

PERUSAL SCRIPT

NCMO

A Short Play
(from the play, "Peculiarities")

by
Eric Samuelson



Newport, Maine

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NCMO

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PECULIARITIES by Eric Samuelsen. 5w 3m. *Peculiarities* is an exploration of LDS attitudes toward sexuality, in particular situations in which moral rigidity and sexuality collide in Mormon culture. A collection of 4 plays TAHOE, PIZZA AND A MOVIE, NCMO and TEMPS (plus two adjunct plays developed later and available separately) KISS, and BISHOP! *Peculiarities* interweaves the 4 plays together, however, they are also available as separately, through-plotted Short Plays. **ORDER #2091**

Tahoe — Two BYU students go to Nevada to get civilly married for a weekend so they can see what sex is like. The play takes place in Ted's car while he and Kendra are traveling back to Utah from a weekend in Tahoe. **ORDER #2092**

Pizza and a Movie — Two roommates, Carlene and Courtney, spend an evening watching questionable content, wondering about men, and eating pizza in their BYU-approved housing apartment in Provo, Utah. **ORDER #2093**

NCMO — The play takes place inside a BYU-approved housing apartment in Provo, Utah where Kim and Trent ... **ORDER #2094**

Temps — Each has been dating someone else, but due to a situation where they work, they are now inside Jason's car on their way to.... **ORDER #2095**
(**KISS #2096, Bishop! #2097**) no longer included in *Peculiarities*.

Eric Samuelsen taught at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio before joining the faculty at Brigham Young University in 1992. He became head of the Playwriting program at BYU in 1999. He has also taught as an adjunct faculty member in the Religion department. He retired from BYU in 2012.

As a playwright, Samuelsen has had twenty-seven plays professionally produced in Utah, Indiana, Louisiana, New York, and California. Some of his plays include *Gadianton*, which has seen three professional productions across the country, *A Love Affair with Electrons*, *Family*, *The Plan*, and *The Way We're Wired*. He is resident playwright at Plan-B Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, who designated their 2013-14 season a 'Season of Eric, including productions of six of his plays.

He is a member of the Playwrights' Circle, and the Dramatists Guild. He is three-time winner of the Annual Award in Playwriting offered by the Association for Mormon Letters (AML) and he became president of AML in 2007. In 2013 the organization awarded him the Smith Pettit Award for his lifetime work as a playwright.

He has been a staff writer for the on-line satirical magazine *The Sugarbeet*. He was also featured in the book *Conversations with Mormon Authors*, edited by Chris Bigelow. He is a noted Ibsen translator, and has also published scholarly articles on 19th and 20th century Scandanavian Theatre, and more recently, on LDS drama and film. He blogged at *Mormoniconoclast.com*. Eric died in September of 2019 after a long battle with polymyositis. This has left a huge hole in the Theatre Community within, and outside of, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Peculiarities was first produced in 2001, in Springville, at the Springville Playhouse. Tony Gunn directed.

Kendra was played by *Sarah Ratliff*

Ted was played by *Ben Sampson*

Carlene was played by *Shelley Burton*

Courtney was played by *Sarah Nielsen*

Trent was played by *Jesse Harward*

Kim was played by *Susanna Florence*

Alexis was played by *Diane Rane*

Jason was played by *Jeremy Selim*

In 2005, *Plan B Theatre* in Salt Lake City did a production, again called *Peculiarities*, but it only included three of the stories: Tahoe, Temps, and Kiss. (not included here) The three in cars. Directed by Jerry Rapier. Later filmed. Here it is on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3jfgsYE0IY>

CAST OF CHARACTERS

TAHOE

KENDRA (*BYU co-ed, early twenties*)

TED (*BYU student, early twenties*)

PIZZA AND A MOVIE

CARLENE (*BYU co-ed, early twenties*)

COURTNEY (*BYU co-ed, early twenties*)

NCMO*

KIM (*BYU co-ed, early twenties, single*)

TRENT (*BYU student, Returned missionary, early twenties, single*)

TEMPS

ALEXIS (*Mid-20s. married*)

JASON (*Mid-20s, single*)

*** (non-committal make-out)**

Each play is also available as a separate Short Play , and able to be produced independently including KISS and BISHOP!

NCMO

(A BYU approved housing apartment, Provo, Utah. KIM and TRENT, on a sofa. Making out. TRENT moves away.)

TRENT: Okay. Okay.

(KIM tries to nuzzle his neck.)

I think we'd better—

(KIM kisses him again, hand on his thigh.)

Kim, I mean it.

KIM: Don't quit on me.

TRENT: Not a good idea.

KIM: Come on.

(She kisses him again.)

TRENT: I'm serious.

(He stands. She's clinging to him, hits the floor.)

KIM: *(On the floor. Furious, but controlled.)* All right.

TRENT: I'm sorry.

KIM: Fine.

TRENT: It was starting to get too—

KIM: I was fine.

TRENT: Dangerous. It was getting dangerous.

KIM: Not for me.

TRENT: Well it was for me.

KIM: *(Venomously.)* Coward.

TRENT: There's no need for—

KIM: Wuss. Pansy.

TRENT: Just a second here—

KIM: Fag.

TRENT: I think I proved that I'm not a—

KIM: I know *exactly* how far I can go and *exactly* when I need to stop and this time we were nowhere close.

TRENT: Yeah, well, I guess I don't have your fine tuned sense of—

KIM: I draw the boundaries in this relationship.

TRENT: Do you?

KIM: Yes. I do.

TRENT: Well maybe it's time to redraw some boundaries.

(Heads for the door.)

KIM: You go out that door, and you will never see me again.

TRENT: Break my heart.

(But he doesn't exit, stands by the door.)

KIM: You know me well enough to know that I am stating nothing less than the exact truth. You know me well enough, Trent.

TRENT: So what?

KIM: I really don't kid around. Leave, you're history.

TRENT: Fine.

(But he doesn't leave.)

KIM: Trent?

(He does not answer, still stands by the door, torn.)

Honey.

(He fidgets by the door.)

Come back.

TRENT: No.

KIM: Look, I'm sorry. Come back.

TRENT: No.

KIM: I don't want to end it. Not like this.

TRENT: Yeah.

KIM: Look, I'm sorry.

TRENT: Whatever.

KIM: Really. I am.

TRENT: I'm not sure it's . . . enough for you to—

KIM: You have to understand. I just . . . I had plans for tonight, and I was looking forward to . . . you know.

TRENT: Yeah.

KIM: You cut me off. Too soon, sooner than I . . . Anyway. You see?

TRENT: All right.

KIM: Come back here. Okay? Come here. We'll play truth or dare.

(A long pause.)

TRENT: Truth or dare? I don't think so.

KIM: Don't get all pissy, hormones talking, that's all.

TRENT: Call me a—

KIM: I know, I didn't mean it.

TRENT: Okay. . . .

KIM: Chalk it up to, you know, frustration. Please? Come here?

(He crosses to the sofa, sits, not looking at her.)

TRENT: I was gonna start pushing things, see? I mean, that's why I . . . I was really gonna start pushing things.

KIM: I understand. See, but maybe that's what I wanted.

TRENT: What do you mean?

KIM: Maybe I wanted you to start pushing things.

TRENT: I didn't know if I could stop.

KIM: Of course you could stop.

TRENT: I don't know.

KIM: I mean, I know you. I trust you.

TRENT: I was getting pretty—

KIM: You could stop.

TRENT: Whatever.

KIM: You could have.

TRENT: Okay. But see—

KIM: No, see, that's not the issue. Whether you could stop. I trust you, but you kinda need to trust me too. One of us has to say no and I kinda think that's my job.

TRENT: Both of us.

KIM: Well, sure.

TRENT: Both of us need to, you know, have that responsibility.

KIM: Okay, sure. Okay. But—

TRENT: That's so bogus, 'it's the girl's responsibility to say—'

KIM: No, I'm not disagreeing—

TRENT: I mean, I stopped it tonight. Right? Earlier than you wanted, okay, but seriously, I was not up to pushing things any further.

KIM: Look, can I get you a coke? Cool us both down.

TRENT: Sure.

KIM: Ice?

TRENT: Yeah.

KIM: (*Pouring them both a coke from a two liter bottle.*) I hope it's not too flat. Katie always buys these two liter things, and then leaves the cap off.

TRENT: Gary does the same at my place.

KIM: It's undrinkable, flat pop.

TRENT: Totally.

KIM: Oh, it's got a nice head though.

TRENT: Good.

KIM: (*Spills a little.*) Oops. I'm still a little shaky, you know.

TRENT: Yeah.

KIM: You get going on the back of my neck like that.

TRENT: You like that?

KIM: You couldn't tell?

(*Sits.*)

I'm still shaky.

TRENT: No, we need to do this. Talk about things.

KIM: Totally.

(*A pause.*)

You know, until you stopped it, that was one good session.

TRENT: It was.

KIM: Oh yeah.

(They look at each other. Lights down on them.)

SCENE TWO

(KIM and TRENT, back on their sofa. TRENT finishes off the soda.)

TRENT: That hit the spot

KIM: Okay, Truth or Dare

TRENT: Do we have to do this?

KIM: Yes.

TRENT: It's a party game, right? For like ten people

KIM: You can play it with two.

TRENT: I don't know.

KIM: Truth or dare?

TRENT: Truth. I guess.

KIM: Okay, are you and Lisa engaged?

TRENT: Okay, I thought Lisa and Brad were off-limits.

KIM: Well, as in, do we tell 'em, of course we don't. But I'm curious.

TRENT: What if I don't want to say?

KIM: Truth or dare, you gotta.

TRENT: I don't want to.

KIM: Trent, honey, you really wanna try one of my dares?

(A pause.)

TRENT: Lisa and I are talking about getting married.

KIM: Okay.

TRENT: We are. We're not, you know, engaged.

KIM: I understand—

TRENT: But close. We're talking.

KIM: Sure.

TRENT: If she knew I was over here—

KIM: She's not going to find out that you were over here. Not from me.

TRENT: I'm gonna have to tell her.

KIM: Your call.

TRENT: I just don't think I can go into . . . you know, a—

KIM: Okay, sure, fine—

TRENT: A committed . . . an engage—

KIM: Brad and I too.

TRENT: What?

KIM: I anticipated. Truth or dare, I anticipate you'd ask me about Brad.

TRENT: Yeah, okay.

KIM: We're talking. Brad and I.

TRENT: About . . . about getting m—

KIM: Yes. We are.

TRENT: Okay. . .

KIM: Or . . . maybe we're not.

TRENT: Truth or dare, you can't do that, change your mind.

KIM: Maybe we are, maybe we're not. Maybe Brad and I are like you and Lisa, that's possible. Or maybe I just lied to you.

TRENT: What are you—?

KIM: Point is, you and Lisa - me and Brad, what does any of that have to do with anything at all?

TRENT: It . . . it seems—

KIM: We may never do this again. We may never see each other again. Or we might be back here tomorrow night, on this sofa, doing just what we were doing. We . . . it . . . we don't have a 'relationship.'

TRENT: Okay, there's a sense in which—

KIM: NCMO. That's all this is about.

TRENT: You can't . . . just—

KIM: *Non-committal.* Non-com—

TRENT: I think we've got more going than—

KIM: I don't.

TRENT: You can't just . . . play games about this kinda stuff, Kim.
(Heads for the door again.)

KIM: Can't I? We have. For nearly a year now.

TRENT: I like you. I've thought of . . . even, like, dumping Lisa—

KIM: Why would you do that?

TRENT: Because, you and me, we—

KIM: You don't know anything about me.

TRENT: I . . . I—

KIM: What's my major?

TRENT: Your major?

KIM: Yeah. What am I majoring in?

TRENT: Is this more truth or dare?

KIM: It seems like the kind of basic thing you should know about someone—.

TRENT: Okay. Communications.

KIM: No.

TRENT: Well, I thought it was.

KIM: No, you don't know, because I've never told you.

TRENT: So what are you major—?

KIM: I'm not going to tell you.

TRENT: You're . . . why n—?

KIM: Because I don't want you to know. Where am I from?

TRENT: Okay.

KIM: I'm not going to tell you. What does my Dad do for a living?

TRENT: I get your poi—

KIM: I'm not going to tell you.

TRENT: So we could do that. Share those sorts of—

KIM: I don't want to, that's the point, that's where we are. I get these . . . feelings, and I want you to come over, and I want you . . . and then I don't. For weeks.

TRENT: Okay, I get it, I get your—

KIM: Do you?

TRENT: Yeah.

(Pause.)

Me too.

KIM: Right.

TRENT: No one makes me come over here. I could just . . . not.

KIM: Exactly.

TRENT: But I do. Every time.

KIM: But Brad . . . Brad is a sociology major from San Diego; his father is a dentist. Lisa?

TRENT: And Lisa's majoring in Elementary Ed, she's from Lethbridge, Alberta, and her father died five years ago of cancer. He was a junior high school principal.

KIM: See?

TRENT: It just seems so—

KIM: Seems. Sure.

TRENT: Empty. And—

KIM: No, see that's just . . .

TRENT: Wrong.

KIM: So? So what?

TRENT: And I just feel like I need to—

KIM: Go on. Go ahead.

TRENT: I might just—

KIM: Tell the Bishop, tell Lisa, I don't care. If you do I'll find someone to replace you. If I decide that's what I need. Either way, I will marry in the temple and be a virgin on my wedding night. This isn't about—

TRENT: What is it about?

KIM: It's about. . . .

(Pause.)

It's . . . about. . . you know what it's about, Trent, don't pretend you don't.

(Pause.)

TRENT: I think I'd better just leave.

KIM: If you do, that's it. The end.

TRENT: Maybe that would be best.

KIM: Or maybe not. Your call.

(He stares at her. BLACKOUT)

5 MORE PAGES TO THE END