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Chris Thomas

- *Pickles*

A monologue – black comedy

Running Time: approx. 10 minutes

Period: Now.

Warnings: Minor Swearing

Synopsis:

Pickles follows the story of a family so wrapped up in their day-to-day lives they don't know what hidden dangers may be lying in wait from others in their street.

It's an opportunity for actors to play five different roles in the same script, challenging them to convey different characterisations, including a small boy, elderly lady, emo teenager, bored housewife and frustrated husband.

With rapid character changes in its short timeframe, *Pickles* is a script that goes for broke in delivering something actors can really sink their teeth into.

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please contact for full perusal copy.**

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About the Playwright: Chris Thomas



Born in Perth, Western Australia, Chris Thomas is a writer, actor, journalist and broadcaster who has developed diverse experience in these areas over several years.

He has many eclectic acting credits to his name and broad journalistic experience, working for mainstream newspapers, independent publications and freelancing for numerous titles, as well as extensive work in media relations and flexing his dulcet tones as a radio announcer. He is also the author of the novel *Journo's Diary* and the plays *Which One?*, *Reality Matters* and *Appetite for Destruction*.

Which One? received an encouragement award for writing at the 1994 Bunbury One-Act Drama Festival and Chris himself won an excellence in performance award at the 2001 South West Drama Festival for his role in the play *Disposal*.

About the Play:

Pickles premiered on March 16 and 19, 2010, as part of the Blue Room Theatre's Solo Spot season, directed by Dannielle Ashton. Kyla Jones played all five roles in the script. Kevin Blair also performed all five roles for a performance at Boulder's Stage Left Theatre on May 29, 2010.

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PICKLES
By Chris Thomas © 2010
(developed by Dannielle Ashton and Kyla Jones)

CHARACTER(S): There are five characters in this piece – but it's been written so one actress can play all five characters, providing a challenge for her and the director, in creating five separate personas. I envisage the actress would be around the same age as MARGARET (early 50s) and would then adopt the other characters by using changes in voice, posture etc.

The director and actor in the original piece chose to give four of the characters a Liverpoolian accent, to create a greater contrast with ETHEL, who was given an upper-class English accent. It is up to the individual director as to whether they wish to maintain this approach. The use of music to help cover the transition between scenes is also suggested.

MARGARET: a 50-something housewife, somewhat downtrodden, wondering if life has passed her by.

JAYDN: a seven-year-old schoolboy who is a little naïve

BARRY: an extremely frustrated businessman and husband.

TEGAN: a 15-year-old emo teenager who thinks the world revolves around her and hates everything else.

ETHEL FYFE: an elderly woman who feels that no one is interested in her any more – but she has a dark secret afoot.

[Lights come up on BARRY, who stands in front of an easel, which has large sheets of butcher's paper on it. In this scene, we see graphs, pie charts and business-related material written on the paper. The easel remains present for this whole piece with the paper changing each time to help with the transition between each character. BARRY is a married man, wrapped up in his work so much that he takes his wife for granted. But he feels totally constrained by his job and blames everything in his life on the pressures of his working life, rather than looking at himself]

BARRY: Can't believe the idiots I work with. They've ordered a pile of product, yet haven't even bothered to work out a marketing plan or even if there's a soddin' market for it. Now I've got to try and develop a market and sell this gear. Nothing like creating demand for a useless product, is there? So I'm in the middle of trying to sort out this product shit and the council rings me. The dog's got out. I've spent the past hour trying to sort out the dog problem and now it's all *my* bloody fault. I only got the damn thing to keep the kids happy. Doesn't Maggie understand I'm working my arse off, trying to pay for everything to keep our heads above water? If I ever stopped working, we would all bloody sink in an instant. I was dead lucky; I managed to get our house on the cheap. Her indoors doesn't know that, though. Apparently the couple that lived there before us were having big issues and the wife went missing or something like that. Maggie would freak out if she knew. God, the poor guy... it must have been hell. *(takes a big breath)* I wouldn't know what to do if Maggie went missing. I remember when Maggie and I were in love. Nothing mattered. Just us. So what the hell happened? We're reduced to dogs running rampage around the bloody neighbourhood and I'm cleaning up the mess left behind. I'm doing all this for us. But what's the point, eh? What's the fucking point if you're not enjoying life? *(looks at watch) (BLACKOUT)*

[Actress uses blackout to tear off butcher's paper, ready for next scene. TEGAN, an emo teenager typically wrapped up in herself, is halfway through painting a picture as the lights come up. She moves across the stage to start talking]

TEGAN: (*looks up*) They don't understand me. No, really they don't. I keep telling me mother I'm a vegan and she keeps shoving chicken in front of me. I'm hate the frickin' ugly things – I reckon they're evil. Their horrible beaks and cruel eyes. It's bad karma if you eat 'em. That's what Sinead and I think. It's so true, 'cos she knows someone who knows this guy that worked on the crazy cat lady's house next door and all her chickens swooped on him and attacked his dick. There's no way I'm eating something that's eaten dick. Don't get me wrong – I like dick. Last night Billy gave me one good and proper. I'm still sore. People don't think I'm legal – but I think I'm ready. (*random thought change, as teenagers do*) I hate living in this area. It's so random. They're all total ferals. I heard that before we moved into this street, the woman who lived here before us went missing. Her husband was arrested and questioned but no evidence was found... so they let him go. Not long after he sold the house and we moved in. Nothing interesting like that happens around here anymore. It's a dead-end street, full of dead-end no-hopers. Everyone hangs out like a bunch of losers. Especially my dickhead brother Jaydn. He was really pissing me off before so I told him that he had to go take the dog for a walk. It was so funny watching Jack drag him away by the leash. Then the idiot kid comes home bawling 'cos the dog ran off. I told him he better shut his mouth about it. Jack's always getting out of the yard. Anyway, I told him one of the first things I ever learnt – blame it on the dog.

[Allowing enough time for the actress to compose herself and adjust to the new character, the lights come up as JAYDN runs in, pretending to fire guns, hopping around madly, as if playing the game cops and robbers. He's seven and easily excitable, barely taking a breath when he talks. He also pulls absently at his pants, as little boys do]

**This is not the end of "Pickles"
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