

**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

**PERFECT CIRCLE**

by **Eric Samuelsen**



Newport, Maine

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## **PERFECT CIRCLE**

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PERFECT CIRCLE by Eric Samuelsen received its world premiere January 3, 2009 as part of the second annual STUDENT SLAM, a Plan-B Theatre/Theatre Arts Conservatory co-production. Designed by Jeff Gwilliam and Kyle Lewis. Produced by Colleen Lewis.

AMANDA — **Cindy Stephens**

SARAH — **Meghan Bernstein**

DARLA — **Sarah Tumpowsky**

CRYSTAL — **Chelsea Anne Millward**

ZACH — **Roman Amici**

### **CAST of CHARACTERS 4f 1m**

This casting should be regarded as approximate. Make changes as needed. All characters are mid to late teens, and cousins.

AMANDA — Cindy Stephens

SARAH, age 15 — Meghan Bernstein

DARLA, the Bride's sister — Sarah Tumpowsky

CRYSTAL — Chelsea Anne Millward

ZACH — Roman Amici

(Note: This play takes place at a wedding. All props are mimed, including all wedding guests—including Uncle Gary. When I describe an action, rather than say they mime doing such and such, just assume the action is mimed.)

**PERFECT CIRCLE** a ten-minute play by Eric Samuelsen. 4f 1m. Five teenaged cousins at the wedding of another cousin. What can't go wrong with an overly-demanding bride and an uncle who can't seem to leave the younger girls alone. While the Uncle and the Bride are imagined, the frustrations of the cousins are not. Premiered as a Plan-B Theatre/Theatre Arts Conservatory Student SLAM 2009. **ORDER #3262**

**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](http://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.

## **PERFECT CIRCLE**

*(AMANDA and SARA sit in chairs, left, rubbing their feet. ZACH sits in a chair facing away from them, playing with a Gameboy, listening to an ipod.)*

**AMANDA:** I hate these shoes.

**SARA:** Hate ‘em.

**AMANDA:** Hate ‘em hate ‘em hate ‘em.

**SARA:** Hate ‘em.

*(We see CRYSTAL, filling water glasses for guests at the round table, left. She suddenly shrieks and leaps, as though goosed.)*

**AMANDA:** Reason number five hundred and twelve I’m never getting married. Heels.

*(CRYSTAL deals with other guests, who she soaked.)*

Abu Graib, remember? The torture, the prisoner abuse? You notice they never made them wear high heels? No, not even Donald Rumsfeld at his most diabolical...

**SARA:** My sister wore ballet slippers.

*(CRYSTAL backs away from the table, waving a warning finger at the gooser.)*

**AMANDA:** Seriously?

**SARA:** Well, not like pointe shoes. But the long dress, you couldn’t see her feet. So, dance slippers.

**AMANDA:** Smart girl.

**SARA:** I really thought her dress was pretty. Unlike, you know...

**AMANDA:** Today’s? With the bum bow from hell?

**SARA:** Exactly. I know it’s not fair to compare. But my sister s, even her bridesmaid’s dresses were okay.

**AMANDA:** They were bright orange.

**SARA:** Apricot.

**AMANDA:** Orange. Plus they made us all look fat.

**SARA:** They were bridesmaid’s dresses, of course they made us look fat.

*(CRYSTAL joins them.)*

**CRYSTAL:** Watch out for table four.

**AMANDA:** Which one?

*(Looks.)*

Oh, yeah, Uncle Gary. Total perv.

**CRYSTAL:** Of course he has to goose me while I'm pouring water. Soaked half the table, you guys know where I'd find paper towels?

*(AMANDA shrugs.)*

**SARA:** The caterers got stuff out of that cupboard.

**CRYSTAL:** I'll try there. Thanks.

**SARA:** Hey, Crys? This dress, do I look like a grape?

**CRYSTAL:** Well, her colors are taupe and plum. So...

**AMANDA:** Yet another example of bridal tyranny! The awful awful colors: taupe and plum, teal and wisteria, salmon and lilac, fuschia and navy! Bridesmaids of the world, unite!

*(CRYSTAL makes a half-hearted fist sign, goes off.)*

**SARA:** Why am I even a bridesmaid? I hardly know her.

**AMANDA:** You're her cousin.

**SARA:** She's got thirty cousins.

*(Looking disgustedly at her dress.)*

I don't even think this fabric would make a good rag.

**AMANDA:** How many fairy tales are basically about shoes?

**SARA:** Like what?

**AMANDA:** Well, Cinderella, obviously. For one. And...the one about the old lady who lived in a shoe.

**SARA:** That's not a fairy tale, it's a nursery rhyme.

**AMANDA:** Picky. Okay, there's...well, there's Cinderella. And what's the moral of that story? The girl who can stand wearing horrible uncomfortable shoes, the one who even CLAIMS THE PRIVILEGE of wearing terrible, crippling shoes, shoes made of glass, GLASS, no give, no arch-support, GLASS, "that's" the girl who gets the prince. It's basically about a ... feat of endurance. No pun intended.

*(Enter CRYSTAL carrying lots of paper towels.)*

**CRYSTAL:** You guys feel like giving me a hand?

**AMANDA:** Uh, Uncle Gary's table?

**CRYSTAL:** He's not so bad.

**AMANDA:** Hi, Sandra's wedding? I'm in line, he kissed me on the cheek, kept trying to grope my butt, then offered to help straighten my corsage. No thanks.

**CRYSTAL:** Never mind, I'll get Zach to help.

*(She crosses to ZACH.)*

Zach?

*(She removes his earphones.)*

Zach!

**ZACH:** What?

**CRYSTAL:** You're supposed to be helping, come help.

**ZACH:** Man...

*(Gets up, martyred. They cross to clean up the table.)*

**SARA:** This is my ninth wedding. Nine.

**AMANDA:** Well, you know, it's a big family.

**SARA:** I'm only fifteen! I've been a bridesmaid four times, a flower girl twice. I have this closet full of dresses I will never wear. I'm not even old enough to go to the prom, and I've been in nine weddings!

**AMANDA:** This is my fourth. Only once a bridesmaid, though. Unless you count this.

**SARA:** The only good job at a wedding is to be the girl who sits by the book and makes sure guests sign in. You'd think, nine weddings, at least once I'd get that job, but no, no such luck.

**AMANDA:** At least she's not making us stand in line.

**SARA:** No, and you know why? We're not cute enough.

**AMANDA:** No!

**SARA:** That's what she told Amy who told Brittany who told Sam. Her mom made her use us, you know? But she doesn't want us in the pictures. So she made up this whole sub-bridesmaid slash waitress job for us.

**AMANDA:** That's so like her.

**SARA:** Isn't it?

**AMANDA:** I mean, we're friends and all. Friendly cousins. And family. And all that. But the longer you get to know her, the more you realize she's a terrible terrible human being.

**SARA:** She is. She totally is.

**AMANDA:** But is it her fault, really? I mean, aren't we all part of it?

**SARA:** Part of what?

**AMANDA:** We're being slowly, insidiously socialized, brainwashed, really, into this whole, you know, huge wedding cabal. You know they have bridal shows at my high school? I'm totally not kidding. Our dark puppet masters, selling the whole pretty-princess-on-my special-day fantasy. Luring us down the path to complete enslavement.

**SARA:** Yeah, for mine, I'm going simple. Under five grand, maybe like silver and blue for the colors.

**AMANDA:** I m never getting married. I plan to live in sin.

**SARA:** Plus a chocolate fountain.

**AMANDA:** Those are nice.

*(CRYSTAL and ZACH return, wads of sopping paper towels in hand. ZACH immediately returns to Gameboy and ipod.)*

**SARA:** You get it?

**CRYSTAL:** Yeah. Uncle Gary insisted I'd spilled some in his lap. So I made Zach mop him up.

**AMANDA:** Good for you.

*(Enter DARLA , busy, harried, officious.)*

**DARLA:** Okay, listen up.

*(They do, CRYSTAL removing ZACH's earphones.)*

I've been talking to...herself. The Queen. We are wrecking the most important day of her life. Because of us, a day she's spent the last eight months of her life planning has been irretrievably destroyed. At this point, there's little enough we can do to make amends, but any small gesture would be appreciated.

**CRYSTAL:** Ok. What'd we do?

**DARLA:** I have a list.

*(Again, the list is invisible; she mimes pulling it out with some ceremony.)*

One: the bows on the centerpieces are insufficiently poufy.

*(Moans from all.)*

Two: the candles on tables one, seven and twelve are guttering. Three: some of the napkins were folded incorrectly. Folded properly, the bride's and groom's names are visible together on the same side of the napkin. Folded improperly, and the fold cuts across the word and, leaving the bride's name on the opposite side of the napkin from the groom's. I need not belabor the symbolic overtones of an improper fold.

**CRYSTAL:** We can refold the napkins. What else?

**DARLA:** The music was too loud. When I turned it down, I was informed it was now inaudible. The photograph on table nine is unflattering. Worst of all, one of the bridesmaids, pardon me, that should be one of the "photogenic" bridesmaids forgot to tell us before she got those hair extensions.

**AMANDA:** The wench!

**DARLA:** I would very much like to murder her. My sister, the bride. I want her dead. Dead. Dead!

*(Gets some control.)*

I've fantasized killing her for weeks now. She's my sister, and I love her very much. But there's not a jury in the world...

**2.5 pages to the end of the play.**