

## The Signing

### Characters

**SANDRA** Murphy: A hard working mum in her early forties who dreams of well-behaved children and a clean kitchen.

**TOMMY** Murphy: A football and YouTube obsessed teenage boy, who dreams of leaving home and being signed to Manchester United.

**MR EMMET**: An ageing football talent scout who dreams of signing the next Cristiano Ronaldo.

*Lights come up to reveal an old-fashioned, run-down looking kitchen. There is a sink filled with dishes, broken kitchen cabinets and a work top covered in packets and food. To the left of the stage there is a fridge, with an open bottle of fizzy drink on top. There is a small wooden table centre stage. There are two chairs behind the table, facing the audience. Both the table and chairs look rather old and tired. There are a few dirty glasses on the table. A crashing noise is heard off stage.*

**SANDRA:** (Off stage) Tommy! I told you to keep that thing out of here, how many times? I've enough to do without you making extra work for me.

*From the direction of the noise, Tommy – a fifteen year old boy, wearing muddy football shorts and a Manchester United T-Shirt comes running in. He is dribbling a ball. He runs over to the fridge, puts his phone on top of it and begins dribbling the ball around the kitchen.*

**TOMMY:** He's closing in, he's getting there, past the last defender, he shoots... (Tommy kicks the ball against the fridge hard, so that the open bottle of fizzy drink that was balanced on top falls over and begins running onto the floor.) He scores!

*Tommy rips off his shirt, flings it on to the table, toppling glasses, and runs around the stage. He dives on to his knees in front of the fridge. All the time still talking.*

**TOMMY:** What a goal from the young Murphy, on his debut for this club. Nothing more could have been asked for. He came here to prove himself and he did just that – what a welcome to Old Traff...

*At this moment he notices Sandra, his mother, has entered stage left. She is wearing jeans and an oversized polo shirt. She is also wearing a cleaning apron and carrying a plastic container full of cleaning products and rubber gloves. She is balancing three brooms of differing sizes under her arms and staring in horror at the mess in the kitchen.*

**SANDRA:** (Interrupting) Thomas Murphy! Look at the mess you've made. I spend my whole day cleaning other people's houses, and then I have to come home and clean my own. Look at this place.

*Tommy has been mouthing along with his mother, letting the audience know he has heard her speech more than once. She catches him at the end, and the two stare at each other until Tommy drops his face to the floor.*



**SANDRA:** And if you know what I'm saying so well Mr Know-it-all, then why wait for me to say it?!

**TOMMY:** *(Picking his shirt off the table and the ball off the floor, whining.)* It's not only me mum. Kerry and Lisa also live here you know. *(He motions to the mess in the kitchen, but accidentally throws the ball through the kitchen window.)*

**SANDRA:** ARGH! Tommy!

*Lights down.*

*Lights come up on the same kitchen only this time it is much tidier. The window at the back has been taped up. There is a pot of tea and three cups on the table in the centre. Sandra is furiously cleaning invisible spots off the work tops and Tommy is pacing across the stage. He is wearing a pair of trousers that are too short for him and an ironed shirt. Sandra comes over, licks the back of her hand and starts to flatten his hair.*

**TOMMY:** *(Moving his head out of the way.)* Muuum! Get off!

**SANDRA:** Keep still Tommy – you look a mess.

**TOMMY:** Mum! He wants to meet us to talk about my football career, not my hair. *(Pause)* My FOOTBALL career! *(He looks at the audience in a trance-like state, smiling longingly.)*

*The doorbell rings and Tommy snaps out of his trance, drops his cup and spills tea all over the floor.*

**SANDRA:** *(Squealing and grabbing a tea towel)* Go and let him in, I'll clean all this up.

*She begins wiping the floor and kicks the broken cup under the table as Tommy enters with a man in a suit. She straightens up and holds out her hand.*

**MR EMMET:** I'm Mr. Emmet, you must be Mrs. Murphy – lovely to meet you.

**SANDRA:** Hello. Please take a seat. *(She gestures at the chairs behind the table.)* Would you like a cup of tea?

**MR EMMET:** Tea would be lovely.

*Mr. Emmet sits down and pulls a brief case onto the table. He pulls out some paperwork as Sandra pours the tea and Tommy fidgets nervously.*

**MR EMMET:** I must say, I think your son is an innovative thinker, and that's what made me travel all the way up here.

**SANDRA:** *(Confused)* Innovative thinker?

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**MR EMMET:** Yes, it's not every young man that personally emails every youth division in the country asking for a trial. Normally it doesn't work of course, but sending the YouTube videos with it... Well I could see talent then. *(He turns to the window that has been taped up and begins laughing.)* All fixed then, eh?!

**SANDRA:** *(Smiling, partly with confusion and partly to be polite.)* Videos?

**TOMMY:** *(Quickly and nervously interrupting.)* Mr... Emmet. I've been playing football since I could walk and I'm... so pleased...

**SANDRA:** *(Interrupting)* Sorry, I don't understand. Did Tommy tell you about the window, Mr. Emmet?

**MR EMMET:** Tell me?! He didn't have to. It's on his YouTube channel, along with everything else! I think you're a great sport – making regular appearances. That was all part of the humour! We all remember being told off by our mothers, but watching you, stood there in your apron – hilarious. That's what made me realise. Tommy is an innovative thinker and, combined with his talent, we think he deserves a go at the youth clubs, and there are a few interested. It's not everyday you get to sign a viral sensation...

*Sandra has not been listening, instead she has been staring intently at Tommy in horror and shock. Mr. Emmet realises that something is amiss and stares between the two. He looks highly uncomfortable. Tommy has his head down and is staring silently at his lap.*

**SANDRA:** *(Without breaking her stare)* Oh yes. He is an... innovative boy alright, and after you leave Mr. Emmet, Tommy and I will be talking about just how innovative he is!

*Lights down.*



# Additional Resources – Reading Comprehension

## The Signing

Friday

Read the text on the following pages then answer the questions below.

1. What type of the text is this?

2. Find two features of the text that indicate this.

3. Why did Tommy put his phone on top of the fridge in the first scene?

4. How many characters are mentioned in this script? List them from start to finish.

5. What do you notice about the text that is in italics and what is its purpose in the text?

6. Compare reading this with reading a story. Is a script harder or easier to read? Does it paint a more or less vivid picture of the scene in your head?

7. 'How many times have I told you?' is an example of what language device?

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8. Do you think Tommy deserved to be signed to a youth club?

9. Who could Kerry and Lisa be?

10. How do we know when a scene has finished?

11. Imagine the conversation that happened between Tommy and Sandra after Mr. Emmet has left. Write it here in script format.