

**KISS**

A ten minute play

by  
Eric Samuelson



Newport, Maine

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**KISS**

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS (1m 1w)

*LYNDA* — in her late twenties

*BARRY* — her husband, maybe thirty

*SETTING: the bench seat of a pickup*

**KISS** a short play by Eric Samuelsen 1m 1w About 10 minutes. An LDS mom is on her way to start work in a brothel to support her family after her husband has lost his job. She has a degree in Art History, simply because she never expected to have to work, but cannot find other options for employment, even in a museum. A very dark play with adult themes. **KISS** was formerly a part of the Plan-B Theatre Company production of “Peculiarities,” the author has wished this to be a separate, 10-minute play. It is however included in the film version called “Peculiarities.” (You can see the film on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3jfgsYE0IY>) It can be done as a companion piece, or curtain-raiser, or even an after-thought, or even incorporated whole into the middle of the play. **ORDER #2096**

**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.

# ***KISS***

*(A pickup, driving across the Nevada desert. BARRY is driving. LYNDA sits in the passenger seat.)*

**LYNDA:** *(After a long pause.)* Okay, so, remember, Thursdays, they get out early.

**BARRY:** Yeah.

**LYNDA:** Teacher, you know, preparation day, whatever. They're out quarter to one.

**BARRY:** I remember.

**LYNDA:** I've set it up. They go straight from school to Zabriskie's.

**BARRY:** Right, to Zabriskie's—

**LYNDA:** I've set it up—

**BARRY:** I know, with Allison, I was there.

*(Pause.)*

**LYNDA:** Thursdays. Not Fridays like it was last year.

**BARRY:** Yeah.

**LYNDA:** And, honey, now look, you really got to promise me this, okay? I want you to promise me—

**BARRY:** Do we have to do—

**LYNDA:** Barry. Honey. I'm serious. If you leave straight from work, you're home by five fifteen by the kitchen clock. And you have to. Every day, you just have got to.

**BARRY:** I told you I—

**LYNDA:** Yeah, okay, but you know how it is, Ed or Ross or one of those guys—

**BARRY:** Honey, I told you, I'll be ho—

**LYNDA:** They'll want to stop, darts or a beer in Elko, and—

**BARRY:** I'll come straight home.

**LYNDA:** Well, you say that, but—

**BARRY:** This is different. Different situa—

**LYNDA:** I know, I trust you. I just--

**BARRY:** I'll have dinner on the table six o'clock. Every night. Solemn promise.

*(She sits back, mollified.)*

It may just be TV dinners, but. You know. I'm on it.

**LYNDA:** Okay.

*(Pause.)*

And no beer in the house. I don't like what it says to the kids, the message.

**BARRY:** We've been over this.

**LYNDA:** It's important to me.

**BARRY:** Okay. I agree, all right. In front of the kids, we pretend there's this thing called the Word of Wisdom.

**LYNDA:** It's important. To me.

**BARRY:** Okay.

*(Pause.)*

Check it out, mirage.

**LYNDA:** I know, feels like the car's gonna hydroplane, and then it's gone.

**BARRY:** Yeah.

**LYNDA:** Three weeks, and then I'm off, and then you can go out. I'll wanna stay home with the kids some anyway.

**BARRY:** Well, yeah, but. We're gonna wanna, you know? A little married one on one, right? I mean when you come home after three weeks gone I'm not necessarily gonna be wantin' to go out with the boys.

**LYNDA:** We'll have to see.

**BARRY:** You know what I mean.

**LYNDA:** Sure.

*(Pause.)*

**BARRY:** Anyway, six fifteen. You can trust me.

**LYNDA:** Okay.

*(Pause.)*

I know I can.

*(Pause.)*

Okay, there's the marker, turnoff's about two—

**BARRY:** Right, right.

*(Pause as he makes the turn.)*

Jackrabbit.

**LYNDA:** What?

**BARRY:** *(Gesturing.)* Jackrabbit.

**LYNDA:** Right.

*(Pause.)*

We're gonna be early.

**BARRY:** Is that a problem?

**LYNDA:** I don't know. I don't know how strict they—

**BARRY:** Did they say it's a problem?

**LYNDA:** They didn't. . . .

*(Pause.)*

Go slower. I don't wanna be early.

**BARRY:** But how big a problem is it if—

**LYNDA:** I don't know. They said a lot of things.

*(Pause.)*

**BARRY:** You'll have a room? I mean, you'll have your room.

**LYNDA:** I've seen it.

**BARRY:** Is it okay?

**LYNDA:** It's small.

*(Pause.)*

It's okay, it's got curtains. Pretty nice curtains. And I can decorate it. Put pictures up, CD player. Stuff.

. . . .

*(Pause.)*

Not too much personal stuff, they said. Family pictures—

**BARRY:** I can see that.

**LYNDA:** But, like, posters. Prints. I was thinking, maybe, a Degas print or—

**BARRY:** Degas?

**LYNDA:** Never mind. Something.

**BARRY:** What about clothes? Underwear, you know, whaddathey call it, a teddy. Victoria's Secret.

**LYNDA:** I, uh, did some shopping.

**BARRY:** You have to provide—?

**LYNDA:** I got some things. I think they'll be all right.

**BARRY:** Can I see?

*(Reaching back.)*

They're in the bag, right?

**LYNDA:** No.

*(Slaps his hand away.)*

I I I don't want you to see. . . .

*(Pause.)*

**BARRY:** I could maybe offer some feedback.

**LYNDA:** No.

**BARRY:** Come on, let me see.

*(Reaching back again.)*

**LYNDA:** No!

*(She grabs a parcel from the back seat and hugs it to her. Pause.)*

**BARRY:** Geez.

*(Pause.)*

**LYNDA:** Please understand, I don't—

**BARRY:** All I know, I'm proud of you, and how you look and everything, and I—

**LYNDA:** No, no no no, don't, I—

**BARRY:** I love you. I love how you look.

**LYNDA:** I know.

*(Pause.)*

Honey. Barry. I have to. . . .

*(Pause.)*

I'm only going to be able to do this if I can . . . separate. . . .

*(Pause.)*

I'm going to have to be a different. . . .

*(Pause.)*

Look, I'm . . . me, I'm Barry's wife and I'm mom to Kevin and Lidie, and . . . right now in this car, that's who I am. I have to keep separate . . . my. . . .

*(Pause.)*

I'm not saying this very . . . um--

***Three more pages until the end:***

**BARRY:** Kiss?

*(She turns and stares back at him. Final Blackout.)*