

The English Theatre of Hamburg

Established 1976

presents

DEADLY GAME

A Thriller by David Foley

Premiere on 29 April, 2010

Preview Performances at reduced prices on 26, 27 and 28 April

Performances Tuesday to Saturday at 19.30 Hours

Matinee Performances at 11.00 Hours on Tuesday and

Fridays beginning 4 May

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Dear Friends of The English Theatre of Hamburg,

DEADLY GAME, a thriller by David Foley, is the final production of our 2009-2010 Season. The play will premiere on 29 April, 2010, preceded by previews at reduced prices on 26, 27 and 28 April. (**THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES** by Frank D. Gilroy closes on 17 April. Be sure to see this prize winning play while tickets are still available.)

It is also now possible to purchase a subscription for our 35th Season 2010-2011. A subscription entitles you to see four plays for the price of three. For more information please phone the box office (227 7089) or read about next season's plays and book online (www.englishtheatre.de)

About the Author

David Foley's plays have been produced frequently on both sides of the Atlantic. **DEADLY GAME** premiered recently in the USA, where it received the prestigious Edgar Allan Poe Award for crime fiction. A fast moving, witty thriller, it has been produced in Europe at Vienna's English Theatre, The Mill at Sonning in England, and on a UK tour. Other plays by David Foley include **AMERICAN WITCH**, **SWITCH**, **CRESSIDA AMONG THE GREEKS**, **A HOLE IN THE FENCE**, **PARADISE**, **SAD HOTEL**, **THE LAST DAYS OF MADALYN MURRAY O'HAIR**, **MOTHER CALDWELL**, **MURDER AT ARGOS** and **IN EXILE**. Concerning thrillers such as **DEADLY GAME**, the author says,

*We love blood. We love murder. We love danger and double-crosses and the moment when the safe, predictable world gives way. We love them in a thriller (because) thrillers allow us to slip the cost. They allow us to laugh as we gasp, to feel horror with pleasure, to ride death and danger like a rollercoaster. I've always loved thrillers and mysteries. When I was a kid, I came home from school and watched Perry Mason on TV. I whiled away summer afternoons with Agatha Christie. I loved Ira Levin's fiendish entertainments and the elegant gamesmanship of Anthony Shaffer's **SLEUTH**. Writing **DEADLY GAME**, I rediscovered the luxurious addictive pleasures of these stories: mysterious strangers, priceless jewels, unsavory secrets and death not from natural causes. We get a lot of tragedy in the world. We get a lot of blood and betrayal. But (in **DEADLY GAME**) we just have fun.*

The Small Cast Thriller

Until the 1970s most thrillers were "whodunits" in which the characters in the play as well as the audience sat around trying to guess who had committed the murder. The Agatha Christie mysteries, most of which required numerous characters, were typical. Starting in the 70s, however, economics made another kind of thriller necessary. Theatres could no longer afford to produce such large cast plays. Authors now had to write thrillers with fewer characters—six at the most—and depend on shock effects and exciting twists to create suspense. Some notable examples of this new kind of thriller (all seen at The English Theatre of Hamburg in past seasons) are **I'LL BE BACK BEFORE MIDNIGHT** (4 characters) by Peter Colley, **SLEUTH** (2) by Anthony Shaffer, **DEATHTRAP** (5) by Ira Levin, **CORPSE!** (4) by Gerald Moon, **MR FOTHERGILL'S MURDER** (Our production of this play by Peter O'Donnell had five characters, but one of them was a giant stuffed doll who is now resting comfortably in the theatre's storage room.), **STAGE STRUCK** (4) by Simon Gray, **MURDER IN GREEN MEADOWS** (4) by Douglas Post, **CLIFFHANGER** (4) by James Yaffe, **DANGEROUS OBSESSION** (3) by N. J. Crisp, **WHEN THE REAPER CALLS** (5) by Peter Colley and **BAD BLOOD** (4) by Richard Stockwell. In each of these plays, the audience is trans-

ported into the fantasy world of danger and intrigue, where morality is forgotten in the passionate quest for blood and gain. And all with a maximum of five characters!

Summary of DEADLY GAME

Time: The present

Place: Camille Dargus's modern apartment in Manhattan

ACT I

Camille Dargus is a jewelry designer who has fought her way from poverty to wealth and fame. An attractive widow in her forties, her only weakness is a desire for handsome young men, and she is willing to pay for their services. She returns home earlier in the evening from a formal dinner party where she picked up Billy, a good looking waiter she could not resist. After she enjoys the pleasure of his company, Billy, wearing only a towel, comes out of her bedroom into the living room. Camille follows him a short time later and is somewhat distressed to find him looking at the expensive items in her apartment. To be on the safe side, she informs Billy that there is a security guard in the building and asks him politely to leave. He ignores her request. She offers him money, but he refuses to take it, saying he is not a call boy. As he puts on his waiter's tuxedo, he questions Camille about her rise to fame and fortune. She admits that, apart from talent and hard work, the money her husband left her had a great deal to do with her success.

Billy suddenly remembers that he left his digital movie camera in the bedroom. Camille is alarmed at the thought of a camera in her bedroom, and with good reason. Billy retrieves the camera and shows her scenes of the two of them having sex while the camera, set on automatic, was filming everything. She reaches for the camera, but he pulls it away, threatening to put the movie on the internet if she does not pay him fifty thousand dollars. He also points out that he knew of Camille's celebrity and riches before he agreed to come to her apartment. The quick thinking Camille informs Billy that she will not pay him a cent because the movie would be the best free advertising imaginable for her line of jewelry. She says, "jewelry designers want women to believe that if you wear their jewels you'll be a magnet for men both adoring and beautiful."

Billy puts the camera in his bag, but still refuses to go. This is too much for Camille. She picks up her cell phone and asks Ted, the security guard, to come up to her apartment and remove the young man. When Ted arrives, Camille claims that Billy stole her camera, which she takes from Billy's bag. As Ted tries to force the young

man from the room, Billy snatches the gun from Ted's holster and hits him on the head with it, knocking him out. Then he ties up Camille, telling her that "life is unpredictable so you always have to have a second plan." Camille asks him what it is he really wants. Surprisingly, Billy replies that he wants Camille to marry him so he can be rich and famous. Taken aback by what she considers to be a ludicrous proposal, Camille replies that being married once was quite enough for her. Billy asks her if her husband had affairs with other women and Camille replies that he quite often did.

Billy begins to search the apartment. Camille warns him that it is senseless to rob her because she and Ted, as well as people at the dinner party, can identify him and he will be picked up quickly by the police. Ignoring her warning, Billy asks Camille if she knows the principle behind the operation of a computer. He explains. "It's all based on *If this, then what?*", he says. Furthermore, "a good programmer tries to foresee every possible action on the part of the user and teach the computer how to respond to it." He assures her that the "if/then" principle of the computer has always worked for him in situations like this one.

While Billy continues his search in another room, Camille tries to revive Ted and get him to untie her, but before Ted can make a move, Billy returns and points the gun at him. Billy fires a warning shot, then takes handcuffs from his bag and closes one cuff on Ted's wrist and the other cuff to a wall pipe. He then throws Camille over his shoulder and takes her to the bedroom where he ties her to the bed and returns to the living room.

Billy unlocks the handcuffs restraining Ted. It is now apparent that Billy and Ted are working together. Ted is, however, angry because being handcuffed to a pipe was not part of their plan. Billy tells him there is not a set plan, that the plan changes continually according to what happens: "If/then." But Ted is more concerned about the painful lump on his head than he is with Billy's computer philosophy. He now wants to find the valuable object that Billy told him they would find in the apartment.

When Ted goes to another room to search, Billy brings Camille, bound and gagged, out of the bedroom. He removes the gag and tells Camille he would enjoy talking to her some more. He questions her again and finds out that she comes from Wisconsin, his home state.

Ted returns to the living room and Camille asks him if he knows Billy. Billy answers quickly that he and Ted are old

friends. Camille realizes she has been deceived by Ted and she asks him to tell her what they want. Billy shouts at Ted, "Don't you tell her!" He then tells Ted to search the kitchen.

Billy reveals to Camille that neither she nor Ted knows his real name and wonders if she is using a pseudonym as well. She admits that her real name is Edna. After more questioning, Billy leaves Camille alone with Ted and goes to another room.

Camille takes the opportunity to ask Ted, a family man, why he is letting himself get involved with Billy. Ted confesses that he is deep in debt from gambling and can only be saved from being killed by gangsters by acquiring a large sum of money. Camille asks again what he is looking for, but Ted refuses to say. Increasingly fearful, Camille asks if he and Billy plan to kill her after they have found what they want. Ted says he hopes not. Again Camille appeals to Ted, telling him what danger he has put himself in with the law. She reminds him of his two little boys and his little girl and tells him he is a nice man who should not be doing this. Billy reappears and tells Camille that Ted is not nice, that, in fact, he has been in jail for armed robbery. Billy leaves again, supposedly to search the bedroom.

Camille begs Ted to move her from the chair to the sofa because of a terrible pain in her back. Ted does so, but when Billy returns he is unhappy with what Ted has done. Camille, suspecting that Billy's reasons for disrupting her life go deeper than the search for some valuable object, asks him if she has wronged him in some way in the past. Billy denies this.

When Billy and Ted are not looking, Camille reaches under the sofa and presses a secret "distress button" which alarms the police. She tells the men that the game is up because the police are on the way. Ted tells Billy they have to go because he cannot risk going to jail again, but Billy refuses to leave until they have found what they came for. He shoves the gun up against Ted's jaw to make sure he does not leave. There is a struggle and in desperation Ted grabs a kitchen knife and plunges it into Billy. A red stain spreads across Billy's shirt as he gasps and staggers toward Camille. Camille screams in horror. Billy moves closer to her, then stops and falls at her feet. Slowly, she takes her hand from her face and looks up to see Ted pointing the gun at her face.

ACT II, Scene 1

Holding the gun to Camille's head, Ted wipes his fingerprints off the knife handle. He then forces the handle of the knife into Camille's hands so her fingerprints will be on it and the police will blame her for Billy's death. Camille, who cannot stand the sight of blood, drops the knife. Then she surprises Ted by telling him the police are not coming

because the alarm system was set up, but not engaged. Without that threat, they still have to decide what to do about Billy's body.

Realizing that Ted could convince the police that she killed Billy, Camille knows that she must work with Ted to erase all traces of a murder having been committed. With her now on his side, Ted plans to cut up Billy in the bathroom and pack the body parts in one of Camille's large suitcases for easy disposal. Frantically following Ted's orders, Camille provides Ted with plastic bags and a big suitcase. Ted then handcuffs Camille to the water pipe so he can deal with Billy's body without worrying that she will try to escape. While Ted drags Billy to the bathroom, Camille laughs hysterically at the thought that Billy's "If/then" philosophy has fatally let him down.

ACT II, Scene 2

Camille is still handcuffed to the water pipe when Ted drags the suitcase full of Billy's remains from the bathroom into the living room. He claims he cleaned up all the blood, but Camille says she will check it later just in case he missed some. She is relieved to see that Ted has also cleaned the knife. Ted unlocks the handcuffs, freeing Camille. She, having become partners in crime with Ted, fixes them both a drink to settle their nerves. Disturbed by what has happened, but satisfied that they did what was best under the circumstances, Camille suggests that Ted should leave. He refuses, however, saying that he wants what he came for and will not leave without it. Camille has no idea what he is talking about. She can only conclude that Billy tricked Ted into believing there is something of great value in the apartment.

Camille finds it unsettling when Ted questions her about her personal life. He seems to know as much about her past as Billy did. He is aware that she used to be poor and hated it. He knows that she married an older man who was rich, smart, powerful and, for awhile, gave her a feeling of security she had never known. Her marriage, however, was unhappy. Her husband turned out to be a sadistic man who liked to play psychological games that would undermine her confidence, her courage and her sense of who she was. After only two years of marriage, she could barely think or feel anything.

Up to this point what Ted has said about her is true. But as Ted goes on she realizes that the rest of what Billy told Ted was all made up. She concludes that Billy must have strayed from the truth in order to gain Ted's cooperation. For instance, Ted mistakenly claims that Camille's husband gave her a piece of jewelry of extraordinary value before the marriage went bad. Ted says he knows that it's called the Emerald Star. Camille insists that there is no such thing as the Emerald Star, but Ted does not believe her. He takes out the gun and points it at her, demanding

that she tell him the truth. He says that the evening will end in only one of two ways: either he will leave with the Emerald Star, or Camille will end up dead and stuffed in a suitcase like Billy.

Camille now realizes she must trick Ted in some way if she is to survive. She pretends to faint and falls into Ted's arms. Now that the gun is no longer pressed to her head, she sinks her teeth into Ted's wrist which causes him to drop the gun. She grabs the weapon and fires a shot past his head. Ted is the one who is desperate now. He tells Camille that Billy told him that if she would not give him the Emerald Star he need only mention two words: Mildred Johanssen. When he does so, there is a dead silence. Camille realizes that there is far more to Billy's invasion into her life than she at first thought. She pretends not to know the name Mildred Johanssen, but Ted can see that she is visibly shaken.

Ted tells her that Mildred Johanssen was Billy's mother and Camille's maid when she lived in Wisconsin. Mildred died after having lived a hard life. On her deathbed she told her son Billy that she had once asked Camille for financial help, but Camille turned her down. Mildred also told Billy about the Emerald Star because she thought that if he could get hold of it, he would be well off. In addition, she would be able to take revenge on Camille for refusing to help her.

Seeing that there is no way she can convince Ted that the Emerald Star does not exist, Camille decides to humor him by pretending that it does. She corrects Billy's version of the story by pointing out that Mildred was not her maid, but her sister. Believing what Camille is telling him, Ted concludes that Billy must have been her nephew. Camille says he was not her nephew, but her son. After a stunned silence Ted wants to hear more about her past.

Camille, however, is fed up with story telling and refuses to go on. She tells Ted he should take the Emerald Star she has hidden in her apartment and leave. The jewel, she says, is hidden in a little table a few feet away. As he searches for the jewel in vain, Camille, standing behind him, reaches for a hard object on the dining table and smashes it down on his head. He falls. She strikes him again, making sure he is dead.

Her first impulse is to call the police and make up a story about Ted, but before doing that she must remove the suitcase containing Billy's remains from the room. Fighting nausea, she takes hold of the handle. It is very heavy. She uses all her strength to drag it across the floor. As she backs up, moving the suitcase inch by inch, Billy, who comes from another room, appears behind her and says, "Need a hand with that?"

Camille spins around, then staggers away from him, screaming in astonishment at seeing Billy alive. Enjoying

the look of horror on her face, Billy calmly reminds her that he always has another plan. If/then. He arrogantly explains that it was easy to fake the stabbing. The knife, he says, has a retractable blade and the blood was fake. Camille can hardly believe that the fight between Ted and Billy was staged, and she does not understand why. Billy says it was a game. He knew Camille would never give them the jewel of her own free will. The plan was to trick her into believing Ted had killed him. Then, when he heard the magic words "Mildred Johanssen" he would come out of hiding and Camille would fall apart. But, he did not come out, Camille protests. Billy explains that he waited because he did not want to spoil the fun. He admits he gave Ted just enough information about her past to scare her, but he knew Camille was clever enough to overpower Ted in the end.

Now Camille wants to know how much Billy really knows about Mildred. He answers that he knows that Camille had a child and gave the infant to her sister, Mildred, to raise. He assures her that he was not the child. Camille is desperate to know who Billy is. If not her son, who? Billy decides to tell her the truth. He says that his mother was simply one of Camille's schoolmates back when they were teenagers. Camille's husband, Gerald, got his mother pregnant and Billy was the result. His mother wanted compensation and Gerald's lawyers paid her fifty thousand dollars to go away, but after spending that money she became bitter and felt she deserved more. She asked Camille for help, but was turned down. After Gerald's death, Camille walked away with everything and Billy's mother wanted revenge. She knew there was something suspicious about Gerald's death and she told Billy to find out from Mildred what happened.

When Mildred became fatally ill, Billy went to her sick bed shortly before her death and listened to her confession. She told him that her sister Edna (Camille) had finally had enough of her sadistic husband, Gerald, and viciously smashed his head in. Then she panicked and phoned Mildred for help. Mildred came to her rescue. They dumped Gerald's body over a cliff into a river where he was later found by the police. The authorities believed their story that it was an accident. Mildred was particularly believable because she was known in the community as a church-going, God-fearing woman. Mildred felt she had to help her sister, but she remained guilt-ridden for the rest of her life. Billy concludes by saying that Mildred was glad to be able to finally confess to him what had happened before she died.

Camille is devastated by all that Billy knows. She is willing to give him anything to make him go away. She asks him what he wants and he tells her again that he wants her to marry him so he can become rich and famous. If she does not marry him he will blackmail her and ruin her life.

Camille, astonished by what she considers a ludicrous demand, asks Billy why he did not just tell her his story in the first place and threaten to blackmail her. Why bother to bring Ted into the picture, pretend to be murdered and then scare her out of her mind? Billy answers that that would not have been much fun, that games are important. Games, he says, are how we get to know each other. They bind us together.

Camille pretends that Billy has succeeded with his game-playing. When he feels relaxed, she surprises him by picking up the object she used to kill Ted and throwing it at him. This gives her time to reach for the gun. Billy tries to save himself with more of his fast talking, but Camille is

not listening. Pointing the gun at him, she calls the police and says, "There's a man in my apartment. He's

killed my security guard. I'm holding a gun on him. Please hurry though. I'm not sure how much longer I can hold him like this. He may run off. Or I may have to shoot him. Just at the moment it's hard to say."

She hangs up the phone. The tableau holds for a moment, Camille pointing the gun at Billy, Billy eyeing her warily. The lights go down.

The End

MULTIPLE CHOICE EXERCISE

1. Camille picks up Billy at (a. a high school reunion, b. a disco, c. a dinner party).
2. Ted is (a. a waiter, b. a security guard, c. a policeman).
3. Camille wants Billy's (a. mobile phone, b. watch, c. camera).
4. Both Billy and Camille come from (a. Wisconsin, b. Michigan, c. South Carolina).
5. Camille's real name is (a. Ida, b. Mildred, c. Edna).
6. In order to get Ted's gun Camille bites (a. his wrist, b. his nose, c. his ankle).
7. To compensate Billy's mother for getting her pregnant, Gerald (a. married her, b. gave her money, c. bought her a house).
8. The cause of Gerald's death was (a. murder, b. heart failure, c. an accident).
9. The Emerald Star (a. is hidden in Camille's apartment, b. will make Ted a rich man, c. does not exist).
10. Billy tells Camille that (a. she is his mother, b. he wants to marry her c. she is too skinny).

Answer Key:

1. c, 2. b, 3.c, 4. a, 5. c, 6. a, 7. b, 8. a, 9. c, 10.b

INTERPRETATIVE EXERCISE

1. A sudden change in the story line of a play is called a "twist." What twists do you notice in DEADLY GAME and why do you think audiences like them?
2. Decide what you know about the three characters in the play and discuss what motivates them.