

The Other Room

a short play

by

Bruce Daniel

SAMPLE ONLY

The Other Room

Cast

ANNE	A woman
ROB	A man
CAROL	A woman
MICK	A man
PERSONS 1 and 2	People

(PERSON 1, PERSON 2, ANNE and ROB are seated in a row. The ambience is of a doctor's waiting room. There is a ticket dispenser and a number display on the wall.)

(CAROL enters from "the street" and takes a ticket. There are no spare seats so she stands to one side. General awkward waiting room silence. The display chimes and ticks over to no. 34. People check their tickets. PERSON 1 stands, casts a nervous glance at the others, and exits to "the room".)

PERSON 1

(Blood-curdling scream from offstage.)

Aaarghhh!

(CAROL is taken by surprise. The OTHERS show concern but less surprise.)

CAROL

My goodness. I wonder...

(The others look at her and she falls silent. Long, uncomfortable pause. She sits. MICK enters, quite relaxed. As he takes a ticket, the display chimes and ticks over to no. 35. PERSON 2 slowly checks his ticket, waits a moment, stands and exits slowly to the room.)

PERSON 2

(Blood-curdling scream from offstage.)

Aaarghhh!

(Pause.)

MICK

Looks like she got her money's worth!

(Pause.)

ANNE

(Quietly.)

It happens with all of them.

CAROL

Sorry?

ANNE

All of them. Everyone that's gone in... everyone's screamed just like that.

MICK

But, surely...

ANNE

And you know what else?

(Pause.)

No one ever comes out. Not one person has come back out of that door the whole time I've been here!

MICK

There are probably lots of rooms in there.

CAROL

There usually are... in this sort of place... aren't there?

MICK

Hey, just because one person screams...

CAROL

Two.

ROB

Four.

(The display chimes and ticks over to no. 36. ANNE tenses visibly.)

ANNE

Seven.

(She whimpers. She stands, approaches the door to the room and stops.)

My name is Anne McKittrick. I'm thirty-four. I have no loved ones. If I don't return please report my disappearance to the authorities.

(She exits to the room.)

Aaarghhh!

(Pause.)

CAROL

Oh my God! What's happening in there?

MICK

Look... it can't be anything bad... I mean, it's just a doctor's surgery... just a GP... you know, people get needles...

ROB

Doctor's surgery?

(Pause.)

What do you mean, a doctor's surgery? I'm here for a dental checkup.

CAROL

I just want to renew my registration!

ROB

Have you noticed something strange? There's no receptionist. There should be a receptionist. It just doesn't make sense that there's no receptionist.

(Pause.)

No authority whatsoever. A power vacuum. You might say... anarchy.

CAROL

What's going on in there? Where do they all go? Why do they scream? Why don't they ever return?

ROB

What's your name, dear?

CAROL

Carol.

ROB

Hi Carol. I'm Rob. Carol, all those questions I've been asking myself, too. I've been sitting here, observing, and analysing the whole time. And I've come up with a theory. Would you like to hear it?

(Pause.)

They're passing into a new state of being. On the other side of that door. They won't be coming back.

(CAROL whimpers.)

Be strong, Carol. Listen to what I have to say and take courage.

MICK

(Aside, rolling his eyes.)

Bloody hell...

ROB

But just because we'll never see them again, it doesn't mean they're gone. Their souls haven't died. They live on. They live on in a new afterlife which I have just discovered!

MICK

Hey, maybe they slipped into a parallel universe!

ROB

No they couldn't have. I've already considered that. I think you were being facetious, but this is no joking matter, my friend. They couldn't have gone to a parallel universe simply because there's no such thing.

CAROL

I don't want to die!

ROB

Carol! Carol, I need you to stay calm. You're very important to me. Do you know why? I need you because you're going to help me to build upon the foundation stone of the new religion that has been born here today! As the founder of... The Universal Association of Spirituality and Peace... I proclaim...

MICK

What the hell are you on about, mate? The Spiritual Association of... what? You can't do that! A few people walked into a room and screamed, that's all. Look, there has to be a simple, rational explanation. Like, maybe they all stepped on a tack sticking up through the carpet or something.

ROB

Fantasy. You're head's in the clouds, sir! The chances of all those people stepping on the same tack are almost non-existent!

CAROL

Maybe it was a really large tack.

(Pause.)

Or lots of little tacks?

ROB

Oh, come on, Carol! Don't listen to him! He's trying to win you over! I need you to be with me! The destiny of my whole life has been leading to this day. I need a disciple.

MICK

A disciple? So, you claim to be the head priest of a religion just because you thought it up?

ROB

No! No, sir! No! I didn't appoint myself! I have been granted divine authority!

MICK