

PERUSAL SCRIPT

BLIND DATE

by
Eric Samuelsen



Newport, Maine

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BLIND DATE

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CHARACTERS (1f 1m)

FIFI

REX

BLIND DATE by Eric Samuelsen 1f 1m. A space, maybe a dining room. Contemporary costumes or simple black. About 12-14 minutes. Hyper-vigilance. On a stakeout. Fifi and Rex seem to be just thrown together. They talk about duty. They talk about their bosses—how they seem to be blind to a lot of things. But their bosses are human. Not canine. Like their dutiful selves. Fifi and Rex go on observing what seems to be some sort of human mating ritual that involves a meal, a lot of talking, some shiny thing. Fifi remembers mating. Rex does not, really, but he begins to trust in Fifi's instinct about it, as she was fixed after mating, not before, like Rex. But this is nothing like what Fifi remembers. Fifi is focusing on her boss's shoes. So there is a puzzlement in the middle of their duty. But they carry on. **ORDER #3281**

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.

BLIND DATE

REX: So.

FIFI: Hey.

REX: How's it goin'?

FIFI: Good, no complaints.

REX: So, back to it.

FIFI: Yep.

REX: Gettin' to be every night now.

FIFI: Well, that's the job.

REX: It is indeed.

(Pleasantries over, they settle down.)

If you could just . . .

FIFI: What?

REX: I just like to keep my sightlines clear.

FIFI: Sure.

(Moves slightly.)

So, anything?

REX: See that guy there? Just past that potted plant.

FIFI: Oh, yeah.

REX: I'm not saying he's necessarily a threat.

FIFI: No, but...

REX: There's just something a little hinky.

FIFI: There! The way he scratched his leg.

REX: Is what I'm saying.

FIFI: May not mean much.

REX: But you can't be too careful.

(Looks at her with a new appreciation.)

You. You saw what I was seeing.

FIFI: Well, yeah.

REX: It's nice. Is all. A lot of women, and I'm not profiling here but it's true, a lot of women just aren't that security conscious.

FIFI: Well, it's a question of training.

REX: Which is what I'm saying. Training and instincts.

FIFI: You have to stay alert.

REX: Exactly. Exactamundo.

(He yawns.)

Sorry. One of those nights.

FIFI: No biggie.

REX: Stakeouts. Guard duty.

FIFI: Well, that's the job, right? Hours bored to death, and then, pow, something happens.

REX: Take last night. Middle the night, I was sure we had an intruder.

FIFI: Yeah?

REX: Oh, absolutely certain. So, you know, did what you do, raised the alarm.

FIFI: Sure.

REX: Turns out, was the people next door home late from a party.

FIFI: Embarrassing.

REX: Still.

FIFI: You gotta do what you gotta do.

REX: It just felt wrong, you know?

FIFI: You gotta go with that feeling.

REX: I'd rather be wrong ten hundred times.

FIFI: Or eleven hundred...

REX: Wake everyone up, cause a ruckus, wake the boss from a sound sleep...

FIFI: Cause what if you'd been right?

REX: Which is the point I'm making here. It only takes the one time, he wakes up in the morning, his food dish is gone, someone's marked the territory.

FIFI: Or worse.

REX: Or worse. I'll put up with a swat on the behind with a rolled up newspaper if that's what's required. I have a job to do.

FIFI: And you're good at that job.

REX: Abso-damn-tutely. Good at the job.

FIFI: We both are. That's why we get along.

REX: Yeah.

(Pause.)

Anyway. Slow night.

FIFI: I don't mind. Some good smells.

REX: We never get a taste.

FIFI: No. But you know, the smell's almost worth it.

REX: Sure.

FIFI: And we're tucked in a corner. Last time, out in the middle like that. . . .

(She shudders.)

REX: Nightmare.

FIFI: You'd think people would look down occasionally, see where their feet are about to land.

REX: Major security breeches, over and over.

FIFI: It's the way they're always coming, you know? The strangers. Refill the water dish, refill the bowl.

REX: But here, this corner, wall to our backs, it's much more secure. Good control of the perimeter, good escape corridor. I always say, it's not the threat, it's the terrain.

FIFI: Plus there's this heater thing against my butt.

REX: Oh, that's nice. You wanna share?

FIFI: No, I'm good, thanks.

REX: Okay....

(Pause.)

FIFI: So. . .how do you think it's going?

REX: How do I think what's going?

FIFI: Them? The bosses?

REX: I'm not sure I follow...

FIFI: How do you think it's...proceeding?

REX: I'm not sensing any kind of security situation.

FIFI: No, look. Their relationship.

REX: I'm not overly concerned. At first, I thought your boss might pose a threat. Foreign smell, foreign gait, especially the gait. I'll tell you straight out that I did not care for her walk. Side to side like that. What's the word, sashaying. It seemed...suspicious. Unstraightforward. I was on alert, I'll tell you: she seemed like a grade A, Defcom 3 security problem just waiting to happen. But so far, it's been okay. I mean, I'll still keep my eyes open. But for now, we're good.

FIFI: You do know that they're mating.

REX: They're what?!?!?!?!?

FIFI: Mating. I mean, what did you think? Why else would they be here?

REX: They're eating.

FIFI: They can eat at home. They could eat alone.

REX: You're right. They could.

FIFI: This is how they do it. They eat together. They go to light-and-noise rooms. They mate.

REX: So that's what those are about!

FIFI: Had me going, too. It didn't make sense, you know, go to some big dark room full of people, sit there forever.

REX: They go with those other people. The dog-less ones.

FIFI: Yeah, that other couple. Spend the whole time whispering.

REX: I don't like those two. Especially the male.

FIFI: I don't like 'em either. Especially the female.

REX: The boss has me. He doesn't need him.

FIFI: Well, they're friends.

REX: I don't care for friends. Major security risks, these 'friends.' Plus, those places they go, the four of them, all that light, all that noise, I got distorted audio, bad visual, I'm working with smell and not a lot else.

FIFI: I think they're there to see something. They all face the same direction, there's pictures up there. Cars, sometimes.

REX: I do like cars.

FIFI: Me too.

REX: But . . .why do you go to a place to see stuff if you can't see?

FIFI: That's why the friends. The whispering. To explain.

REX: *(Admiringly.)* You got this whole thing figured out.

FIFI: I've given it some thought. Drawn some conclusions.

REX: But...mating? They don't look like they're mating.

FIFI: Still, that's what's going on.

REX: How do you know?

FIFI: Took me forever. That kind of puzzle, you just have to keep gnawing at it. Why do they eat together? Why do they spend SO MUCH TIME together. You know what finally clued me in?

REX: What?

FIFI: Her shoes. I mean look at those things.

REX: Oh. Oh, yeah!

FIFI: I gotta tell you, I wouldn't let someone put those things on my feet.

REX: Not a chance.

FIFI: She can't walk in 'em, any kind of threat, she couldn't run. Teeter-y things.

REX: So...why?

FIFI: They change her walk. For him.

REX: But...it's not like he can see it.

FIFI: It's instinct.

REX: Okay. Instinct, yeah.

FIFI: We're their eyes. That's why they have us. I mean, they don't use their senses ANYWAY, can't really hear, can't smell at all. Take away their eyes, they got nothing.

REX: It's like crossing the street.

FIFI: Exactly.

REX: He could maybe cross the street by himself. Use one of those white sticks like some of 'em do. But with me, we just shoot across there, easy-peasy. Way way safer.

FIFI: Faster, too, with us.

REX: All kinds of stuff like that. They got us.

FIFI: They got us.

REX: Good thing too.

(Pause.)

So, the shoes?

FIFI: She's changing her walk, make her easier to mate with. He can't see it, and she may not even know that's what she's doing. But that's what's going on.

REX: Huh. Dang. Learn something new every day.

3 MORE PAGES TO THE END