

Samantha's Friend



This play can be set in any time that has cars with seatbelts in the back.

The set should ideally be made up of a mixture of rooms in one house, a lounge, a kitchen, a study, a bedroom and a hallway. Alternatively, an amalgamation of all. There must be near a height chart near a doorway, of which height mark entrants will be added between acts as the play goes on.

The varied ages of Samantha can be altered slightly to better suit the age of each actor. Samantha's friend is always 14.

The Cast:

Samantha aged 4 and a half

Samantha's friend aged 14. When seen, in a pale blue dress.

Jennifer: Samantha's mother.

David: Samantha's Father.

Samantha aged 6

Samantha aged 8

Samantha aged 9

Samantha aged 12

Samantha aged 12 and 11 months

Samantha aged 13

Samantha aged 14

Scene One

(Samantha, aged 4, is sitting on a rug on the lounge floor next to a little plastic table. She has set the table for two, two plastic cups in saucers, a plastic tea pot, a plastic sugar bowl all on a plastic table cloth. It should be colourful and set out pristinely. At this point Samantha's friend is a voice only. This should be spoken off set, not recorded. Samantha makes a cup of imaginary tea for her friend.)

Samantha: There, just as you like it, milky, one sugar. *(She smiles.)* Just like I have it.....SNAP!

Friend: Why, thank you so much, it's perfect.

Samantha: You're welcome! *(Samantha goes to drink.)*

Friend: Wait!

Samantha: What an earth is the matter?

Friend: You have to hold the cup properly, like a lady.

Samantha: Like this?

Friend: No silly!

Samantha: Oh, like this?

Friend: Nearly.

Samantha: Or like this?

Friend: Better!

Samantha: You are so fussy, does it matter?

Friend: Yes of course it matters! Real ladies drink their tea like this, watch!

Samantha: Like this then?

Friend: So very close! Hold your pinky out.

Samantha: I beg your pardon? My Pinky? What is that?

Friend: Your little finger. You poke it out as you lift the cup from the saucer. Watch me.

Samantha: But why?

Friend: Because the handle is really little, so that's what real ladies do. Try for me!

Samantha: All right, like this?

Friend: Perfect!

Samantha: Great! *(She jumps up)* Oh I have biscuits too! Do you care for a Bourbon Cream, or perhaps a Nice?

Friend: Nice! *(pronounced Nice, as the French town)*

Samantha: Nice! *(rhymes with mice)*

Friend: Nice!

Samantha: Nice!

Friend: Nice!

Samantha: Haha! Isn't it funny they call Nice Biscuits Nice, do you think it's because they are so nice?

Friend: I think so, they're my favourite!

Samantha: Mine too!....how about that! *(Samantha dished out two each.)* There you go, have two because they are so Nice Nice!" *(They both laugh. Samantha nibbles delicately at the corner of her first Nice biscuit, relishing the hard sugar coating on top.)*

Friend: How do you freeze a Nice biscuit? *(Samantha shakes her head.)* You bite off the N and you have ice! *(Samantha bursts out laughing sending a spray of biscuit crumbs across the table, they are both laughing)*

Jennifer: *(Off stage)* Darling, it's dinner time we're having roast lamb and Daddy is home on time today! So we can all eat together!

Samantha: Ssssh.....! Hide! *(She shoes away her friend)*

Friend: Don't panic!

Samantha: You must hide!

Friend: Hahaha, you are silly Samantha!

Samantha: All right Mummy, just let me tidy up and I will be with you.

Jennifer: *(enters)* There you are Samantha darling, why are you always so eloquent?

Samantha: What does ello-kwunt mean mummy?

Jennifer: It means my beautiful daughter speaks like the Queen!

Samantha: Oh, all right, maybe the Queen will come to tea one day! Please Mummy!

Jennifer: You never know, perhaps we should invite her.

Samantha: Oh can we please? Please Mummy!

Jennifer: We can invite her, but I'm sure she is far too busy. *(she helps Samantha tidy up)* Who were you talking to just then darling, before I walked in?

Samantha: S..... *(she pauses)* S, S, S, *(pronounced 'Suh')*

Jennifer: S s s? Were you having dinner with a S s s snake?

Samantha: No Mummy, that's silly!

Jennifer: Don't you mean S S S Silly? *(both exit laughing, hand in hand.)*

Scene Two

(Samantha is now aged 6. She is at the kitchen table doing some drawing with some crayons. Jennifer is at the sink washing up. Samantha has a blue crayon in her hand and is concentrating intensely on her drawing, she slips suddenly with the crayon which ruins her drawing.)

Samantha: Damn it!

Jennifer: Samantha! Mind your language!

Samantha: I'm sorry Mummy, but you jogged me!

Jennifer: I didn't darling, I was nowhere near you. I was washing up.

Samantha: Oh, sorry Mummy.

Jennifer: That's alright.

Samantha: It must have been S.....

(Jennifer returns to her dishes; she sings or hums a happy tune. Samantha takes up another piece of paper and begins another drawing. She takes a light brown crayon and draws lots of long lines in a row, quickly. She then takes a pink crayon and draws the outline of a face. Jennifer finishes and starts to dry her hands on a tea towel.)

Jennifer: That's a pretty picture darling, is it me?

Samantha: No.

Jennifer: Oh, OK, is it Mrs Jarrett?

Samantha: No.

Jennifer: Haha, are you going to tell me Darling?

Samantha: It's of no one in particular, it's an experiment.

Jennifer: Well, it's very good darling.

Samantha: Why thank you!

Jennifer: Cheeky!

(Jennifer sits opposite Samantha at the table, she continues humming or singing her tune, she sifts through the drawings. One stands out to her, another portrait but this time far more detailed, far more advanced. She stops singing.)

Jennifer: Darling, did you draw this one? Or did Daddy draw it?

Samantha: Ur? *(not looking up)*

Jennifer: Samantha, who drew this picture?

Samantha: Sam drew that one.

Jennifer: Sam?

Samantha: Yes.

Jennifer: Who is Sam?

Samantha: Sam. *(matter of fact)*

Jennifer: Darling, who is Sam, is she one of the older girls at school?

Samantha: No Mummy.

Jennifer: Is she at Brownies?

Samantha: No Mummy, she lives here with us.

Jennifer: Pardon me?

Samantha: She lives with us, she lives in the spare room.

Jennifer: Darling, no one lives in the spare room, it's just you, Daddy and I in this house.

Samantha: And Sam.

(Jennifer studies the drawing once again.)

Jennifer: What are these red lines on the girls face Samantha?

Samantha: They are her scars Mummy.

Jennifer: Darling?

Samantha: Yes, Mummy?

Jennifer: Is she your friend?

Samantha: Of course, she's funny too! She calls Daddy Mr Grumps because he moans all the time!

Jennifer: *(laughing, she picks up the tea towel and puts it over Samantha's head like a head scarf, they both laugh)* Why don't you do a picture for Nanny, she'd love a new one to go on her fridge. Maybe you could draw Mr Grumps!

Scene Three

(Samantha's Eighth Birthday. Samantha is sat on the lounge floor, she is surrounded by many very nicely wrapped birthday presents. Samantha's friend is a voice off stage as in scene one.)

Friend: Happy Birthday Samantha Panther!

Samantha: Thank you!

Friend: You have lots of presents, aren't you lucky!

Samantha: I am! I deserve them because I've been a good girl!

Friend: Did you eat all your greens?

Samantha: Always!

Friend: Then you have been a good girl!

Samantha: Have a seat, I will make some space for you. *(she makes space by moving some presents.)*

Friend: Why thank you! (*Samantha shakes a present and listens to it.*) You better put that one down before Mr Grumps catches you!

Samantha: Eeek!

Friend: You have been warned haha!

Samantha: (*calling*) Mummy! Can I open them NOW please?

Jennifer: (*off stage*) Just a few minutes darling, Daddy will be here any minute.

Samantha: Yes!

Friend: (*silly deep voice*) Mr Grumps has arrived, stand by your beds!

Samantha: Haha!

Jennifer: (*walking in*) Wow, lots of presents, there must be a lucky little princess here in the house!

Samantha: I'm here Mummy!

Jennifer: Where?

Samantha: RIGHHERE!

Jennifer: There you are!

Samantha: (*now stood on the armchair or sofa*) I'm the princess and it's my birthday! You may kneel at my feet and beg my attention!

Jennifer: (*drops to one knee*) Oh beautiful Princess, may I be the first to congratulate your royal highness, on this the occasion of her eighth birthday!

Samantha: He he! You may! But you are not the first. Sam has already wished me a happy birthday!

Jennifer: Oh, of course. The princess's imaginary friend would have to bestow her wishes first!

Samantha: Naturally!

Jennifer: Tell me why your imaginary friend has the same name as you, usually they have a different name?

Samantha: Well that is her name Mummy. And she is real, not imaginary.

Jennifer: Silly Samantha!

(*They hear the front door slam, followed by some indecipherable cursing.*)

Jennifer: Your father!

Samantha: Daddy!

Friend: Mr Grumps!

Jennifer: (*reacting, turns slightly to Samantha*) Sshhh!

(*Samantha's father joins them in the lounge, he takes off his hat and shrugs off his overcoat, neatly laying it over the sofa arm, he gives a big sigh.*)

Jennifer: Mr Jameson, you are in the presence of her royal highness Princess Samantha, I suggest you bow!

(Her father kisses her hand and gives an elaborate bow.)

Samantha: He he! Good morning Mr Jameson, you may kiss my feet!

David: Yuk, those smelly cheesy stinky feet, no thanks!

Samantha: Then I must cut off your head! *(She wealds an imaginary sword and swings it.)*

David: What do we do on every birthday?

Samantha: Height chart!

David: Yes Samantha, the height chart.

Samantha: Do you think I've grown? Am I a meter yet?

David: Let's see, now stand up straight and still. *(he uses a ruler along the top of her head to make sure it's level.)*

Samantha: I love you Daddy.

David: Oh my! That's four inches since you were seven! You are now one meter and one inch!

Samantha: Silly Daddy, you can't use metric the same time as imperial! Mrs Jarret says so! *(Samantha laughs out loud and runs to the lounge.)* I'm over a meter!

David: Aren't you forgetting something?

Samantha: Ooops sorry Daddy! *(Jennifer hands Samantha a pen.)* Just here? *(Samantha writes her height on the chart and returns to the lounge.)*

(David studies the height chart, from the bottom up. Higher above in neater writing is: Sam, aged 14, 1m 47cm. He is taken aback.)

David: Jennifer?

Jennifer: Yes?

David: Did you write this?

Jennifer: Write what?

David: This, here look! 'Sam, aged 14, 1 m, 47 cm.'

Jennifer: No, I haven't seen that before.

David: You must have done, it's not Samantha's handwriting, it's too neat.

Jennifer: Well it's not mine either. Can't have been there long, don't worry about it.

David: But who is Sam? We never call her just Sam and she doesn't call herself that.

Jennifer: I have no idea who wrote it on there. But she does have an imaginary friend called Sam.

David: She does not have an imaginary friend! I never heard her mention it!

Jennifer: Well isn't that the whole idea of an imaginary friend, to keep them secret! But then you're hardly ever here to notice!

David: And what's that supposed to mean?

Jennifer: Exactly as I just said! You seem to like to be anywhere else but here!

David: That's rubbish, you know the demands of my job.

Jennifer: Convenient answer.

David: What?

Jennifer: I'm not arguing now, certainly not on our daughter's birthday! Come, the princess is demanding her presents and our presence.

Scene Four

(Samantha is aged nine and two thirds. Samantha is settling herself in bed at the end of the day. She lays back and gives a big yawn, she looks up to the sky through her 'skylight'. She turns off the bedside light. Samantha's friend is still the voice off stage.)

Friend: Are you awake?

Samantha: No *(trying not to laugh)*

Friend: Haha, silly! I know you are awake, your eyes are open!

Samantha: How can you tell?

Friend: Never mind, can you hear that?

Samantha: Hear what? It's quiet?

Friend: Ssh, listen. Your mother and Mr Grumps are arguing!

Samantha: I can hear them now.

Friend: I wonder what they are arguing about? Shall we go downstairs and listen?

Samantha: *(sits up in bed.)* I don't think we should.

Friend: Turn on the light.

Samantha: But it is late.

Friend: Really?

Samantha: Alright. *(Samantha turns on the bedside light.)*

Friend: Come on, don't be a scaredy cat! Come with me, tippy toes!

(Samantha climbs out of bed, puts on a dressing gown and walks to the 'kitchen door')

Samantha: You're right! But I can't understand what they are saying.

Friend: Then go in, silly!

Samantha: No I mustn't!

Friend: Scaredy cat, scaredy cat!

Samantha: Huh! Very well.

(Samantha opens the 'kitchen door' slowly and creeps in. David is sat at the kitchen table, Jennifer is stood with her back to Samantha, who remains unnoticed.)

David: You always do this Jennifer, you know fully well how important my job is, yet you still persist in your bloody whingeing. Do you think I want to hear this nonsense every time I come home?

Jennifer: No, I don't say it every time, you know that, it's just that you seem to be away far more than you need to be!

David: You know that's not true!

Jennifer: It is! It's like you never want to be here! Whenever you are here, you look like you'd rather be anywhere than here!

David: That's bullshit Jennifer!

Jennifer: It's not! *(she sighs)* What's the point, you never listen! *(She goes to turn and sees Samantha.)* Samantha darling! What are you doing up? I'm sorry baby, we were just talking.

Samantha: You were arguing, I was worried.

Jennifer: Sometimes adults get a bit cross, it's nothing to worry about darling. Let me take you back up to bed, we can read another chapter of the story.

Samantha: Daddyswore.

Jennifer: I know darling. he was just a bit cross, like I said. But I think Daddy should apologise for swearing.

David: *(suddenly shouting.)* Go to bed Samantha!

(Samantha bursts into tears and buries her face into her mother's side.)

Jennifer: Now look what you've done! *(She kissed Samantha's head,)* Come, I'll take you up, then Daddy and I will discuss this like adults, no more shouting and swearing. But first I'll read you another chapter. Alright darling.

Samantha: Alright mummy, goodnight Daddy.

David: Night.

(Her mother takes her by the hand and leads her to the door.)

Friend: Mr Grumps!

David: What did you say?

Samantha: Nothing daddy, I didn't say anything.

David: Yes you bloody did, you called me Mr Grumps! What the hell!

Jennifer: She never said a word David, leave her alone! *(she rushes Jennifer through the door.)*

(In the kitchen David finds some red wine and pours himself a large glass. In Samantha's bedroom Jennifer helps her back into bed. This can take some time. It takes a while for Samantha to calm down. Jennifer reads to her, inaudibly. David drinks and leans back in his chair, lighting a cigarette. Jennifer switches off the bedside light and walks back to the kitchen. She sees David with a glass of wine, finds a glass and pours herself some from the same bottle.)

Jennifer: We said we would never argue in front of her, it took her ages to stop crying.

David: You must have heard her call me that?

Jennifer: She didn't say anything, she was crying!

David: Yes she did, she called me Mr Grumps, as clear as day! I would have hit her if it wasn't for you, she would have deserved it, calling me names. Has she no respect?

Jennifer: Stop! *(she finishes her drink in one go. She stands and leans across the table towards David.)* You will never, ever raise a hand to my daughter.

Scene Five

(Samantha is aged 12, nearly 13. She is sat up in bed, she has been crying but is now doing her best to pull herself together. Her hair is dishevelled, she takes a sip of water from the bedside table. Jennifer is sat on the bed, to one side. Samantha's friend is now on stage but in darkness until the lamp is turned back on, when she first becomes visible to the audience. Samantha's friend is now and remains throughout, in a long blue dress. Jennifer sits on the side of Samantha's bed.)

Samantha: He's so bloody mean, I hate him Mum!

Jennifer: Now now Samantha, we don't talk like that, you know your daddy loves you very much.

Samantha: Dad! I'm not six!

Jennifer: Sorry.

Samantha: Sorry Mum, but he doesn't love me, not anymore.

Jennifer: Of course he does darling, he's just stressed right now.

Samantha: He always is Mum!

Jennifer: Keep your voice low darling.

Samantha: Yes, mum.

Jennifer: He does love you, he always has, just try to be good and keep out of his way.....please?

Samantha: Keep under his radar you mean? Like you said before? *(they both laugh.)* Like the quiet little submarine daughter!

Jennifer: Yes, darling! Keep your periscope up when he's around, if he seems hostile then dive for cover! *(They laughed together, her mother kisses Samantha on the forehead, turns out the bedside light and leaves the bedroom.)*

(Darkness.)

Friend: Are you crying?

Samantha: No, of course not! He just pisses me off sometimes.

Friend: Sometimes? You mean all times.

Samantha: He can't help it, he's stressed. You know he is. Now if you don't mind I'm going to sleep, I have an exam in the morning.

Friend: I'm going to see him.....have a word.

Samantha: What the hell! *(Samantha sits up and turns on the bedside light. For the first time Samantha's friend is visible to the audience, standing up next to Samantha's bed.)*

Friend: Don't worry!

Samantha: He can't see you!

Friend: Correct Sam, but he can *hear* me.

Samantha: Don't!

Friend: Oh keep your knickers on, it'll be fine!

Samantha: He can't take it!

Friend: Of course he can.

Samantha: He can't, it will be too much!

Friend: Why?

Samantha: You know! Because he is stressed!

Friend: He always is, you said so yourself!

Samantha: You were listening?

Friend: I always am!

Samantha: *(a long pause.)* Please don't.

Friend: Go to sleep, leave it to me. Concentrate on your algebra. Night.

Samantha: Night Sam. *(Samantha yawns)* Don't be too mean on him, he's just a man. *(Samantha turns out the bedside light.)*

(The light rises on the lounge area of the stage. Her father sits in his armchair watching golf on the television, a glass of brandy in one hand, a cigar in the other. His eyes grow heavy and his head drops slightly. The brandy glass slips slightly in his hand. This startles him so he sits up, takes a sip, finds the remote control and turns up the television.)

Friend: Mr Grumps. *(Samantha's friend is visible to the audience, but not to David.)*

David: *(he sits up sharply, turns on his lamp and looks around the room. He looks intensely at the television ((the audience)). It is still showing the golf. He glances over his shoulder to the door to see it firmly closed.) (He whispers.) Who said that? (He pauses, then laughs at himself. Moments pass, the golfer on the screen takes a big swing, the crowd cheer. David sits back in his armchair and takes a deep breath.) (During this Samantha's friend walks round behind David, takes his cigar out of his hand and places it in the ash tray on the table.)*

Friend: Mr Grumps!

David: Who said that, where are you? *(He mutes the television.)* Bloody well show yourself!

Friend: Calm down, enjoy your cigar.

David: *(he raises his arm to his mouth to take a drag from his cigar but his hand is empty. He shakes and looks down at the coffee table to see his cigar stubbed out and propped up in the ash tray.)* What the hell? *(He leaps up spilling his brandy, curses, turns off the television and paces out of the room. He checks every room, locking the kitchen and front door. He stands at the front of the stage, confused.)*

Friend: Goodnight Mr Grumps.

(David is horrified, scared. Black out.)

Scene Six

(Samantha's thirteenth birthday. Samantha, Jennifer and David are standing near the height chart beside the door.)

Jennifer: Come on Darling, we've done this on every single one of your birthdays before.

Samantha: Do I have to? I'll be late for school.

Jennifer: Please darling, it won't take a second.

David: Do as your mother says Samantha!

Samantha: Fine, but it's Sam now. Can't you call me Sam like everyone else?

David: Just do it Samantha.

Samantha: Fine! *(Samantha stands with her back to the height chart as before, this time reluctantly.)*

David: Stand up straight.

Samantha: Huh.

David: One meter.....thirty-six centimetres. *(He stands back to look his daughter in her eyes.)* Tell me once again who wrote that above.

Samantha: Wrote what Dad?

David: You know fully well, who wrote that above?

Samantha: I've already told you enough times, Sam wrote it!

David: Damn you! Give me your hand! *(He hits her with the ruler across the palm of her outstretched hand.)*

Samantha: Was that supposed to hurt, Dad?

David: Get out of my sight Samantha!

Scene Seven

(Samantha's fourteenth birthday. Samantha's friend appears this time, only to David. Samantha stands with her back to the kitchen door frame with a resigned look on her face. She flinches as David produces the ruler but relaxes when he rests it gently across her head.)

Samantha: Must we have to keep doing this, isn't it normal that I keep growing, what's the...

David: Silence! Tell me once and for all who wrote 'Sam, aged 14, 1m 47cm' when you were just eight years old? *(Samantha stands in silence.)* And guess how tall you are now!

Samantha: *(whispering)* One meter forty-seven?

David: Precisely! Bit of a coincidence don't you think? *(He holds the ruler threateningly at her throat.)* Who wrote it?

Samantha: I've already told you Dad, Sam wrote it!

David: Liar! *(shouting.)* Sam does not exist except in your stupid little head!

(Samantha ducks away, grabs her school bag and runs for the door, slamming it shut behind her. David throws down the ruler and opens a cupboard, finds his tablets and washes two down with a glass of water. He sits at the kitchen table dropping his head in his hands.)

Friend: Mr Grumps.

(David jumps up and looks towards where he thinks he hears the voice.)

Friend: Over here Mr Grumps.

(David turns his head sharply causing him to crick his neck, he holds it with one hand. He shakes in horror when he sees Samantha's friend in an open doorway. He drops his arm and takes a step forward.)

David: Who are you?

Friend: You know who I am Mr Grumps!

David: What do you want?

Friend: Go easy on your daughter, while you still have her.

David: What is that supposed to mean?

(Very quick blackout, when the lights come back up Samantha's friend has gone. David makes himself a strong mug of coffee and tops with a splash of whiskey from a small bottle stashed behind the bread bin. He takes a large gulp, reeling from the temperature and the kick of alcohol. He paces the room. He kicks over a chair. He slams a cupboard door shut. He curses aloud. He finishes his coffee and throws his mug down violently onto the floor, smashing it.)

Jennifer: *(entering.)* What on earth are you doing? Are you alright, you look pale?

David: *(picking up the chair and sitting.)* I saw her.

Jennifer: Saw who?

David: Sam.

Jennifer: Well yes of course you did, she left in a rush. What did you say to her David?

David: No, I saw Sam. *(He pauses.)* Her imaginary friend Sam.

Jennifer: Have you been drinking David? This bloody early?

David: Yes, but not much. I tell you she was stood in the doorway next to the bloody height chart, as clear as bloody day! In a long blue dress. But she looked terrible, pale, her hair was dirty and matted. She had two big scars across her right cheek. She looked.....she looked...

Jennifer: David?

David: She looked just like Samantha.

Jennifer: Two scars on her right cheek? Definitely two on the right cheek?

David: Yes.

Jennifer: Oh.

David: Jennifer, what's up?

Jennifer: Nothing.

David: Don't lie to me, you know something.

Jennifer: It's nothing.

David: *(raising his voice.)* Jennifer, tell me!

Jennifer: *(goes to a kitchen door, takes out a collection of drawings and finds the drawing of the girl with two scars on her right cheek. She shows it to David.)* She drew that when she was six, or someone drew that when she was six.

David: My God!

Jennifer: What is it?

David: My Good God.

Jennifer: David?

David: That's who I saw, but how can that be?

Scene Eight

(In the hall, (or lounge if required.) David is pacing the room, impatient. He is in a suit and tie. Jennifer is also well dressed, checking herself in the mirror. Samantha's friend is not seen until by David. Samantha is 'upstairs' (not on stage.) when she appears she is in heels, a long pale blue dress, her hair is curled.)

Jennifer: Give her a break David, what's got into you? Ever since your 'vision' you've been so nice to her. Now this?

David: I told her to get ready hours ago!

Jennifer: Yes, but she's a teenage girl, she needs time to get ready! I should know!

David: She's had enough time! I'm not going to be late for my own brother's wedding for God sake!

(David starts to go upstairs but Jennifer stops him.)

Jennifer: David! Let me go, you'll only upset her more, I'll speak to her, give me two minutes.

David: We haven't got two minutes!

Jennifer: One then!

(David silently lets her pass him. He looks in the hallway mirror to check his tie. He tilts his head to check for grey hairs on the side of his temple and catches sight of a figure in the reflection. He spins round only to see one of his wife's coats hanging in the door frame. He breathes a sigh of relief.)

David: *(shouting)* Hurry up!

Friend: *(voice off stage)* Don't go.

David: Oh no, not you again!

Friend: I said don't go!

David: Not now, just not now! I'm not bloody interested. We're late, come on you two, please! Samantha, get down here now!

Friend: Sam!

David: What?

Friend: It's Sam now, you know it!

David: Oh shut it you!

Jennifer: (entering alone) She's just coming. Who are you shouting at David?

(Samantha follows, she glares at her father and pushes past him towards the front door.)

Jennifer: Are you Ok David? You look pale.

David: It doesn't matter! Get in the bloody car!

Jennifer: You will never talk to me like that again, after this stupid bloody wedding Sam and I are going. I don't care where, just anywhere away from you.

David: Oh come on Jennifer!

Jennifer: It's too late David, far too late!

(Jennifer grabs her coat and leaves the house leaving the front door wide open. David watches his wife leave, picks up his car keys and takes one final look in the mirror. This time Samantha's friend stands clearly in the kitchen door way, next to the height chart, staring at David.)

Friend: I said do not go Mr Grumps.

(David turns sharply and makes for the door but it is slammed shut by Samantha's friend. He grasps at the handle to open it but it would not move.)

David: Damn you! *(David snatches at a spare set of house keys from the telephone table and turns for the door.)*

Friend: Stay!

(David runs for the door, Samantha's friend kicks him in his shin, he falls heavily onto the floor. He quickly gets onto his knees, he has bitten his lip and feels blood.)

David: You little bitch! *(He stands, turns the key in the lock, opens the door and runs out.)*

Friend: Mr Grumps don't go.....please don't go! I'm sorry.....DON'T GO!..... STAY!

(Quick black out. When lights are up David and Jennifer are sat facing the audience in the front of the car, this can be two chairs from the lounge or kitchen, placed together with a gap between. Samantha is sat behind them in the gap. Samantha's friend has gone.)

Jennifer: Slow down David!

Samantha: Dad! My seat belt's stuck in the door, I can't do it up!

Jennifer: Slow down David, PLEASE! What's got into you?

Samantha: *(screaming.)* Dad!

(Sound effect of screeching tyres followed by a loud metallic crash. David and Jennifer jolt forward in unison, Samantha is thrown forwards between them. If possible this should be done in slow motion until blackout.)

Scene Nine

(Samantha is laying on a 'hospital bed', her feet directly towards the audience, David is sitting in a chair by her side, his head in his hands. Samantha's friend sits motionless to one side, opposite side from Samantha to where Jennifer enters. Jennifer enters, crying. Jennifer walks up to the side of the bed without acknowledging David. Jennifer looks down and gently kisses Samantha's hand, holding it to her own face, then bursts into tears. Jennifer lifts Samantha's upper body up and the audience see clearly that Samantha has passed away, she has two red scars across her right cheek. Jennifer cries uncontrollably. During this sequence the light has come up slowly on Samantha's friend, who sits, watches forlornly. Jennifer slowly lets Samantha down, and kisses her forehead. Samantha aged four walks in, waves to Samantha's friend who waves back, walks to her father and kisses his cheek, he does not respond. She walks to Jennifer and pulls at her hand, she rests her head against Jennifer's side.)

(Slow fade to black out)

Scene Ten

In a repeat of the Scene Eight opening: (In the hall, (or lounge if required.) David is pacing the room, impatient. He is in a suit and tie. Jennifer is also well dressed, checking herself in the mirror. Samantha's friend is not seen until by David. Samantha is 'upstairs' (not on stage.) when she appears she is in heels, a long pale blue dress, her hair is curled.)

Jennifer: Give her a break David, what's got into you? Ever since your 'vision' you've been so nice to her. Now this?

David: I told her to get ready hours ago!

Jennifer: Yes, but she's a teenage girl, she needs time to get ready! I should know!

David: She's had enough time! I'm not going to be late for my own brother's wedding for God sake!

(David starts to go upstairs but Jennifer stops him.)

Jennifer: David! Let me go, you'll only upset her more, I'll speak to her, give me two minutes.

David: We haven't got two minutes!

Jennifer: One then!

(David silently lets her pass him. He looks in the hallway mirror to check his tie. He tilts his head to check for grey hairs on the side of his temple and catches sight of a figure in the reflection. He spins round only to see one of his wife's coats hanging in the door frame. He breathes a sigh of relief.)

David: (shouting) Hurry up!

Friend: (voice off stage) Don't go.

David: Oh no, not you again!

Friend: I said don't go!

David: Not now, just not now! I'm not bloody interested. We're late, come on you two, please! Samantha, get down here now!

Friend: Sam!

David: What?

Friend: It's Sam now, you know it!

David: Oh shut it you!

Jennifer: (entering alone) She's just coming. Who are you shouting at David?

(Samantha follows, she glares at her father and pushes past him towards the front door.)

Jennifer: Are you Ok David? You look pale.

David: It doesn't matter! Get in the bloody car!

Jennifer: You will never talk to me like that again, after this stupid bloody wedding Sam and I are going. I don't care where, just anywhere away from you.

David: Oh come on Jennifer!

Jennifer: It's too late David, far too late!

(Jennifer grabs her coat and leaves the house leaving the front door wide open. David watches his wife leave, picks up his car keys and takes one final look in the mirror. This time Samantha's friend stands clearly in the kitchen door way, next to the height chart, staring at David.)

Friend: I said do not go Mr Grumps.

(David turns sharply and makes for the door but it is slammed shut by Samantha's friend. He grasps at the handle to open it but it would not move.)

David: Damn you! *(David snatches at a spare set of house keys from the telephone table and turns for the door. He stops, his back to the audience, takes a big heavy breath, his shoulders raise and fall. He turns around slowly and stands to face Samantha's Friend as she stands still next to the height chart. He raises one arm, his fingers trace the highest written marking. Slowly he touches Samantha's Friends face, brushing her scars gently.)* Samantha?

Friend: Yes Daddy?

David: Samantha?

Friend: Sam now Daddy, but I don't really mind.

(David turns for the door, turns the key in the lock, opens the door and walks out.)

Friend: Mr Grumps don't go.....please don't go.....

(Quick black out. When lights are up David and Jennifer are sat facing the audience in the front of the car, this can be two chairs from the lounge or kitchen, placed together with a gap between. Samantha is sat behind them in the gap. Samantha's friend has gone.)

Jennifer: Slow down David!

Samantha: Dad! My seat belt's stuck in the door, I can't do it up!

Jennifer: Slow down David, PLEASE! What's got into you?

David: Fine, I'll slow up. But buckle up quickly please!

Samantha: *(mimes opening and closing the door, and fastens her seat belt. She sits back, still wary of her father and his mood.)*

Jennifer: Thank you!

David: *(As he drives faster once more he looks at Samantha in the rear view mirror for a few seconds.)*

Samantha: *(screaming.)* Dad!

(Sound effect of screeching tyres followed by a loud metallic crash. David and Jennifer jolt forward in unison, Samantha is thrown forwards between them. If possible this should be done in slow motion until blackout.)

Scene Eleven

(Samantha is laying on a 'hospital bed', her feet directly towards the audience, David is sitting in a chair by her side, his head in his hands. Samantha's friend sits motionless to one side, opposite side from Samantha to where Jennifer enters. Jennifer enters, crying. Jennifer walks up to the side of the bed without acknowledging David. Jennifer looks down and gently kisses Samantha's hand, holding it to her own face, then Jennifer lifts Samantha's upper body up and the audience can see she the two red scars across her right cheek have disappeared. Samantha wakes slowly, groaning. During this sequence the light has come up slowly on Samantha's friend, who sits, watches.)

Samantha: Mum?

Jennifer: Hey baby.

Samantha: *(Looking to her Jennifer and David, David is now sitting up, watching them, smiling.)* I'm sorry, did we miss Uncle Johns wedding?

Jennifer: No, don't worry about that now. The vicar agreed to rearrange, once you're better. Everyone's worried about you!

David: There are at least twenty family and friends in the hospital reception, I think we've caused quite a scene!

Jennifer: You're one lucky lady!

Samantha: *(suddenly struggling for breath.)* Mum?

Jennifer: It's OK Sam, relax, can't have you getting in a state with two broken ribs can we? *(She pushes some pillows up behind Samantha's back.)* It's been a long day, Dad and I are going to get some coffee, can we get you anything?

Samantha: No thanks Mum. Love you.

(Jennifer and David leave.)

Friend: *(Stands, takes a step closer to Samantha, stops and smiles. Samantha smiles back, they give each other the smallest of waves as Friend 'disappears' by backing into the wings (or by any other effect to give the impression she has vanished.))*

(Slow fade to black out)

End of Play.