

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

GHOST STORY

by Mark Ravenhill

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

samuelfrench.co.uk

Copyright © 2010 by Mark Ravenhill
All Rights Reserved

GHOST STORY 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 978-0-573-11606-3

www.samuelfrench.co.uk

www.samuelfrench.com

FOR AMATEUR PRODUCTION ENQUIRIES

UNITED KINGDOM AND WORLD

EXCLUDING NORTH AMERICA

plays@samuelfrench.co.uk

020 7255 4302/01

Each title is subject to availability from Samuel French,
depending upon country of performance.

CAUTION: Professional and amateur producers are hereby warned that *GHOST STORY* 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 Judy Daish Associates Ltd,
2 St Charles Pl, London W10 6EG.

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

THINKING ABOUT PERFORMING A SHOW?

There are thousands of plays and musicals available to perform from Samuel French right now, and applying for a licence is easier and more affordable than you might think

From classic plays to brand new musicals, from monologues to epic dramas, there are shows for everyone.

Plays and musicals are protected by copyright law, so if you want to perform them, the first thing you'll need is a licence. This simple process helps support the playwright by ensuring they get paid for their work and means that you'll have the documents you need to stage the show in public.

Not all our shows are available to perform all the time, so it's important to check and apply for a licence before you start rehearsals or commit to doing the show.

LEARN MORE & FIND THOUSANDS OF SHOWS

Browse our full range of plays and musicals, and find out more about how to license a show

www.samuel french.co.uk/perform

Talk to the friendly experts in our Licensing team for advice on choosing a show and help with licensing

plays@samuel french.co.uk 020 7387 9373

Acting Editions

BORN TO PERFORM

**Playscripts designed from the ground up
to work the way you do in rehearsal,
performance and study**

Larger, clearer text for easier reading



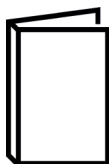
Wider margins for notes



Performance features such as character and props
lists, sound and lighting cues, and more

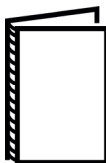


+ CHOOSE A SIZE AND STYLE TO SUIT YOU



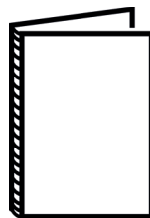
STANDARD EDITION

Our regular
paperback book at
our regular size



SPIRAL-BOUND EDITION

The same size
as the Standard
Edition, but with a
sturdy, easy-to-fold,
easy-to-hold
spiral-bound spine



LARGE EDITION

A4 size and spiral
bound, with larger text
and a blank page for
notes opposite every
page of text – perfect
for technical and
directing use

LEARN MORE

samuelfrench.co.uk/actingeditions

**Other plays by MARK RAVENHILL
published and licensed by Samuel French**

Candide

Citizenship

Golden Child

Handbag

Mother Clap's Molly House

Over There

Pool (No Water)

Product

Scenes from Family Life

Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat

Shopping and Fucking

Some Explicit Polaroids

The Cut

The Experiment

**FIND PERFECT PLAYS TO PERFORM AT
www.samuel french.co.uk/perform**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mark Ravenhill was born in Haywards Heath, West Sussex in 1966. He studied Drama and English at Bristol University. His first play *Shopping and Fucking* was produced by Out of Joint and the Royal Court Theatre in 1996. Subsequent plays include *Faust Is Dead* and *Handbag* (both Actors Touring Company), *Some Explicit Polaroids* (Out of Joint at the Ambassadors Theatre), *Mother Clap's Molly House* and *Citizenship* (both National Theatre), *Pool (No Water)* (Frantic Assembly at the Lyric Theatre), *The Cut* (Donmar Theatre), *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* (Paines Plough) and *Over There* (Royal Court). From 2012 to 2014, Mark was playwright in residence for the Royal Shakespeare Company, producing a new version of Brecht's *Galileo* and *Candide* inspired by Voltaire (both Swan Theatre, Stratford-Upon-Avon). Mark's work in music theatre includes a new English version of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea* with additional material by Michael Nyman (King's Head); *Ten Plagues*, a song cycle for Marc Almond with composer Connor Mitchell (Traverse Theatre) and *Elysium* with composer Rolf Wallin for the Norwegian Opera. Mark is the co-creator of the ITV sitcom *Vicious*.

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.

FIRST PERFORMANCE INFO

GHOST STORY was created for Sky Playhouse Live and
broadcast by Sky Arts in July 2010.

CHARACTERS

MERYL

LISA

HANNAH

MERYL and LISA.

LISA Have you ever...?

MERYL This isn't about me.

LISA But... I wondered...how you came to—

MERYL This is about you.

LISA Did you ever...did you heal yourself...did you?

MERYL That would be crossing the line.

LISA But your understanding comes from...you understand illness because...?

MERYL I'm a healer. That's all—

LISA I understand.

MERYL That's all I – of course you are asking questions: Who is this woman? Is she like me? Do I see myself in this woman?

LISA Yes.

MERYL Do I trust this woman?

LISA Maybe.

MERYL All of these questions are natural. Natural questions. But that is not the task. We are here to work on you. You will be healed. Where is your anger?

LISA Everywhere.

MERYL Illness is anger. Anger caught in the body, a trapped anger. Are you angry with yourself?

LISA Yes.

MERYL Then let's start with that. If you can forgive yourself...
I guide. But it's not for me to forgive you. It's for you...here.
All the work you do, you do on yourself.

LISA (*to mirror*) I...

MERYL Do you see a woman you can forgive?

LISA I...look so ill.

MERYL Is that what you see?

LISA Skin yellowed. Gums rotting. Patches where hair should be.

MERYL You're a beautiful woman.

LISA Everything falling away and I see a skull.

MERYL We see what we tell ourselves to see. Forgive yourself.

LISA I'm so frightened.

MERYL What's your fear? Name it.

LISA No.

Pause.

MERYL Tell me what you think of me.

LISA Well...

MERYL You can't access those feelings.

LISA No, I can't access those feelings.

MERYL Words create a story about ourselves. I'm a person
who is dying. I have no choice. My body is diseased and
ugly. My breast is my enemy. Is that a story you can hear
in your head?

LISA Yes.

MERYL So. A new voice, a new... I'm at the centre of my universe,
I am filled with love, my body is filled with well-being. We
can...if we do the work. Will you do the work?

LISA I'll try.

MERYL Alright. Now. You look at me and you don't have the words to describe what you feel.

LISA You're a guide. You're a healer. You're a wise woman.

MERYL I'm going to ask you to draw me.

LISA Alright.

MERYL But...the crayon in the other hand. So now you're not controlling with your conscious...you see?

LISA I see.

MERYL I'm going to count down from twenty and the picture will be done. It's an image, an instant picture of what's in your... Here we go. Twenty...nineteen...eighteen...seventeen...sixteen...fifteen...fourteen...thirteen...twelve...eleven...ten...nine...eight...seven...six...five...four...three...two...one. And – stop. What do you see?

LISA I...

MERYL Would you like to show me...?

LISA ...

MERYL There are no judgements. No punishments.

LISA hands MERYL the picture.

LISA I can't draw.

MERYL I look like the wicked witch, don't I? Would you describe that as...?

LISA A witch. It is, yes.

MERYL Isn't that interesting? Here I am the healer but I'm also the witch. That's interesting. I would have been burnt. Maybe in a previous life I was. Maybe they pulled me into the market place and they accused me... Somebody pointed at me, somebody – maybe someone like you – pointed at me and said: You live without a man, you have your own thoughts and your own space and you tell women that they

can love their bodies, that their breasts are not their enemies and so we say that you should be burnt.

LISA I'm not doing that. I'm diseased. I want to be well. I want to heal. I want to work with you.

MERYL You are angry with me. That's only right. Someone else has to be the focus of your anger. I'm in the room. I'm used to this. It's part of the process. You hate me but—

LISA No.

LISA *holds up the picture.*

This is nothing.

LISA *rips up the picture.*

I am diseased. My breast was removed. I have forgiven the man, the surgeon who ripped and maimed me. He did the best he could with the knowledge he had at the time. My scarring is terrible. But I look at it now and I can see the beauty there. Yes, I cover it with this prosthetic but I can love my scar. There have been two wonderful years since my operation. My daughter had her first kiss from a boy. My husband lost twenty pounds and we have – sometimes – reassumed intimacy. But now. It's in my lung. They've found a spot, my lung. You see? It's back.

MERYL I see.

LISA I did all the work on myself once and now...

MERYL It's back and...

LISA And I'm overwhelmed by darkness. The story I'm living is... I will move closer and closer to my death. It will be a horrible death. I will lose control of my body. I will be in great pain. I need a helper to change that story. I need you.

MERYL Then we'll work together.

LISA I'm sorry, I want to know if you've ever—

MERYL Of course you do but—

LISA I want to know if – if we're going on this journey – what's your experience of – are you a survivor...do you...?

MERYL I can't cross the line.

LISA Because...?

MERYL Because one person must be the healer. You want to be well—

LISA Yes...

MERYL And it won't work – I can't empower you to release your anger if I'm also – do you see?

LISA I just want to—

MERYL Talk to your fear. Tell her what you're feeling. I'm your fear. Talk to me. Name me. Give me a name.

LISA You...

MERYL What's happening?

LISA I can't.

MERYL Are you ending the session?

LISA I just can't do that.

MERYL Are you leaving and going back to your partner and your tests and – are you ending the work with me?

LISA I don't know.

MERYL You want me to tell you about myself. But I can't do that. I can't... I understand your journey. I share your feelings. I... I want us to do this work together.

LISA Because?

MERYL Because you're a brave, beautiful woman who can be well again.

LISA I don't want to go. But...going on. I am so worn down by fear and Western medicine.

MERYL Look at this room. Look around. Look at me. Look at my hand. Does any of this actually exist? Actually objectively

exist? No. It only exists in my perception. The universe is only as I perceive it to be. I am ill. I am well. I decide.

LISA But still...the...

MERYL Say the word.

LISA Cancer.

MERYL Louder.

LISA Cancer.

MERYL Draw it for me. The cancer. As you see it.

MERYL *gives LISA a chalk.*

On the wall.

LISA On the...? (*laughs*)

MERYL (*laughs*) I know, isn't it crazy?

As LISA draws on the wall:

Start with the eyes. That's good. I'm seeing a lot of anger there. But also fear. Could the cancer be as frightened of you as you are of it?

Now the mouth. So...it's hungry. It's desperate to eat which means...it's needy, it's weak.

And a body. A shape, form. What's the size of the creature?

So it's big, bigger than you. And it's reaching out to you.

Is it a man or a woman?

LISA *draws a primitive penis on the cancer, like a cave drawing.*

So it's a very male energy. There's a male who is big and he's hungry and he's reaching out to you and he's going to eat you. Is this how it seems to you?

LISA Yes – that's it.

MERYL Now then, speak to it. Tell it what you feel.

LISA Could you leave me alone please. Could you go away. I'm not ready for you. You see, my daughter still needs me. She doesn't know enough about the world. I still want to guide her. And my bloke. He really loves me. He'll go to bits if I let him down. I'll let him down if I go and I don't want to do that.

MERYL But I can take you. You won't be missed. Your bloke. Your daughter. You're telling me they're the special ones. So I can take you.

LISA I'm special.

MERYL How are you special?

LISA I'm working on myself. Every day I'm making myself grow a bit more. Because I'm unique. Because...

Pause.

MERYL That's it. That's good. Now if you—

LISA No.

MERYL No?

LISA I'm not doing this. This is...

MERYL Yes?

LISA I don't believe this. They're not my words. They're words to please you. I'm just the same as everyone else. I've never done anything special in my life. I was born in a little house that looked just the same as a thousand other little houses. I went to a school and I wore the uniform and I was average at everything. Now I work in a little cubicle that's just the same as a hundred other cubicles on the seventh floor which is just the same as every other floor. And I've been happy with that. It's been okay. It's been good. I've never wanted to be special. And now I've got breast cancer and it's spread into my lung. And that's not special or dramatic or—. It's boring, actually boring. And all the other women – the lines of them sitting there waiting for their chemo and their radio

and wearing headscarves and their wigs. Lots of them think they're special. Fighting the fight. But it doesn't make it better. It doesn't—

MERYL I have seen miracles.

LISA gets her coat and bag, prepares to leave.

LISA I'm sorry. I've wasted your time.

MERYL It's our time.

LISA I'll pay you.

MERYL There's no need.

LISA This is my choice. I want you to have the money.

MERYL I don't want to take the money.

LISA I'm just paying you for your time.

MERYL Take it.

MERYL pushes the money on the floor. LISA gets down to pick up the money which is scattered about the floor.

MERYL moves over and forms the shape of the cancer drawn on the wall.

Please. I need you. I'm hungry. I need to eat.

LISA Don't.

MERYL Because I'm big, because I'm male, all this male energy, then I frighten you.

LISA This is a stupid game.

MERYL But I need a woman. To feed on, to eat. I've already taken your breast. I've taken your breast and I fed on that and it kept me happy for months. But now I'm back and there's so much more of you. I can taste your lung... your lung tastes good. Maybe I'll take that next. Please. If you don't stop me. I'm so hungry. I can't help myself if you don't do anything, if you walk away then I will spread through

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