

# **The Bond**

**Rachel Bramble**

Sam- A Vicar- mid to late 30's [age discretion]

Chris- A Scientist-mid to late 30's [age discretion]

*Either part can be played by female or male actors*

*A park bench*

*Enter Sam carrying a bag. S/he sits down and waits, after a minute s/he gets out and looks at his/her mobile phone and starts moving around on the bench as if waiting for something or someone. Enter Chris, Sam gets up as s/he approaches and they hug, one short and then another long hug. They both sit down with a gap between them.*

**Chris-**Sorry I'm late I had trouble parking, Wow at last...

**Sam-** Yes, fantastic.... oh just

**Chris-** Yes yes... I can't believe.... it's so long

**Sam-** .... like an eternity and yet also like yesterday..... You're looking well, just the same.

**Chris-**You too..... I'm so pleased that you did it, *[laughing]* look at your dog collar, is it really part of a washing up liquid bottle?

***They both laugh***

**Sam-** It might as well be. It took me a while getting used to it. It's your fault anyhow because you told me to and you did... you became the scientist?

**Chris-** Yes.... I can't imagine either of us doing anything that we didn't want to. Oh it's just so so good to see you.

*They hug each other and remain attached*

**Sam-** And we were right.... but what about your parents how did they cope with your atheism?

*They separate*

**Chris-** It was hard at first they were pretty upset

**Sam-** Mine too.... well, not really upset... more angry.... I suppose... they thought I was an idiot.

**Chris-** I can see their point going from atheism to a believer can be hard to grasp.

**Sam-** But you understand that I was never an atheist, I always believed that there was a God. They just wanted me to be like them.

**Chris-** Oh yes.... it was the same for both of us, We were just.

**Sam-** born into the wrong family, that's all.

**Chris-** Yep

**Sam-** And are you happy?

**Chris-** Yes very....and you?

**Sam-**I suppose so, cos I can be just me, but it took so long, too long...

**Chris-** but exchanging letters helped didn't they...what happened to them....why did they stop?

**Sam-** I felt like I was preaching.

**Chris-** But that's what you wanted to do.

**Sam-** But that's what you were getting away from!

**Chris-** No, it wasn't that, the truth was Sam that they were both preaching. They both believed that their way was right, but we felt that it was wrong for us, that's all

**Sam-** So how old were you when you finally told them about the atheism?

**Chris-** I suppose about twenty, it was during my first year at Uni when I decided to change from Biology to Physics. They were so proud of me getting there and understood my interest in the sciences but they were concerned when I wanted to change and a little confused. I told them that they needn't worry. I'd find the money for the extra year. I had always worked part time and was used to living on very little. They thought it was something to do with the break up.

**Sam-** [*sounding concerned*] Oh you didn't tell me about that!

**Chris-** Oh no sorry... well I thought I'd found the love of my life, but it wasn't to be.... It just coincided with my desire to do physics and finally acknowledge my atheism.

**Sam-** You'd always wanted to do it anyway and you'd never believed.

**Chris-** You remember!

**Sam-** Of course, I remember lots of things

**Chris-** really so do I .... I remember that first day when you knew that you just felt just the same as me, that you were a misfit. You sat next to me in assembly looking smart in your new blazer and we said the 'Lord's prayer' together. I said it with little meaning, but you sung it out as if you'd never heard it before.

**Sam-** Yes, I remember.... it felt good.

**Chris-** And Tommy Stevens laughed at you. I wanted to punch him.

**Sam-** I remember that too. You often felt like that, you told me.

**Chris-** Did I?

**Sam-** Yes.... but I knew it was just frustration, I felt like it too sometimes.

**Chris-** Really?..... you never told me!

**Sam-** I didn't tell you everything

**Chris-** Why

**Sam-** because my family hated violence and believed in human rights... but when I told them about what I wanted to study they were shocked and a little angry. It frightened me. I'd never seen them like that. I suppose they wondered how this quiet compliant teenager had turned into someone who was so different and determined. I remember them blaming you and your family. They knew that your parents were strong believers. I remember them saying practically at the same moment

“Oh come on Sam, you must be joking, you can't believe all that twaddle” I told them that I did, that I had experienced things that science just couldn't prove and that I knew that theology was what I was meant to study and that I wanted to be a vicar.

They told me that I was free to choose what I did but that they couldn't support me financially for the length of time it would take.

**Chris-** I wish I had been there when you told them..... maybe I could have helped them understand.

**Sam-** Maybe.... but that's long ago and we had gone our own ways before then.

**Chris-** But we still had our letters

**Sam-** Yes but they were not so meaningful, they had lost their..

**Chris-** Intensity...

**Sam-** I suppose

**Chris-** But sitting here with you on our favourite bench brings it all flooding back

**Sam-** you mean the intensity

**Chris-** I mean all of it, all the feelings, all the memories and the regrets.

**Sam-** What regrets?

**Chris-** Oh you know!

**Sam-** No, but I do remember that we'd been friends for about a year when I told you how I felt. I was scared... I thought you would laugh at me. My parents believed that everything could be proven scientifically but I knew they were wrong but it was after having tea with your parents one day that I felt more at ease with myself. I remember them saying "God bless" and waving as I left. My parents used to squirm if they heard such words..... but to me it brought a sense of calm and warmth..... After that I made all sorts of excuses to come to your house.

**Chris-** I didn't mind, but wasn't sure why my house when there was more privacy to hang out at yours.

**Sam-** Of course it wasn't all plain sailing!

**Chris-** What do you mean?

**Sam-** Well I had my doubts at times.

**Chris**-really!.

**Sam**- Oh yes.... sometimes I thought that somehow I had been bewitched and that in fact that my parents were right.

**Chris**- so at times you wondered whether there was a God!

**Sam**- yes .... maybe, but why should I have felt like that?

**Chris**- because your parents really mattered to you and..

**Sam**- ....and the feeling of losing them, is that what you are getting at?

**Chris**-Perhaps.

**Sam**- Yes Maybe, oh I don't know...but it was more other people rather than them. Society makes you choose to be in a certain group and adopt that groups thoughts and beliefs...well at least that's what it feels like to me and if you aren't true to those beliefs then you become a misfit.

**Chris**- I know what you mean, it's like you and me with our different beliefs we can be friends but how can we be friends with our friends..... Is that the real reason why you didn't keep in touch that you were ashamed of who I had become?

**Sam**- Maybe it was who I had become that was the real reason!

**Chris**- What do you mean?

**Sam**- I went through my ordination and my parents weren't there and you weren't there and the people who were, just assumed, they hadn't thought about it all the same as we had.

**Chris**- [*assertively*] But, Sam, you know that I would have been there, was it that you were scared that I would have said the wrong thing?

**Sam-** Maybe and because of that I felt guilty...I shouldn't have felt like that!

**Chris-** But you can't help how you feel.

**Sam-** Oh Chris you are the scientist, you are the one who sees logic and reason...

**Chris-** But I also see passion too, I saw your passion for God and I was jealous.

**Sam-** Oh

**Chris-** I wanted to feel like that, but in so many ways I just couldn't.

**Sam-** Why?

**Chris-** Because I had lost God, religion, all of it...I had rejected all of it and because of my pride I couldn't compromise. I mixed with people who laughed at religion and I was embarrassed by who I had been and that's why I needed your letters to keep me sane, to keep me balanced, to let me be the small child who didn't question any of it, the small child who loved the smell of the church and the colours of the robes.

**Sam-** But I thought you'd never believed!

**Chris-** I didn't, but it was as you said warm and comforting, familiar, safe and sometimes I wished that I had kept my mouth shut and never told you and them how I felt. There were times that I hated you for destroying that world.

**Sam-** But I didn't destroy it

**Chris-** Yes I know.

**Sam-** You really hated me?

**Chris-** Yes, well I think so, oh of course not.....



**Sam-** Oh Chris, it was so different for me.

**Chris-** How..... why..... what do you mean?

**Sam-** Oh Chris, I loved you, I adored you.... you just brought a blazing light into my life. You talked with so much passion about things.

**Chris-** Surely not!

**Sam-** Oh yes, you told me that I should follow my own beliefs, you asked your Dad for his books, don't you remember?

**Chris-** Oh yes, yes.

**Sam-** And he told me what to read next and he introduced me to your Vicar and it was then that I knew that's what I wanted. But it was you who encouraged me along the way and showed me how I could read the books scientifically

**Chris-** Did I?

**Sam-** Oh yes.. those were the best days...the days before Uni when we could just be who we wanted to be.

**Chris-** Yes I suppose they were, after that we had to choose but you didn't help me.

**Sam-** How could I, I always disliked the sciences, I just found them so boring and we kept changing teachers. I know that no one wanted to do RE but the last teacher we had was hilarious. I used to love his lessons when he really didn't know what he was doing and so we could pick any bits out of the bible that we liked and you turned it into drama. I just loved it...all of it.

**Chris-** But I was making fun of it all.

**Sam-** I didn't care, you did it with such gusto

**Chris-** The passion that you talked about!

**Sam-** Yes.

**Chris-** But why didn't you ever tell me...did you really love me...or?

**Sam-** Oh..yes...I really loved you, but ..... yours was a different path...

[pause]

**Chris-** So tell me about the break up.... I never knew...you never told me

**Sam-** About Robin?

**Chris-** So that was his name.

**Sam-** Yes.

**Chris-** How long did it last?

**Sam-** 3 years.

**Chris-** 3 years..... and you never told me!

**Sam-** We didn't share everything you know.

**Chris-** But something as important as that!

**Sam-** You didn't contact me when your Dad died, I was really upset when I found out, I had become very close to him. He came to my ordination you know!

**Chris-** Oh he never told me!

**Sam-** Yes, your Mum came too and when I told them that I hadn't invited you they understood. They told me that they were very proud of you and read all your articles. They said that they didn't really understand them but they were proud anyhow.

**Chris-** They never told me.

**Sam-** Yes when your Dad died and your Mum followed soon after I was mortified. It felt like losing my own parents.

**Chris-** Do you see much of them?

**Sam-** Who.... Mum and Dad?

**Chris-** Yes.

**Sam-** Not really, they moved to Cornwall, near St Ives and it's such a long way and they are just in their own worlds of books and art and I don't fit in, but my brother lives nearby and so I know they are OK.

**Chris-** Don't you miss them?

**Sam-** Well I know I should and feel guilty that I don't. It seems so ungodly to feel this way, but I became closer to your parents...they seemed to understand me better I suppose.

**Chris-** We should go together.

**Sam-** To see them?

**Chris-** Yes, because I think you'll regret it if you don't.

**Sam-** You mean us meeting isn't a one off then?

**Chris-** I hope not, when I found that you were living just a few streets away and that we had some of the same friends I was overwhelmed.

**Sam-** So you believe in fate and what's meant to be then?

**Chris-** I suppose I must. My Mum was a great believer and I think that even if you know you are different if you have good parents much of your upbringing is always there.

**Sam-** I suppose that's true, at times logic and science has made me realise that some of my fellow believers really live in the dark ages.

**Chris-** And if you talk to them they will understand.

**Sam-** I doubt it.

**Chris-** Have a little faith.

*Sam laughs*

**Chris-** Oh I see what you mean, but then the world is full of variety and colour.

**Sam-** That's what Robin said.

**Chris-** So why didn't it work then?

**Sam-** I dunno, perhaps I just couldn't see that colour, or we just weren't right for each other. He wanted children.

**Chris-** And you didn't?

**Sam-** I was scared that they would turn out like me, I suppose.

**Chris-** That's crazy, you are a great person.

**Sam-** I think too much.

**Chris** – And that's a fault?

**Sam-** Yes.

**Chris-** Why?

**Sam-** Well what has it done for either of us?

**Chris-** But we have good jobs and good lives.

**Sam-** Are they really that good?

**Chris-** Compared to many they are fantastic.

**Sam-** Oh I know I get reminded of it every day both from the news and my parishioners, but I still wonder. Do you know I have kept this bottled up for years, I never found anyone like you who I could talk to about everything. Did you?

**Chris-** No, I suppose not.

**Sam-** It's that bond, it's hard to explain, it's just something that we had.

**Chris-** It's still there.

**Sam-** You feel it too?

**Chris-** Yes, of course.

**Sam-** But there's no of course about it.

**Chris-** Sometimes I think that there is.

**Sam-** I don't agree, I don't think that you can assume anything in life

**Chris-** But assuming and knowing is different. I felt it the moment I saw you and even greater when I touched you.

**Sam- [laughing]** What, you the scientist talking in such a way!

**Chris-**But Sam scientists have to start with a feeling about something that they have observed. They have to think that there's something just not right or that could be better and there are always those freak discoveries that lead to something much greater. Think of Newton with the apple falling on his head and Worcester sauce

**Sam-[laughs]-** An interesting comparison

*[pause]*

**Chris-**I'll have to go soon

**Sam- [sounding concerned]** Oh, do you, oh that's a shame!

**Chris- [shyly]** I suppose you could come too if you like, I'm meeting another old friend.

**Sam-** Is it someone I know.

**Chris-** Well actually yes.

**Sam-** Who is it?

**Chris-** Well there's two of them.

**Sam-[getting edgy]** Chris you are being very cagey.

**Chris-[cagey]-** Well, I'm not sure how to tell you this... but it's your Mum and Dad.

**Sam-[shocked]-** What!

*Sam stands up and goes to leave, Chris stands grabs his/her arm*

**Chris-[pleading]** I'm sorry.

**Sam-** [*getting angry speaking right in Chris's face*] So! this was all a fix..... all contrived, how long have you had this planned with them?

**Chris-** [*quietly*] Not long.

**Sam-** [*loudly*]-How long?

**Chris-** [*nervously*] Oh only a couple of weeks or so.

**Sam-** [*confused*]-Why, why now, why suddenly appear again in my life?

**Chris-** [*assertively*] Because I missed you..... I woke up one day and just wondered. My life was good but there was just something missing and I found an old Christmas card from your parents giving me their new address and I just decided to write and they replied and I just missed you more. Look let's sit and sort it out

*They both sit down close to each other*

**Sam-** [*quieter*] What did they tell you about me?

**Chris-** Not a lot.... just that they hardly ever saw you, [*getting upset*] you're mad with me aren't you?

**Sam-** Yes, no..... but you had no right!

**Chris-** [*assertively*] No right, what to interfere in your life, [*getting louder*] oh yes I did, you were crazy, they gave you so much.

**Sam-** But they never believed in what I did, in me, just because I didn't think like them.

**Chris-** You didn't give them a chance.

**Sam-** They just couldn't do it, they were so entrenched.

**Chris-** No you're wrong.

**Sam-** [*getting upset*] How can you say that. I told you how they reacted when I said that I wanted to be a Vicar.

*Chris offers a hug which is accepted by Sam*

**Chris-** [*quietly*] But you never asked them again.

**Sam-** [*upset*]-How could I, they made me feel that all my beliefs were worthless.

**Chris-**[*quietly*] But that was the heat of the moment, you and I have had many times over the years where we argued and then sorted out our differences. Look at now, you could have walked away but you didn't. Yes I'll admit that I had hoped that you would come with me and meet them. But I couldn't do more than hope and I never knew whether you would even be here in the first place, but you are..... and it's just great.

**Sam-** Yes it's the best thing in the world. Fancy a Jam sandwich?

**Chris-**[*laughs*]- You haven't!

**Sam-**[*laughs*]-Oh yes I have *Goes in his/her bag takes out sandwiches and gives Chris one they bite into the sandwiches.*

[*pause*] Oh they are so good

**Chris-** I thought you were making fun of me when I ate them.

**Sam-** Oh no, white bread and Jam with marg I adored them. I was fed up with organic this and that and the doctrine of healthy living.

**Chris-** And now?



**Sam-** Oh I suppose that I like both...the thing is I now like both lives too. I love my faith, but I also like the straight talking no nonsense behind science.

**Chris-[sadly]-**We were both fools to let our beliefs and what other people might think to keep us apart.

**Sam-** Yes, our bond is so much greater than all of it.

**Chris- [quietly]-**And that's why I wanted you not to lose that with them. You have the chance that I didn't with my parents. Maybe they were right about the organic food!

**Sam-**Maybe, but it was never the food, it was the arrogance about it, the claiming of its superiority.... brown bread being greater than white.

*[ pause ]*

Do you remember the first time that we went to Macdonald's together?

**Chris-**Oh yes, I remember that you didn't know what anything was.

**Sam-** I was so embarrassed. I think I was about fifteen and I was glad it was just you and me, other kids would have made such fun of me, but you didn't. I remember trying to memorise the menu so that I knew for another time.

**Chris-** And I just loved your Mum's home- made soup and bread. My parents were too busy with other things.

**Sam-** I don't remember that.

**Chris-** Well we didn't go to your place very often. But guess what, I'm mostly a vegetarian now and make my own soup.

*[They laugh]*

**Sam-** So do you wish that you were born to my parents?

**Chris-** I might have wished that then, but not now.

**Sam-** Why?

**Chris-** I think because I probably would never have been friends with you at school. We would have mixed with other people and although we might still have been the Vicar and the Scientist we might not have felt so passionate about it.

**Sam-** But then maybe we would have found that special person!

**Chris-** Who knows, but I know that our bond is very deep, it's not fitting in that probably created it and that Sam you are that special person and I don't want to lose you again.

So will you come and meet your parents?

**Sam-***[nervously]*- You're forcing me.

**Chris-** No, I'm encouraging you, the way we did when we were younger. So will you come?

**Sam-** I'm not sure.

*They freeze on the bench*

*Lights down*

*The End*

