

PREMIERE PERUSAL SCRIPT

Cannibal Bondage Fiasco

A ten-minute play by
Eric Samuelsen



Newport, Maine

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CANNIBAL BONDAGE FIASCO

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CHARACTERS

SEBASTIAN—a gentleman used to living large

PERCIVAL— a chef, and a gentleman used to living large

SETTING: ONE INTERIOR

CANNIBAL BONDAGE FIASCO a ten-minute play by Eric Samuelsen. 2m. Simple interior, elaborate or indicated. Modern costumes. About 10 minutes. The macabre humor, the mock-social-status-consciousness of the 'very rich' and those wanting to associate with them and please them are explored with a savage wit that beg the analogy be made to society-at-large, especially when comparing America and ... those outside of it. Our bondage ty money and class, or lack of either...or both... center this social dramady. PREMIERE PLAY FILE **ORDER #3275**

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.

CANNIBAL BONDAGE FIASCO

(The swank apartment/home in an upper middle class area of Des Moines. Some simple object could indicate that there is a lot of money that was once involved in the lives of SEBASTIAN and PERCIVAL.)

SEBASTIAN: So it comes to this. An indifferent Merlot. A terrine of the most pedestrian foie gras. A half-stale artisan bread with truffle butter. And a main course—

PERCIVAL: I tried!

SEBASTIAN: I'm sure you did: poorly aged and seasoned, overcooked. With a ... sauce.

PERCIVAL: It's a fiasco!

SEBASTIAN: Disappointing, certainly.

PERCIVAL: Catastrophe!

SEBASTIAN: Unfortunate.

PERCIVAL: Utter devastation!

SEBASTIAN: Calm yourself, Percival, we both know I'm immune to histrionics. We're agreed it was not one of your better efforts. But redeemable.

PERCIVAL: But Sebastian? You ... really think so?

SEBASTIAN: I know so.

PERCIVAL: How so?

SEBASTIAN: L'audace!

PERCIVAL: Pensez-vous ainsi ?

SEBASTIAN: Certainement!

PERCIVAL: L'audace!

SEBASTIAN: Absolument!

(They strike a heroic pose.)

PERCIVAL: I'm not sure I follow.

SEBASTIAN: Audacity, my friend! The answer to all of life's dilemmas—a flouting of convention on the grandest possible scale.

PERCIVAL: Yes. Of course. Audacity, why didn't I think of that.

(Pause, deeply confused.)

So ... not a Bordeaux, then?

SEBASTIAN: Let me try this again.

(PERCIVAL looks attentive.)

Our houseguests...

PERCIVAL: Yes?

SEBASTIAN: Are important people...

PERCIVAL: Right.

SEBASTIAN: To us.

PERCIVAL: Granted...

SEBASTIAN: And so far, this visit, they've been unimpressed. Underwhelmed. Visibly filled with l'ennui.

PERCIVAL: They think I'm boring! My cooking: boring!

SEBASTIAN: They do, yes.

PERCIVAL: So unfair.

SEBASTIAN: Time to focus, Percival. The terms of the will couldn't be clearer. The Countess left us the money.

PERCIVAL: *(Ecstatic.)* To us!

SEBASTIAN: But not unconditionally.

PERCIVAL: *(Utterly despondent.)* No.

SEBASTIAN: We have to impress the trustees. Prepare them a meal ...

TOGETHER: The likes of which they have never before eaten.

PERCIVAL: Five times, we've cooked! Every night this week, and tonight's our last chance!

SEBASTIAN: And yet, so far...

PERCIVAL: They're horrible. Where did she find these people? They've been everywhere, they've eaten everything. I cook, I slave! They shrug their shoulders. Meh. I heard one of them actually say that. Meh.

SEBASTIAN: And we rather do need the money.

PERCIVAL: Do we ever! The dunning letters! The insulting visits from attorneys! The phone calls!

SEBASTIAN: I know.

PERCIVAL: Collection agencies! I had no idea such things even existed! Scruffy, unshaven, unmannerly

people, leering, crude vulgarians whose entire *raison d'être* apparently is to press gentlemen— gentlemen!— to pay their debts! The calls, the incessant ringing of the phone.

SEBASTIAN: We could decide to not answer.

PERCIVAL: Yes. Yes, that's possible. To not answer the phone. Yes. I'm drawn to it, you know, the ringing, I hear one ring and the idea that I might just ignore it makes me twitch uncontrollably. But, yes, we might do that. Train ourselves.

SEBASTIAN: But it's not sustainable.

PERCIVAL: Which is my point! We live by the phone, it's the central fact of our existence. The phone, and the invitations it brings, the balls, the parties, the excursions.

SEBASTIAN: I know.

PERCIVAL: But not anymore. The phone ringing presages not an evening in the best society, not any longer it doesn't. It's a collection agency. It's some grubby little bill collector. It's, often as not, Mac.

SEBASTIAN: (*With real hatred.*) Mac.

PERCIVAL: Mac. Unshaven, uncouth. Ungrammatical.

SEBASTIAN: Loathesome, horrid Mac.

PERCIVAL: Debt is bondage. My grandmother used to say that, and I thought she was mad. Debt is bondage. No, I'd airily reply, debt is the social lubricant that allows gentlemen to slide through life unscathed. Debt is how we acquire the accouterments without which why bother? If I'm in Paris, if I find myself in the Ateliers Bataillard and see, for example, a Remi Blanchard without which my life will have lost all meaning, what am I to do? Pay cash?

SEBASTIAN: No, it's clearly unsustainable.

PERCIVAL: The Countess understood.

SEBASTIAN: We displeased the Countess.

PERCIVAL: The Countess understood. She knew.

SEBASTIAN: She died ... uncertain.

PERCIVAL: Of us?

SEBASTIAN: We must admit. There were ... incidents.

PERCIVAL: She always knew we loved her.

3 MORE PAGES TO THE END:

(*SEBASTIAN exits, hefting his candlestick. PERCIVAL opens his laptop.*)

Recipes... recipes.

(**THE END**)