

# ANYONE CAN DANCE

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## Anyone Can Dance

*Anyone Can Dance* was first performed at the Sawston Drama Festival on 24th March 2017, directed by Richard McNally, and featuring James Inman as Joe and Lisa Wight as Samantha.

Joe                Male, 36

Samantha       Female, 31

*Time: the present.*

*Scene: Joe and Samantha's bedroom.*

*JOE and SAMANTHA are in bed, having sex. They finish.*

*Pause*

Joe                I wish I'd met you years ago.

Samantha       Maybe you did.

Joe                I think I'd remember.

Samantha       Memory's weird though, isn't it?

Joe                Is it?

Samantha       Like how we remember some things and just forget other things?

Joe                But what does it mean to forget?

Samantha       I can't remember.

*During the following, JOE and SAMANTHA put on underwear before getting out of bed for the pillow-fight section.*

Joe                I mean presumably whatever I've known or seen or heard or smelled or tasted is all still in here.

Samantha       Actually I was wrong when I said memory's weird. *You're* weird. My very own weirdo.

Joe But what if I could recall all of it? Every single sensation.

Samantha Your brain would burst.

Joe No it wouldn't.

Samantha It would be so full, it would explode.

Joe But it's like computer memory boards, isn't it? They don't get heavier the more disk space you use. My brain wouldn't explode.

Samantha Stop being so literal.

Joe But, no, come on, what if we did meet once, before? Earlier. And the memory's still in here. After all, we've always lived in the same city.

Samantha It's a big city. We were in different schools, drinking in different pubs. Different ages.

Joe Not that different.

Samantha What?

Joe Ages. Our ages are not that different.

Samantha You're old and I'm young.

Joe Thirty-one is not young.

Samantha Younger than thirty-six. I've never fucked anyone as old as you before.

Joe You make me sound ancient.

Samantha You're my decrepit old record-breaker.

Joe Do I get a medal?

Samantha On top of which you're old before your time.

Joe I am not.

Samantha Yes you are. Like the way you make your tea.

Joe What's wrong with the way I make my tea?

Samantha Loose tea leaves?

Joe It's the best. Everyone says so.

*(Pause)*

They do.

*(Pause)*

Make your own tea in future.

Samantha I'm teasing!

Joe You're horrible to me.

Samantha You love it.

Joe But come on, think about it. What if we had met years ago?

Samantha And been together for more than six months?

Joe Five months, three weeks, two days actually.

Samantha Trust you to know that.

Joe But don't you wish we'd have had like ten years, or twenty years together, rather than just a few months?

Samantha No.

Joe Why the hell not?

Samantha We were different people then.

Joe Not that different.

Samantha Totally different.

*JOE thinks a moment then clicks his fingers. Lights change.*

*JOE and SAMANTHA are primary school age, pillow fighting across the bed.*

Joe Is!

Samantha Isn't!

Joe Is!

Samantha Isn't!

Joe Is too!

Samantha Isn't, isn't, isn't!

Joe                Is, is, is!

*SAMANTHA clicks her fingers and we are back in the present.*

*During the following they both dress ready for the disco section; JOE in simple white shirt and black trousers, SAMANTHA in simple dress, with her hair in pigtails.*

Joe                It wouldn't have been like that.

Samantha        Yes it would.

Joe                No, it wouldn't.

Samantha        Would. We were five, we would have got on about as well as a pitbull and a kitten.

Joe                You being the—

Samantha        Kitten obviously.

Joe                You're comparing me to a pitbull?

Samantha        I'm just saying I'm a kitten.

Joe                What I meant was I sometimes think the whole of my life before I met you has been a waste.

Samantha        It hasn't been a waste. Think of it as training. Anyway, you'd have hated me at five, I even went to church back then.

Joe                Most kids do.

Samantha        I was such a princess – I liked dressing up, making my hair pretty.

Joe                How do you know I wasn't totally different as well?

Samantha        What, you liked making your hair pretty?

Joe                It was quite long.

Samantha        We had a dog, Marmalade, and I would tie ribbons in his fur, then insist Dad take him out for a walk. He always did of course, nothing was too much trouble for his little girl. He must have had the piss taken out of him so much when he walked Marmalade in the park.

Joe                You tied ribbons in your dog's fur?

Samantha Yes.

Joe What sort?

Samantha Pink ones.

Joe I meant the dog.

Samantha Cocker spaniel. Had curly black and white fur. Perfect for tying ribbons in.

Joe Your dad must have been soft taking it out like that.

Samantha He probably took them out as soon as he was away from the house.

Joe I would have done.

Samantha I knew you didn't love me.

Joe Your father is allowed to indulge you – that's what dads do. But I'm your

... your ...

Samantha My what?

Joe I don't know. Lover.

Samantha I hate that word, sounds like we're having an affair.

Joe Boyfriend.

Samantha Like we're teenagers.

Joe Partner.

Samantha A business.

Joe Other half.

Samantha Like I'm not complete without you?

Joe Or I without you.

Samantha Hmm, I'll let you know on that one.

Joe God you're such a cynic aren't you?

Samantha Yes, well ...

Joe                That's why ...

*JOE clicks his fingers. Lights change. Music.*

*JOE 14, SAMANTHA 9, at a disco.*

Joe                Hey.

Samantha        Hey.

Joe                Do you wanna go out with me?

Samantha        Out where?

Joe                Just out with me. You know like boyfriend/girlfriend sort of thing.

Samantha        Do you fancy me?

Joe                No . . . yeah.

Samantha        I don't know.

Joe                We could just go to the pictures or something.

Samantha        Can my friend come?

Joe                If you want.

Samantha        I'll think about it.

Joe                We don't have to go to the pictures.

Samantha        I don't like the pictures.

Joe                Don't you?

Samantha        No. Boring.

Joe                Oh.

Samantha        Do you wanna dance?

Joe                I don't like dancing.

Samantha        Oh.

*SAMANTHA CLICKS HER FINGERS and we are back in the present. Lights change.*

*Music stops. During the following they both change for the car scene. JOE in jeans and tee shirt; SAMANTHA in dress and denim jacket.*

See what I mean?

Joe            So just because I didn't like dancing and you didn't like the cinema, we couldn't have dated?

Samantha    It's not just that.

Joe            What then?

Samantha    We were different people.

Joe            Ha, yeah. I was fourteen.

Samantha    I would have been nine!

Joe            Eeuw.

Samantha    Exactly.

Joe            I think you're being a bit literal.

Samantha    Hey, you're the one who started this whole 'I wish I'd met you years ago' bollocks.

Joe            It's not bollocks. Don't you wish you hadn't had to go through all those shitty relationships before finally meeting the man of your dreams?

Samantha    I'll let you know when I've met him.

Joe            I swear sometimes you don't have a romantic bone in your body.

Samantha    Like you said, shitty relationships . . .

Joe            Well, you've got me now.

Samantha    You're a soppy sod, aren't you?

Joe            Is that why you love me?

Samantha    One of the reasons.

Joe            What are the others?

Samantha    You're very needy, aren't you?

Joe            Is that another reason?

Samantha    No.



Joe            OK, maybe fourteen was a bit young. Say nineteen, and you would have been fourteen.

Samantha    Still weird.

Joe            We're only talking dating!

Samantha    Weirdo.

Joe            OK, twenty-one. You'd have been sixteen.

Samantha    You had a car?

Joe            Of course. Well, my uncle's, but you know . . .

Samantha    That would have impressed me.

*JOE CLICKS HIS FINGERS. Lights change.*

*JOE, 21, is in a car. SAMANTHA, 16, walks past.*

Joe            Hey, Samantha, isn't it?

Samantha    What if it is?

Joe            Wanna come for a drive?

Samantha    That ain't yours.

Joe            It's my uncle's.

Samantha    Does he know you're out in it?

Joe            Course. I just took him to the airport. Picking him up next week.

Samantha    Yeah? Where you taking me?

Joe            Any place you like.

Samantha    The seaside.

Joe            What?

Samantha    I want to go to the seaside.

Joe            That's fifty miles away.

Samantha    Take it or leave it.

Joe            We'd have to leave now.

Samantha OK, got nothing else to do.

Joe Get in.

Samantha Come on then, let's go. My mates will be well jel. Being out with a real bloke who's got a car. How come you ain't got your own car?

Joe I've just finished university.

Samantha God, that sounds boring. How come you ain't got a job?

Joe I will get one now I've finished.

Samantha Doing what?

Joe In a museum hopefully.

Samantha Boring.

Joe What are you going to do then?

Samantha Me and my mates are forming a band.

Joe Yeah?

Samantha You know like the Spice Girls.

Joe Oh right. "I tell you what I want, what I really really want..."

Samantha Yeah, whatever.

Joe They've all got nicknames haven't they?

Samantha Yeah, it's like their identities. Who they are. It gives them power.

Joe Right.

Samantha What are you into then?

Joe Oh you know, britpop, Blur, Oasis.

Samantha Which one?

Joe What?

Samantha Blur or Oasis?

Joe Both.

Samantha You have to choose one.

Joe            No I don't.

Samantha    Yes you do. You can't like both.

Joe            But I do.

Samantha    They're both shit anyway.

Joe            You like the seaside then?

Samantha    No. Fucking hate it. I just wanted to see if you would take me there.

*SAMANTHA CLICKS HER FINGERS and we are back in the present. Lights change.*

Joe            Christ, you really were a piece of work weren't you?

Samantha    It was just a phase.

*During the following they both change for the nightclub scene.*

Joe            You never told me you were gonna be a spice girl. What was the name of this band?

Samantha    I'm not telling you.

Joe            Oh, someone's keeping a secret.

Samantha    It was a long time ago. All this proves is why there was no point in us having met then. We'd have long since broken up. We probably wouldn't even have got to the seaside. You'd have turned round and taken me home. And that would have been that.

Joe            I'd have been mesmerised by your beauty and your sparkiness, and kept going all the way to the beach.

Samantha    Liar. You'd have been sick of me before we'd even got halfway.

Joe            So come on. Band name. And who did you model yourself on?

Samantha    Promise not to laugh.

Joe            Ha! You must be joking.

Samantha    But it's embarrassing.

Joe            Haha like I haven't told *you* anything embarrassing?

Samantha    But I like it when you get embarrassed.

Joe Stop stalling. Tell me.

Samantha We called ourselves the Bikini Girls.

Joe The Bikini Girls?

Samantha Yep.

Joe As in....

Samantha Bikinis, yes.

Joe You were sixteen?

Samantha Yes.

Joe So, and I have to ask this, no pervyness intended....

Samantha Go on...

Joe Was the plan to actually go on stage in just bikinis?

Samantha Yes!! Oh God, why did I tell you??

Joe What was your nickname? String?

Samantha We didn't have nicknames.

Joe Halter-neck.

Samantha Shut up!

Joe Oh that's brilliant. Maybe I'd have come and seen you live and thrown my boxers at you.

Samantha Thanks.

Joe Hey I'm not the one who was planning on going on stage in just a bikini.

Samantha I don't see what's so strange about it. Beach, stage, it's all in public isn't it?

Joe It's context. I might glance at you walking along a beach in a bikini—

Samantha You'd only glance?

Joe — but if you're up there on stage, I'm ogling you the whole time. In a way it's what you're there for.

Samantha Ogling?

Joe Or would you want all your male fans in blindfolds?

Samantha That's a very appealing idea. Have you ever been blindfolded?

Joe I'm not sure I want to tell you.

Samantha Ohh you have. Who was she?

Joe It was a long time ago.

Samantha Did you enjoy it?

Joe It was more her thing than mine.

Samantha Who was it?

Joe Remember me telling you about Lauren? The older...

Samantha *(laughing)* The one with the cats?

Joe Yes, her.

Samantha What didn't you like about it?

Joe I couldn't see anything.

Samantha Obviously!

Joe I like to see.

Samantha I'd love to blindfold you, tease you.

Joe Would you be wearing just a bikini?

Samantha Oh a lot less than that.

Joe Maybe I'd enjoy it more with you.

Samantha I'm sure you would.

Joe You've both got to be into it.

Samantha Yeah.

Joe Sorry, I didn't mean to—

Samantha It's fine . . . I just never want to . . .

Joe What if it had been me?

Samantha     Oh God, we're not on that again are we?

Joe             But what if . . .

*JOE uses a scarf to blindfold SAMANTHA.*

Samantha     I'm not sure about this.

Joe             Come on, it'll be fine.

Samantha     I don't know.

Joe             Hey, it's me.

Samantha     I don't like it.

Joe             Relax.

Samantha     I can't.

Joe             Relax.

Samantha     I'm not sure.

Joe             Come on.

Samantha     I don't like this. I know you're not him, but—

Joe             What if I had been?

Samantha     I don't know.

Joe             Imagine.

Samantha     I can't.

Joe             Try.

Samantha     I don't have the imagination.

Joe             Yes you do.

Samantha     I don't want to have the imagination.

Joe             Come on. Try.

*Pause*

Samantha     It's different.

Joe             How?

Samantha Better maybe. More...

Joe Softer?

Samantha I guess.

Joe More relaxed?

Samantha Yes. You're not a . . .

Joe What?

Samantha . . . not such a bastard.

Joe I might have been.

Samantha Not you.

Joe Maybe I'd have exploited your youth.

Samantha That's not funny.

Joe You were vulnerable.

Samantha I was out of control. You'd have hated me.

Joe I could never have hated you.

Samantha You would never have loved me.

Joe I might—

Samantha *(pulling off the blindfold)* I can't do this.

Joe I'm sorry.

Samantha I'm not doing some stupid fucking regression thing.

Joe Ok.

Samantha Some things are just better left where they are.

Joe Maybe.

Samantha It's gone, buried, that's where it's gonna stay. No markers.

Joe Is that what I am? A marker?

Samantha Yes.

Joe I just want to know everything.

Samantha Not a good idea.

Joe You were eighteen?

Samantha Yes. *(Pause)* We met in a club, if you must know.

Joe What if I'd been in there?

Samantha For fuck's sake! What if, what if? Life isn't a set of what ifs. It's what *is*.

*JOE CLICKS HIS FINGERS, the lights change and loud disco music plays.*

*JOE, 23, SAMANTHA, 18 are in a nightclub.*

Joe You don't look old enough to be in here.

Samantha Eighteen today. Can't you tell?

Joe Serious?

Samantha My friends are over there. Ask them.

Joe Hey, I believe you.

Samantha How old are you?

Joe Twenty-three.

Samantha Can't you get arrested for talking to me?

Joe I hope not.

Samantha You here on your own?

Joe Just me and a friend – he's over there, dancing with that girl in the leather trousers.

Samantha So you thought you'd chat up someone young enough to be your daughter?

Joe Do I look that old?

Samantha And the rest.

Joe Can I get you a birthday drink?

Samantha Vodka and Coke.

Joe Sure you want to accept a drink from such an old geezer?



Samantha     Maybe I like old geezers. Wanna dance?

Joe             I don't dance.

Samantha     Suit yourself. But I'm still getting that drink, right?

Joe             Right. Do you come here often?

Samantha     Seriously?

Joe             What?

Samantha     Isn't that the oldest chat-up line, like ever??

Joe             Is it?

Samantha     Have you ever even been out with a girl?

Joe             One or two.

Samantha     Is that all?

Joe             Three or four. Depends what you call 'going out with'.

Samantha     Whatever you want to call it.

Joe             I've had two steady girlfriends.

Samantha     What about the others?

Joe             Oh you know, one-night stands.

Samantha     So two steady girlfriends and two one-night stands? And you're twenty-three? (*JOE nods*) God, I hope I've had more than that by the time I'm twenty-three. Like a hundred times more.

Joe             A hundred?

Samantha     Why not? Life's for living right?

Joe             I live.

Samantha     Doesn't sound like it.

Joe             I like steady relationships.

Samantha     How long did they last?

Joe             The first one was just under two years, the last one was nearly three.

Samantha     Getting better then. Or worse.

Joe            You like playing the field?

Samantha     I'll let you know when I've played it. Why did you split?

Joe            Oh you know, you just do, don't you?

Samantha     She dumped you.

Joe            Not dumped exactly.

Samantha     I've never been dumped.

Joe            Never?

Samantha     I always get in first.

Joe            That makes you sound ruthless.

Samantha     Kill or be killed. Dump or be dumped.

Joe            I'll try and remember that.

Samantha     So come on, what caused your last one to walk out?

Joe            Who says she walked out?

Samantha     You've got "please don't dump me" tattooed on your forehead.

Joe            No-one likes being dumped.

Samantha     So get in first.

Joe            Would you like to—

Samantha     Thanks for the drink. See you around...

*Music gets louder as SAMANTHA dances away, JOE watching.*

*SAMANTHA CLICKS HER FINGERS: the lights change and the music cuts. We are back in the present.*

*During the following they change for the train station scene.*

Samantha     What is it with you and dancing?

Joe            I just can't do it.

Samantha     Anyone can dance.

Joe            Not me. Two left feet.

Samantha    No...one is definitely a right foot.

Joe            You know what I mean.

Samantha    It's just an attitude.

Joe            One I don't have.

Samantha    I'll teach you.

Joe            What?

Samantha    To let go, that's all dancing is. Freeing up the spirit.

Joe            My spirit is perfectly free thank you.

Samantha    Come on, try it.

Joe            I'm not in the mood.

Samantha    You should be in the perfect mood after what we've just done.

Joe            You wore me out.

Samantha    Dancing will boost your stamina.

Joe            Maybe another time. *(Pause)* Was he the only one?

Samantha    Who?

Joe            The guy with the blindfold.

Samantha    The only one what?

Joe            Who . . . I don't know . . . damaged you.

Samantha    Who says I'm damaged?

Joe            You know you are. It's like your emotions are buried in a minefield with a dirty great "warning" sign.

Samantha    Thanks.

Joe            Come on, Sam, I'm not being mean, but—

Samantha    I'd hate to see you when you *are* being mean.

Joe            I just want you to let me in.

Samantha     God that's such a fucking cliché.

Joe             I don't know how else to put it.

Samantha     You want to know what it was like? Really?

*JOE CLICKS HIS FINGERS and the lights change. Sounds of a train station.*

*JOE, 25, SAMANTHA, 20 at a train station. SAMANTHA is kneeling on the floor, looking through her bag. JOE looks across to her. He is holding a take-out coffee.*

*Long pause.*