

# SOCKS GO IN THE BOTTOM DRAWER

A One Act Stage Comedy

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## CHARACTERS

Adam (m)	A man 30s-50s.
Keeper (f)	A robust, down to earth woman.
Citizen Swan (f)	A teacher. Sensitive and full of enthusiasm.
Citizen Jesmond (f)	A teacher. Dry and intellectual.
Lucy (f)	A naïve and mischievous young woman.
Katherine (f)	Lucy's friend.
Girls	Optional non-speaking parts.

## SET/PROPS

The play takes place a number of decades in the future, and costumes should reflect this. The stage is dominated by a large cage, above which hangs a notice 'Do Not Feed The Man'. There is a small hoarding, stage left, with printed information on the species Homo sapien (Male).

Inside the cage there is a chair, a small sofa, and a chest of drawers. An exercise-bike stands in one corner, and a laundry basket and ironing board in the other. A life-sized female inflatable doll sits on the sofa.

Adam (AS THE LIGHTS RISE, ADAM IS ARGUING WITH THE DOLL) It's my money. I've earned it. And if I say we're going to Ibiza, then Ibiza it is. (HE PAUSES TO OBSERVE THE DOLL) Oh, for God's sake, Samantha, don't sulk. I hate it when you sulk. (AS IF LISTENING IMPATIENTLY TO HER REPLY) Yes, yes, yes, I know we need a new sofa. Yes, yes. Your sister's got a three piece suite . . . Yes, yes white leather . . . (LOSING HIS TEMPER) Look, I'm not made of money. If you want a holiday and a three piece leather suite, go out and buy one yourself! (PAUSE) Aha. That shut you up. That put a zip in your lip. (PUFFS HIMSELF UP) I'm the breadwinner in this house. I wear the trousers. I am Boss man, the Capo, the Numero Uno. Do you know what you'd be without me? (TRIUMPHANT) A shrivelled up piece of plastic. As far as you're concerned, I am God.

Keeper THE KEEPER ENTERS THE AUDITORIUM VIA THE AUDIENCE,

UNNOTICED BY ADAM WHOSE FOCUS IS 'SAMANTHA'. THE KEEPER IS DRESSED IN OVERALLS AND CARRIES A BUCKET. SHE STOPS SUDDENLY) Oh no, Adam. How many times do I have to tell you? No doll when we've got visitors. (SHE DROPS HER BUCKET AND HASTILY EXITS)

Adam (TO THE DOLL) Don't give me that look. Her? She's nothing to me, Samantha. Nothing. (COAXING) You'll love Ibiza. Sunny beaches, lager, the Birdie Song and you and me, hip to hip, doing the Lambada. What more can a girl want? (LOOKS LONGINGLY AT THE DOLL) Come to me, Samantha. (HE PULLS A PIECE OF STRING WHICH IS ATTACHED TO THE DOLL'S ARM. SHE FALLS OFF THE CHAIR AND IS DRAGGED ALONG THE GROUND) Come to Daddy. (HE PULLS HER UNTIL SHE REACHES HIS FEET, THEN LIFTS HER UP TO FACE HIM) My God, but you're beautiful. (HE KISSES THE DOLL PASSIONATELY)

Keeper (JANGLING KEYS, SHE ENTERS FROM STAGE RIGHT) Adam!

Adam (STARTLED, HE CLUTCHES THE DOLL PROTECTIVELY) Leave us alone!

Keeper Time to put her to bed.

Adam No!

Keeper Samantha wants to go bye byes. (SHE UNLOCKS THE CAGE DOOR AND ENTERS)

Adam She's my wife!

Keeper She's going to bed and no arguing.

Adam I demand my conjugals.

Keeper (LOCKING THE DOOR BEHIND HER) We've got visitors, Adam. Important visitors. We can't let them see you humping plastic.

Adam She's not plastic. She's alive and kicking.

Keeper You're our prize exhibit. Even the orang-utan doesn't get as many visitors.

Adam (BLOCKING THE DOLL'S EARS) Sssh. Not so loud. She gets jealous. (GAZES LOVINGLY AT 'SAMANTHA') There's no-one else in my life, babe. No-one.

Keeper (GRABS HOLD OF THE DOLL) Let her go.

Adam No.

Keeper Not so tight. You'll give her another puncture.

Adam I never.

Keeper You did. I had to stick her head in a bucket of water to find the leak.

Adam (SHIRTILY) I lose my temper sometimes . . .

Keeper You shouldn't knock her around like you do.

Adam (HE GRABS THE DOLL BACK) She's my wife. I know my rights. I'm entitled to my conjugals whenever the urge takes me. Look. (HE POINTS THE SMILING DOLL'S FACE TOWARDS THE KEEPER) She's gagging for it. Aren't you, darling? There's not a judge in the land who'd send me down. (HE HUGS THE DOLL TIGHTLY)

Keeper I'm warning you. (SHE POINTS A SMALL DEVICE AT HIM) I don't want to have to give you a shot of Zapper.

Adam (THREATENS KEEPER) You'll feel the back of my hand!

Keeper Give her back.

Adam 'The balance of my mind was disturbed, m'Lud'.

Keeper Final warning.

Adam 'Something inside me snapped.' (HE RUSHES AT THE KEEPER WHO FIRES THE ZAPPER. ADAM CRUMPLES TO THE GROUND WRITHING IN PAIN) Aggh.

Keeper (MORE KINDLY) Sorry, poppet. I know how it upsets your digestion. (PICKS UP THE DOLL) She's only meant to be twice a week for therapy sessions. No other keeper would let you play with her like I do.

Adam (WEAKLY) She gets lonely without me.

Keeper (STARTS TO DEFLATE THE DOLL) I'll blow her up for you again tonight. But only if you behave yourself with the visitors. Try and remember to smile. You were a right misery yesterday. People don't travel hundreds of miles just to watch you with your feet up on the sofa reading The Sun.

Adam (TO THE DEFLATING DOLL) Missing you already.

Keeper            You're incredibly popular.

Adam             So you keep saying.

Keeper            Women all over Britain discuss your attributes.

Adam             (CHEERING UP) Do they?

Keeper            You've got pulling power, Adam. (SHE TUCKS THE FOLDED DOLL UNDER THE SOFA)

Adam             Pulling power?

Keeper            When I look at you, I see . . . a babe magnet.

Adam             (INFLATING WITH PRIDE) A babe magnet. Yes. I'm something, aren't I? Rippling torso, arms like tree trunks. (OFFERS HIS BICEP) Have a feel of that.

Keeper            (SHE OBLIGES) Very nice, Adam.

Adam             So, which lucky ladies are going to be worshipping at the temple Male today?

Keeper            The Humanities Field Study Group from Birmingham Methodist College.

Adam             Oh God.

Keeper            Be nice to them, Adam. They sponsor your toilet paper.

Adam             (A LONG-STANDING COMPLAINT) That awful stuff . . .

Keeper            Two hundred rolls a year. Three hundred when The Arsenal play at home.

Adam             (PERKING UP) Up the Gunners! (STARTS UP A FOOTBALL CHANT) Ole, ole, ole . . .

Keeper            That's more like it. Works like a dream. (CHECKS HER WATCH) Right, I'd better go and meet them at reception. (UNLOCKS THE CAGE DOOR AND LETS HERSELF OUT) Remember. Bright smile, not too much eye contact, keep your trousers on. (LOCKS THE DOOR BEHIND HER. EXITS)

Adam             (MIMES SCORING A GOAL) Goal! Right off the left foot. Pure magic. (HE DRIBBLES AN IMAGINARY BALL) Dribbling down the centre, pass to Smithy, cunning little flick to Bernardo, just on-side, waiting, waiting, waiting . . . and (KICKS) Goooooallll!!! (HE RUNS AROUND THE CAGE,

PULLING OFF HIS SHIRT AND DOING THE VICTORY SALUTE) He's got the hatrick!

(AS IF BEING INTERVIEWED ON TV, CHEWS GUM) Babe magnet, eh? Well, yes, you know, when you transfer for ten million, you're going to have healthy young women flinging themselves at you. It's natural, isn't it? Look at me. (ANXIOUSLY TRIES TO PULL IN HIS PAUNCH) I'm oozing animal magnetism.

Lucy (ENTERS BOLDLY FOLLOWED BY A MORE NERVOUS KATHARINE)  
If I have to sit through one more lecture on the male endocrine system . . .  
(SHE SPOTS ADAM) Wow!

Kath It's a man! Look at his feet. They're enormous.

Adam (HE STARES MESMERISED BY THE GIRLS, THEN SPOTS THE DOLL'S DEFLATED ARM POKING OUT FROM UNDERNEATH THE SOFA) Ah!  
(HE TRIES TO PUSH THE DOLL FURTHER UNDER THE SOFA)  
Samantha go bye byes! (HE TURNS TO FACE THE GIRLS WITH A WILD SMILE)

Lucy Do you think he'll come if I whistle?

Kath Don't, Lucy. He's dangerous.

Lucy So they say.

Cit J. (ENTER CITIZENS JESMOND AND SWAN, THE KEEPER AND EXTRA GIRLS IF AVAILABLE) Ok girls. Gather round. Can everyone see and hear properly?

Others Yes . . . Ok . . . Thanks.

Cit. S. Lucy, not so close, please. He may poke something out through the bars.

Others He's not very hairy . . . I thought he'd be hairier. He's standing up, just like us . . . Do you think he'll do anything violent?

Cit J. Note books at the ready, everyone. I want you to take full field notes, mark everything down - his movements, his gestures, his verbalisations. We're here to record dispassionately. Remember? 'Assumptions are the enemy of science'.

Cit. S. Yes. Forget the cage, forget the bars. Just observe Homo sapien (Male) as though he were roaming freely across the housing estates and football pitches of the pre-revolutionary world.

Kath Will he urinate against the wall?

Cit J. No, Katherine. That's dogs.

Kath I'm sure I read somewhere . . .

Keeper Lighting up now, Adam. (SHE FLICKS A SWITCH)

Adam (THE CAGE IS FLOODLIT. HE SHIELDS HIS EYES FROM THE GLARE) For crying out loud.

Keeper Ooops. Sorry. Wrong level. (SHE REDUCES THE BRIGHTNESS) Better?

Adam (ADAM BLINKS OUT AT THE WOMEN, WIPES THE TEARS FROM HIS EYES) ) Just a speck of dust in my eye, that's all. I don't cry. Me, cry? Never. (HE SNEEZES, THEN BLOWS HIS NOSE INTO HIS SHIRT. TO THE KEEPER) You know it plays havoc with my allergic rhinitis. (HE PUTS HIS SHIRT BACK ON)

Lucy He's not exactly what you call frightening, is he?

Cit J. That depends which side of the cage you're on, Lucy.

Keeper (TO ADAM) Come on, Adam. Why don't you have a little go on your bike?

Adam I'm not in the mood.

Keeper They've come all the way from Birmingham to see you.

Adam (PEEVISHLY DISPLAYS HIMSELF) Right profile. Left profile. (HE STARTS TO LOWER HIS TROUSERS) Full frontal . . .

Keeper Adam! (ADAM SWIFTLY TURNS HIS BACK ON THE VISITORS AND ZIPS UP HIS TROUSERS) (TO CITIZEN JESMOND) He's a bit unpredictable at the moment. I wouldn't let them get too close.

Cit J. Stand well back, girls. Use your binoculars if need be. (LUCY VEERS TOWARDS THE CAGE AGAIN)

Lucy (TO ADAM) Cooie! (AS IF TO A DOG) Here boy. (ADAM GAZES AT HER IN AWE, THEN GIVES A LONG LOW WOLF WHISTLE)

Cit S. (THRILLED) Oh yes. (ADAM WHISTLES MORE LOUDLY) The mating call of the mature male in must. (SCRIBBLING NOTES) Very clear. Very distinct.

Girls (SCRIBBLING NOTES) Did you hear that ? . . . It's a mating call . . . Weird.

Lucy Does that mean he wants to play?

Cit J. In a manner of speaking, yes.

Lucy He must get very lonely.

Cit J. A man is never lonely, Lucy. He has his ego for company.

Adam (TO LUCY) Got the time on you, love?

Cit. J (KATHARINE ATTEMPTS A REPLY) Don't answer him, Katharine.

Adam What's a lovely girl like you doing in a place like this? Do you come here often? Your place or mine, babe?

Cit S (ENTHUSING) Chat up lines. How lucky.

Lucy Which one does he want me to answer first?

Cit S Any or none. It's a form of complete gibberish spoken to women, simply in order to secure their attention.

Cit J. Note the use of 'babe', most likely originating from the Thames basin. There can be considerable regional variation – for example?

Kath Hen?

Cit J. Yes, Katharine. Hen, my lover, pet, petal . . .

Adam What a pair of knockers!

Cit J. Then straight into the courtship ritual.

Adam (STARTS TO GESTURE SUGGESTIVELY) Waaaarr!

Cit J. A perfect example of the upper phallic thrust. (TO CITIZEN SWAN) It's just not the same on DVD.

Adam (ADAM STARTS TO DISCO DANCE, SINGING 'SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER' AND GYRRATING HIS HIPS WITH ENTHUSIASM)

Kath Shouldn't we fetch a doctor? I think he's having a seizure.

Cit J. No, Katherine. This is perfectly normal behaviour for a man.

Kath He'll do himself an injury.

Cit S. He thinks it's attractive to the opposite sex.

Kath (PERPLEXED) How?

Cit J. Male posturing is thought to be the result of a primal urge to pass on genes, regardless of physical danger or personal humiliation. Clearly, in this case, there's no physical danger . . .

ADAM (STRUTTING AROUND THE CAGE SINGING) "I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts. . .

Cit J. But the personal humiliation . . .

Adam (HANGS UPSIDE DOWN FROM THE CAGE) "I've got a lovely bunch of coconuts . . ."

Cit J. . . . is overwhelming.

Keeper (APOLOGISING TO THE OTHERS) He's on new medication. It's playing havoc with his hormones. (TO ADAM) Behave yourself!

Adam She's giving me the come on. Look at those legs! Crying out for a bit of 'what for'.

Lucy 'What for'? . . . What's 'what for'? . . .

Kath How can Lucy's legs be crying out for anything, Citizen Jesmond?

Cit J. Illogical, isn't it? He desires her legs - but somewhere in the melting pot of his brain, he concludes that her legs desire him.

Keeper (ADAM JUMPS ONTO HIS EXERCISE BIKE AND STARTS PEDALLING) Ah, that's more like it. Burn off those frustrations, poppet. Do your Tour de France.

Adam Yes. Watch everyone. Watch! Watch! Watch! (FURIOUS PEDALLING FOR THE BENEFIT OF LUCY) And Adam 'Tiger' Jackman sweeps past the finishing line in a record three hours, 12 minutes and 33 seconds, in this, the toughest leg of the Tour de France. A triumph of human endurance, a triumph of true grit, a triumph of sheer animal magnetism!

Cit S. How long can he keep this up?

Keeper           Hours and hours. He loves his little bike. Donated by The School of Male Studies, U.C.L.A. They're funding our modest breeding programme.

Lucy               Breed men?

Kath               When there's a world shortage of orang-utans?

Cit S.             The Founding Mothers never intended to totally eradicate the male species, Katharine. Simply to cull it to manageable proportions.

Keeper            It would be an awful shame if they died out.

Cit J               In my opinion any breeding programme is out of the question. How can we take that sort of a risk? It would be like re-introducing small pox.

Keeper            He's not that bad, are you Adam?

Adam              (EYING UP LUCY DISCRETELY) I'm very misunderstood.

Keeper            We're on target to open our Male Safari Park in Spring 2076.

Kath               What, out in the open?

Cit S.             A more passive, socialised male might be suitable for semi-liberty.

Cit J               I beg to differ, Citizen Swan.

Cit S.             Oh, but the male is such a splendid curio. Surely, we have a duty to preserve Homo sapien (Male) for future generations? (STARRY EYED) I can see them now. Fathers and sons frolicking together in the fields. clinging onto bumpers, bouncing on bonnets, playing havoc with people's car aerials.

Keeper            We're planning a drive-through pub . . .

Cit S.             Are you?

Keeper            . . . a building site where men can expose buttock cleavage ; rows of garden sheds with calendars of naked, large-breasted women on the walls . . .

Cit J.              What?

Keeper            We'll have a small operating theatre for insensitive gynaecologists to practise; a kitchen full of sinks where men can construct towering piles of dirty dishes.

Cit S.             Oh this is splendid.

Keeper            Football hooligans will rampage through mock streets, causing GBH to anyone wearing the wrong colour scarves.

Cit S.            Perhaps even the odd flash of genitalia from under a raincoat?

Cit J.            Bella!

Lucy              What's genitalia?

Cit J.            Next module, Lucy.

Kath              Doesn't he mind us talking about him like this?

Keeper           No. The worst thing you can do is ignore him. It makes him feel unnecessary, doesn't it, Adam?

Adam            I'm starving. What's for dinner?

Lucy              Do men eat the same food as us?

Cit. S.            Of course they do, Lucy. They expect us to cook it for them.

Cit J.            (LECTURING) Congenital reluctance to prepare meals, believed to stem from a malformation of the thumb and forefinger, rendering the movements of peeling, chopping and scrubbing virtually impossible. Except in the event of a dinner party during which loud assertions of "Oh, yes, I do all the cooking" can often be heard.

## CONTINUED

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