She's mad. She goes *out* out on weeknights.

MAIREAD You need to go out on Wednesdays! It's electric. I got fingered in the smoking area of Spoons.

MISS Ew, Mairead!

MAIREAD What? People don't do it enough anymore! It made me feel really young!

I've no idea how old she is. She's celebrated her twenty-first birthday every year I've known her and she dresses like a teenager.

MAIREAD Lost property win! I'm a unicorn queen!

She's my best friend at school and in the world too.

Well, school is my world.

I teach English and I'm a form tutor. I have to do PSHE lessons on stuff they clearly already know about. Stranger danger, sex ed, friendships. I once did a session on the

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* */** A licence to produce *Pickle Jar* does not include a performance licence to play a Justin Bieber song. For further information, please see Music Use Note on page v.

dangers of the internet and the only way I could think to dramatise the session was to act like a porn star.

So I decided to just put an episode of *Catfish* on the projector.

MISS So you see, girls, you could be talking to anyone. Anyone can get hold of a picture of Justin Bieber.

CARLY D'ya like Justin Bieber, Miss?

MISS No! I mean, yes. He's very talented, Carly. I thought that's who you liked?

CARLY No way, Miss. He's a boy. We like men.

MISS What? No. You like boys your own age.

Ok, look, we've nearly run out of time. The important thing is that you change your privacy settings on all these social media apps to private, so people have to add you and they don't find out where you live and type it into their Google Maps and follow you home and just… Kill you. Ok?

CARLY Yours isn't private, Miss.

MISS Yes, it is.

The **OTHER GIRLS** *laugh.*

CARLY Nope. Not on Instagram. Look, here she is.

Eighteen followers. Congrats, Miss, good for you! Hashtag marking, hashtag face mask, hashtag single but ain't got time to mingle, hashtag/

MISS /Ok! Yes. Thank you. That…is unfortunate. It's better to be private. I'll be changing mine at lunch.

CARLY Worried you'll get too many followers, Miss?

Carly Hancock. She's smart. Not smarter than me but she's really clever.

Sometimes I used to walk down the corridor and pretend I was her. It made me feel powerful and confident.

I realise how stupid that sounds.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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