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SF PERUSALS

SCENES FROM FAMILY LIFE

by Mark Ravenhill

SAMUEL FRENCH

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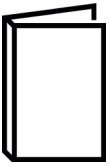

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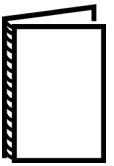

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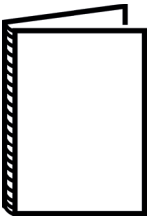

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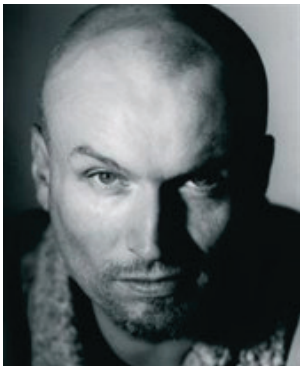

Mark Ravenhill was born in Haywards Heath, West Sussex in 1966. He studied Drama and English at Bristol University. His first play *Shopping and Fucking* was produced by Out of Joint and the Royal Court Theatre in 1996. Subsequent plays include *Faust Is Dead* and *Handbag* (both Actors Touring Company), *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 a new play *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*.

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Scenes from Family Life was commissioned as part of the National Theatre Connections programme and first presented in July 2008.

CHARACTERS

JACK

LISA

STACY

BARRY

A GROUP OF THEIR FRIENDS

THREE SOLDIERS

PARENTS AND BABIES GROUP

MOTHER WITH AN EMPTY PRAM

ENTERTAINER

All characters are aged sixteen to eighteen

SETTING

Living room of Jack and Lisa's flat

Scene One

Living room of **JACK** *and* **LISA***'s flat.*

LISA Feel?

JACK Yeah.

JACK *reaches out and touches* **LISA***'s stomach.*

LISA Head and feet and… Tiny but somewhere there's…

JACK Yeah.

LISA You thought of names?

JACK Not yet. You?

LISA A few but… Don't want to jinx it.

JACK Too soon.

LISA Yeah.

JACK What's it feel like?

LISA Different.

JACK Does it send you messages and stuff? Through your body?

LISA I dunno. Maybe. Yeah.

JACK You gotta know.

LISA No.

JACK What's going on in your head?

LISA Happiness. You. Me. Baby.

JACK That all?

LISA Yeah.

JACK You sure...?

LISA I can't tell you every—

JACK But that's what I want to know.

LISA It's just not possible. You ready to be a dad?

JACK I am totally, totally ready.

LISA My mum, she says we're too young but I say Jack's got a job, I got a job, we got the flat, it's time. I love you.

JACK And I love you.

They kiss.

Together forever. You feel trapped?

LISA No. Love it. Love you.

JACK Am I boring?

LISA Normal.

JACK I'll get the tea.

Exit **JACK**. *Whoosh, flash,* **LISA** *vanishes into thin air. Re-enter* **JACK**.

Lisa, do you want white or the...? Lees? Lees? Lisa?

Pause.

Lisa?

Pause.

Lisa!

Pause.

Lisa?

He hunts around the room.

I'm gonna find you and when I find you I'm gonna... Lisa?

He goes and checks in the bedroom.

(offstage) Lisa!

He enters from the bedroom. She reappears – a rematerialisation.

Oh my god. Oh my oh oh—

LISA What? What?

JACK I... There was nothing there. It was frightening. There was like this gap where a person should be and I was calling out but there was nothing there. And then you were there.

LISA Stop messing around.

JACK I'm not, I – Oh Lees. You think I'm going mad? Maybe...

LISA Forget it. Trick of the light. Kiss me.

JACK Listen I...can't.

LISA You're scared of me.

JACK No just I—

LISA You are. You're scared of me.

JACK Of course if you can just—

LISA I'm solid – I'm real – you see – you see – touch me – touch me – what do you feel?

JACK Yeah solid, real yeah.

LISA So I'm here. Nothing happened. You're very tired. You're very stressed. Nobody's running away. Nobody's fading. I'm here with you. We're gonna have the baby together. We're gonna be together – forever. Yeah?

JACK Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

LISA Daddy.

JACK Mummy.

LISA You feeling alright now?

JACK Yeah.

Whooshing sounds. Flashing lights. She's vanished.

Oh no oh no oh no oh – hello hello hello – oh no please! Are you there? Are you – oh oh oh oh. Oh please don't do this oh please oh – I don't want to be on my own. I don't like being on my own. Oh oh oh.

Flashing and whooshing. Blackout. Full light. **LISA** *is back.*

LISA Can I do the curry now?

JACK You did it again. You vanished. Faded away and then—

LISA You're mad.

JACK Stop doing it.

LISA This is completely mad.

JACK I want you to stop doing that. I don't like it.

LISA I'm not doing anything. I'm living with a freak.

JACK There's a place up there or down there or in there or... somewhere and you are going there.

LISA I have had enough of this. I've wanted this baby ever since I was thirteen and now you, you – I'm going out.

JACK Where?

LISA I don't know. Shops. Cinema. Mates. Anywhere.

JACK But what if you vanish—? In front of your mates?

LISA Not gonna happen. Good night.

JACK Stay here.

LISA Why?

JACK It'll be safer.

LISA You're making me frightened.

JACK With the current circumstances.

LISA There are no…

JACK I'll look after you. Stay. Stay. Stay in the house. How we gonna look after baby if you don't stay in the house?

LISA How can we if you keep—?

JACK It's not me it's you who's vanishing.

LISA See. See. We're incompatible.

JACK No no I do love you Lees I do, I just – something's going on – I don't understand but there is something but I – oh – but I do want the baby so…

LISA Alright but – listen – you gotta cut out the funny stuff. I want normal. That's important.

JACK I'll try to cut out the—

LISA Normal. Yeah – I just can't handle. There's a world out there of people and they're all odd. They seem odd. They have like freak-outs on buses and stuff. Talk to themselves. Punch strangers. I can't handle that. You're normal. That's why I picked you.

JACK Course.

LISA I gotta have a totally normal baby father.

JACK I'm the one. Maybe I'm…tonight means so much I'm just…didn't think I was nervous but maybe I'm…

LISA Come here.

JACK Yeah.

Whooshing, flashing etc. **JACK** *rapidly gets out his mobile phone. Starts video recording.* **LISA** *vanishes.*

Come on come on.

Whooshing flashing etc, **LISA** *reappears.*

You did it again.

LISA No I never I was just—

JACK You did. Look.

JACK *rewinds the images, indicates to* **LISA** *to have a look on the phone.*

LISA This is stupid I'm not gonna just—

Reluctantly, she looks.

...Oh my god. Thin air and then I... That's so frightening. Hold me. Oh babe.

JACK *(holds her)* I know, I know.

LISA Am I solid now? I feel solid.

JACK You are. You're solid now.

LISA What we gonna do? If I'm the kind of person who just vanishes – I don't wanna be the kind of person who just vanishes. I never heard of that...people who just...oh.

JACK Me neither.

LISA I want to be here forever.

Doorbell.

JACK I'll do it.

JACK *answers it. Enter* **BARRY** *and* **STACY**, *who is eight months pregnant.*

BARRY Will you tell her, will you tell her—?

STACY Just watch him.

BARRY Will you two tell her—? Will you tell her – she's got this idea, she's got this really stupid idea—

STACY It's not—

BARRY She says that I'm vanishing. She says—

STACY He has.

BARRY I haven't.

STACY You have. You fade in front of my eyes – you go to nothing.

BARRY Will one of you, both of you, tell her that she is mad? Hormones.

STACY I'm not—

BARRY People don't just vanish. I try but I – it's the baby playing with her hormones, she doesn't – when women are pregnant they get these… Your head gets muddled up. You cry and then you're happy and then I vanish.

JACK Barry, mate—

BARRY Yeah? *(to* **STACY***)* Listen to this—

JACK Barry, mate, it's true. People vanish. Lisa's doing the same. Today I've seen—

BARRY Jesus.

JACK Three times. People vanish. I never thought 'til today. But I've seen it. You can just…lose people. They fade to nothing. Empty.

Beat.

BARRY *(to* **STACY***)* You set him up to this.

STACY I didn't do nothing.

BARRY Lisa?

LISA It's true. I'm not a solid person. I'm a person who just… goes and comes back again.

BARRY You're all mad. What you been doing? Well, I'm not going to vanish. Why am I gonna vanish? I'm not gonna vanish. Not gonna vanish when I got a kid on the way.

LISA Show him the clip.

JACK Look at this. *(He shows* **BARRY** *and* **STACY** *the phone clip.)*

LISA See? I go to nothing.

BARRY …Oh my god… Is that what I…?

STACY Just the same. Same as you.

BARRY Oh no. But I want to be in this world. All the time. I don't want to miss stuff. I'm not choosing to go – do you choose...?

LISA I didn't know anything. I thought it was all normal 'til—

BARRY I wouldn't choose... I want to be with you.

STACY What if you vanish when the baby's born? Can't have you vanishing once the baby's born. That's not a role model. I want a two-parent family. I gotta have – that's what it's about, isn't it? A mum and a dad. I'm not gonna be a sad cow pushing a kid round by myself. That's not what I—

BARRY Course, course.

STACY Feels bad when you're gone.

JACK *(to* **LISA***)* Yeah – feels really terrible.

LISA Stop watching that clip.

JACK I was just—

LISA You are – you're just watching it over and over.

JACK Well...

LISA Feels really weird you doing that.

JACK Just want to see if maybe there's some...

LISA Don't. Delete it.

JACK No.

LISA I don't like it. It scares me. Delete it.

JACK It might – it's evidence.

LISA I don't care. It's doing my head in. Give it me. Give it me.

JACK No.

LISA I want it. Don't want you looking at that over and over. Fading disappearing nothing. Fading disappearing nothing. Fading...

BARRY She's right.

JACK Alright alright. I'll look, look...

JACK *goes to delete but whooshing, flashing etc.* **LISA** *and* **BARRY** *disappear.*

Oh. No.

STACY Barry! Barry! This is doing my head in.

JACK How many times it's happened to you?

STACY Four, five times since breakfast. This is my sixth.

JACK Does it get any easier?

STACY No. Still hurts. In your gut. Your heart. Whatever. Miss him.

JACK Yeah – me too.

STACY I couldn't ever get used to a vanishing person.

JACK Maybe we'll have to.

STACY I can't.

JACK But if this is, like, the way it's gonna be.

STACY Then I just can't handle the way it's gonna be.

JACK You'll have the kid.

STACY If it's a stayer. Maybe the kid'll be a vanisher too.

JACK 'Spose.

STACY If the dad's a vanisher then maybe the kid's a vanisher too.

JACK You still want it?

STACY Yeah, only...

JACK You'll cope whatever, won't you? Vanisher or stayer?

STACY I suppose, I don't – this is so new. Vanishers. Stayers. I didn't know there was a difference when I woke up this morning.

JACK Terrible, innit?

STACY Yeah. Terrible.

JACK This could be the rest of our lives.

STACY No.

BARRY *and* **LISA** *reappear.*

Back again.

BARRY Did we...?

JACK You faded away – you dematerialised. You went somewhere—

LISA Oh god. What do you think we are – aliens?

JACK I don't know.

LISA I don't want to be an alien or a ghost. Hold me.

JACK You go out with someone, you live with someone...

STACY You get pregnant with someone—

JACK And then they turn out to be a vanishing person.

LISA Hold me.

JACK I'm frightened.

LISA We're not aliens or ghosts. Hold me. I think we'd know if we were aliens or ghosts, wouldn't we, Barry?

BARRY I think so.

LISA And we'd let you know so don't – hold me. Hold me. Hold me. I'm totally frightened. I'm totally freaked. So don't just look at me like that, staring. Come and hold me.

JACK I'm sorry. *(He holds her.)*

LISA Please don't say those terrible things about us.

JACK Sorry.

LISA Give me a kiss.

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