

PERUSAL SCRIPT

FOURSQUARE

by
Eric Samuelson



Newport, Maine

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FOURSQUARE

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CHARACTERS 2m 4 either

FIRST -either M or F

SECOND -either M or F

THIRD -either M or F

FOURTH -either M or F

TEDDY -M

CRITTENDEN -M

FOURSQUARE a ten-minute play by Eric Samuelsen. TYA. 2m 4 either. Exterior setting. Modern costumes. Slightly amended from its appearance in the longer play, *BUMPS*, this play about the social order of a playground, along with the attendant bullying, presents a microcosmic view of elementary school life. The roles can be played by any aged actor from 5th grade through young adults, even college-aged actors could tour this to young audiences. This is a unique chance for Elementary- through Middle School-aged performers to present something to their peers in a very short, non-threatening, 10-minute format. **ORDER # 3278**

NOTE: This play is also the middle section of a longer play called, *BUMPS*, which expands on the themes explored here and brings a surprising twist of a conclusion for young audiences.

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.

FOURSQUARE

(Lights up on four kids. They stand in a square, milling about, looking around.)

FOURTH: Okay. We're clear.

(They each take out a piece of chalk and together expertly draw a foursquare grid on the floor.)

FIRST: *(Looking up.)* Check it out, guys. Crittenden's got a new victim.

THIRD: Who?

SECOND: The new kid. Had that camo jacket?.

FIRST: It's a cold day.

SECOND: I don't care how cold it is. You don't wear a camo jacket to school. That's just asking for it.

THIRD: No, I know.

SECOND: Head down, quiet, anonymous.

THIRD: Do we call a teacher?

FOURTH: We do not. We play.

(Pulls a playground ball out of a backpack.)

FIRST: I'm never gonna catch you guys. I'm like five hundred behind. I think we should start over.

FOURTH: We're not starting over.

FIRST: I call for a vote. All in favor of starting over.

(They all stare. FIRST raises his/her hand, nobody joins him/her.)

THIRD: You always do this. It's getting annoying.

FIRST: I just think it's less fun playing a game where you have no chance to win.

FOURTH: The point isn't to win. The point is to continue.

(Calls)

Serving.

(They all take their places, each to a numbered square. FOURTH serves. FIRST smashes it right back to FOURTH. FOURTH easily knocks it back to THIRD, who smashes a winner past SECOND.)

FIRST: All right then! Sweet! Movin' up, movin' up, time to get something going, here we go, baby, yes, feelin' it now, yes indeed.

(The others exchange a glance, two parts affection and one part annoyance. FIRST moves to SECOND square, and SECOND to FIRST.)

SECOND: Point to Fourth.

FOURTH: Serving.

(And the game resumes. At this point, the players should ad lib four or five serves; don't choreograph it, but actually play the game. FOURTH gets ready to serve. SECOND stops him/her.)

SECOND: Hold on a second.

(TEDDY looks startled, starts to shy away.)

You okay?

TEDDY: Yeah.

FIRST: You don't look okay. You look like crap.

TEDDY: *(The following exchange has no real animosity in it, essentially pro forma.)* Your face looks like crap.

FIRST: Your mamma looks like crap.

TEDDY: Your mamma's face looks like crap.

FIRST: Your face looks like someone took a crap on a piece of crap.

TEDDY: Your face looks like a bird pooped on a place where a dog pooped on a piece of elephant poop.

FOURTH: Hey. Chill, both of you.

(They instantly do.)

SECOND: Look, it's just Crittenden. Okay. He got your jacket, that's all he really wants. He'll probably leave you alone now.

TEDDY: He didn't get my jacket. I just took it off. Is all. .

SECOND: Well, Crittenden has it now. It's gone. Keep your head down, don't draw attention to yourself, he'll leave you alone.

TEDDY: I'm not afraid of him.

FIRST: No, him or Eads, right? Of course you're not.

(Pause.)

TEDDY: Is Eads the kid with the moustache?

FIRST: Hmm, not sure. You mean the vicious troglodyte sociopath with the moustache?

(Slight smile from TEDDY.)

TEDDY: Why do they have a tetherball pole?

FIRST: Okay, see, there was like this one gym teacher who really liked tetherball, then he got fired for like gettin' nasty with a cheerleader, but the tetherball poles remain. Eads likes to wrap a kid up in the rope and bounce the ball off his head fifty times, hardly leaves a mark.

TEDDY: My Mom sent me with lunch money and they got it now.

THIRD: Sorry, man.

SECOND: Explain to your Mom. The cafeteria food isn't very good. Which it isn't. You also might want to mention that a camo jacket's a mistake.

THIRD: Makes you stand out. Sort of the opposite of actual camouflage.

FOURTH: What's your name?

TEDDY: Teddy.

FOURTH: You're new here, right?

TEDDY: Yeah.

FOURTH: He's new, and his first day, Crittenden and Eads worked him over. Lunch is two dollars. I've got a dollar.

(Hands it over, looks at the others.)

SECOND: I'm sorry, I just didn't bring any money today.

THIRD: I got a quarter.

FIRST: Here.

(Hands over a dollar also.)

TEDDY: Thanks.

(FOURTH pulls off his/her jacket.)

FOURTH: Also, it's cold. We've been playing, moving around, we're okay. Take this for now, give it back after recess.

TEDDY: Thanks.

(Puts it on.)

FOURTH: Okay. Serving.

(Or, if it's not him/her serving, it's "serving?")

TEDDY: What are you guys playing?

THIRD: Foursquare.

TEDDY: Looks stupid.

(They ignore this.)

Can I play?

(Pause, they all stop and look at him/her.)

3 MORE PAGES TO THE END:

SECOND: You're one of us now.

(Smiles, takes his/her place.)

Welcome.

FOURTH: Serving.

(THE END)