



# GOOD WITH PEOPLE

BY DAVID HARROWER



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GOOD WITH PEOPLE  
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GOOD WITH PEOPLE was first presented by Paines Plough and Oran Mor  
at Oran Mor, Glasgow, Scotland on September 27, 2010.

It was revived in a Paines Plough/Datum Point/Traverse Theatre co-production  
as part of the Edinburgh Festival at the Traverse Theatre, Scotland in August 2012.

The play was first presented in the USA in the same production  
as part of the 2013 Brits Off Broadway and Scotland Week Festival  
at 59E59 Theaters, New York City, in March-April 2013.

GOOD WITH PEOPLE was presented at 59E59 Theaters (Elysa-beth Kleinhans, Artistic Director; Peter Tear, Executive Producer) in New York City, opening on April 3, 2013. It was directed by George Perrin; the set design was by Ben Stones; the sound design was by Scott Twynholm; the lighting design was by Tim Deiling; the stage manager was Raynelle Wright; and the production manager was Kevin McCallum. The cast was as follows:

HELEN ..... Blythe Duff  
EVAN ..... Andrew Scott-Ramsay

## **CHARACTERS**

HELEN

EVAN

## **PLACE**

The Seaview Hotel,  
an empty hotel near a loch in Scotland.

# GOOD WITH PEOPLE

## 1

*Reception of a small hotel. Ten A.M. Helen.*

HELEN. We should've been busy, July. It was a time we should've been; expected to be. The Glasgow Fair. The ancient Argyll intoning. They'll come, they'll descend, they'll spend money. They didn't. Blustery day after day, racing cloud but still enough warmth in the sun, enough sparkling light to draw them out here to us. We raise our hopes every year and we're fools. When I was a girl the town swelled. Abundance. The shops stocked up, cafés steamed and our fathers walked the roadsides so full were the pavements. Seagulls nested on litter like smooth white cannonballs. Five butchers, three fishmongers, seven petrol stations then. Cinema too. Skating pond. The memory sticks, insistent. So little trace now. The ones that do make it stay an hour, two hours at most. Afternoon trippers stopping off. Park on the front, pay-and-display and a wander. I watch them through the glass entrance doors of the hotel, the silent, sliding doors, showing the kids where the family ghosts once holidayed. There was one arrival near the end. Tall, in his twenties, already a man impatient. (*Evan.*) Good morning.

EVAN. Morning.

HELEN. Welcome to the Seaview.

EVAN. I booked a room online.

HELEN. Mister

EVAN. Bold.

HELEN. (*Checks her screen.*) Mister Bold.

EVAN. Just the one night.

HELEN. Just one night. Here you are. Card. If you could fill it out. Or fill it in. Never sure which it is. Do you need a pen?

EVAN. Have one. *(He writes on the card. She watches him as he does this. He hands it back.)*

HELEN. Address, Mister Bold?

EVAN. Glasgow not enough?

HELEN. We just need a street address — for the card.

EVAN. ... Glasgow Road.

HELEN. Glasgow Road. Glasgow Road, Glasgow. House number?

EVAN. Do you need a house number?

HELEN. Postcode?

EVAN. You wanting to write to me?

HELEN. It's just for ...

EVAN. I won't damage anything. You won't need to contact me.

HELEN. Doesn't matter. Nationality British. *(He rubs his shoulder.)*

Are you alright?

EVAN. My shoulder.

HELEN. What did you do?

EVAN. Pulled it.

HELEN. I know you, don't I?

EVAN. D'you want to see my passport?

HELEN. No. Why?

EVAN. Hotels usually do.

HELEN. It is. Evan Bold. You grew up here.

EVAN. I did.

HELEN. You don't remember me.

EVAN. I can't remember.

HELEN. Helen Hughes. Mrs. Hughes.

EVAN. Mrs. Hughes ...

HELEN. Jack Hughes. What?

EVAN. "J'Accuse"?

HELEN. Sorry?

EVAN. "J'Accuse."

HELEN. Jack.

EVAN. Zola.

HELEN. My son. Jack.

EVAN. Émile Zola.

HELEN. The French, the French writer?

EVAN. The Dreyfus case. Doesn't matter.

HELEN. Dreyfus? I've read ... was it *Germinal*? The peasants, peasants working in the coal mines.

# GOOD WITH PEOPLE

by David Harrower

1M, 1W

Evan returns to Helensburgh, West Scotland, home to the nation's nuclear defense program and once a thriving holiday resort. A place he's been trying to avoid. Haunted by his past and afraid of his future, he finds Helen working at the Seaview Hotel. *GOOD WITH PEOPLE* is a haunting two-hander from one of Scotland's great writers, tracing one town's path of personal and political destruction.

*"... beautiful, deceptive ... Though this two-character Scottish drama [is] less than an hour long, it is likely to have an enduring and varied afterlife in the shadows of your mind. If that makes GOOD WITH PEOPLE sound like a ghost story, it is in a sense, though it contains no elements of the classically supernatural. It is instead a story of how people haunt their own lives, failing to be entirely present, no matter where they are ... GOOD WITH PEOPLE is short, but it's anything but small."*

—The New York Times

*"A brief, sneaky, skillfully measured duet, David Harrower's GOOD WITH PEOPLE works its minimalist magic on you when you least expect it."*

—Time Out New York

*"Packed with rich writing ... makes a virtue of brevity, compressing its action into a rush of dialogue and imagery that strikes with the force of an avalanche ... fashions an entire world on a rectangle of hotel carpet."*

—BackStage

*"[Harrower] uses his talent for high-precision dialogue to very funny effect ... [GOOD WITH PEOPLE] moves deftly from linguistic games to social commentary, and a touching study of two characters learning to free themselves from their past. It's a tremendous piece of work."*

—The Guardian (London)

Also by David Harrower

BLACKBIRD

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