

Time Please

by

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It's Not Us

The Foresters Arms

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CHARACTER NAME

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

AGE

GENDER

INT - THE HOPE AND ANCHOR PUB - NEAR CLOSING TIME.

As the audience enters music is playing on the jukebox (play-list supplied with notes). Steve, middle aged and heading towards a paunch enters through audience. He takes a small Ipad and slides through a couple of choices before selecting. SFX 'Stuck in the Middle with You' by Stealers Wheel which comes on over the speakers.

He continues to the bar (up stage centre) and begins to sort and clean glasses. He stops for a while and goes to the bar and takes out a letter in a brown envelope hidden between the folds of a news paper. He looks at it, and reads the letter, obviously not for the first time. He shakes his head. Cath, his wife (middle aged, exhausted) enters the bar through the audience and Steve quickly puts the letter into his back pocket. Cath has been collecting glasses as she goes. She joins Steve at the bar and they hug whilst doing the crossword together. The track comes to an end.

STEVE

Drink up please ladies and gents, time please, let's be having you.

Cath goes off to collect more glasses and pub detritus.

STEVE (TO CATH)

You okay, love?

CATH

Knackered. I think my 'Cath the lovely landlady' persona is on it's last legs. Ring that bloody bell will you.

Steve looks at the pub clock, despite being a little premature he goes to the heavy brass bell behind the bar and rings it.

STEVE

Time please, time to go home now Ladies and Gents, home to your loved ones, if not your wives. Come on now, night George, Sydney take care now see you tomorrow.

Steve has joined Cath in collecting glasses and the people he refers to are imagined as if they are going out of the main entrance to the bar Stg Right.

Steve closes the main door, bolts it and locks it. Steve turns off the main lights leaving just the bar area, a single table and the two doors lit, the audience are now in darkness.

STEVE

I'll check the toilets.

Steve leaves the room through a door (up stage right) Cath puts the last of the glasses on the bar. She picks up a set of keys and walks towards the cellar door as Steve re-enters.

STEVE

All clear on the western front, everywhere else?

Cath isn't really listening she reaches the cellar door (up stage left)

STEVE

Leave that, love.

Cath pauses keys in hand at the cellar door.

STEVE

I said leave it. Go on you sit down.

Cath sighs gives up walks back and slumps at a table centre stage. Steve goes behind the bar.

STEVE

Night cap?

CATH

Barman's ruin.

STEVE

Yeah, I know, do you want one or not?

Steve is already filling two glasses with brandy.

CATH

Never try your own supply.

STEVE

Do you want one then?

CATH

Course I bloody do - double please.

Steve comes back round the bar to Cath who is sat at the table looking at her hands. He places the drinks before her and then walks behind Cath, to give her a shoulder massage.

CATH

God, look at my hands, I'll never be hand model now.

STEVE

Did you want to be a hand model?

CATH

Well, why not, that or international woman of mystery, both options are seeming less likely these days.

STEVE

You should wear gloves.

CATH

I do, makes no difference, instead of smelling of beer, piss and cleaning fluid, I just smell a bit rubbery - and not in a good way.

STEVE

Good way?

CATH

Yeah, in a *50 Shades of Grey* Gimp suit way.

Whilst still behind Cath, Steve takes out the letter. She notices that he has stopped massaging and rolls her shoulders. He places the letter on the table in front of her. She instantly tenses.

CATH

What's this?

Steve joins Cath at the table.

STEVE

It's a letter from the brewery.

Cath groans.

CATH

Oh for God's sake, Steve, really? Now? I'm not looking at that until tomorrow. I'm too tired.

STEVE

OK. But what I think -

CATH

No

STEVE

OK, but I've got-

Again the hand goes up.

CATH

NO! Let's just bask in the beauty of beer-scented evening before facing the harsh realities that the morning brings.

Steve opens a pack of cigarettes, he gets out a cigarette and puts it to his lips. Cath looks disgusted.

CATH

Why don't you get one of those E-things, you know what the doctor said, it lowers your sperm count, you'll be in the minus figures if you're not careful.

STEVE

He also said no stress, may as well have said no dating Halle Berry.

Steve puts the cigarette back in the pack.

CATH

Yeah, cos she'd love you. Bald, old geezer who stinks of old beer and fags are what really does it for her. Poor bloody Halle.

They sit holding their drinks lost in tiredness and inner thoughts.

CATH

We should go away this summer. And I don't mean your mum's caravan. I mean away away.

STEVE

Right...

CATH

And what does that mean?

STEVE

It means, yeah, let's go away. Let's magic up some make-believe money from cloud cuckoo land and fly on a unicorn to the world that costs nothing.

CATH

Other landlords get away, why can't you?

STEVE

You know why, we're skint. I said you should go away with one of your mates.

CATH

I don't want to go away with one of my mates, Steve, I want to go away with you. I'm not quite sure what the point of being married to you is. I seem to get all the work and none of the perks.

STEVE

Look I just can't at the moment, there's too many overheads and I want to renovate the place you know make it look, nice, attract some punters...

CATH

Sorry who are these 'punters'? Have you looked around here lately Steve, we're not even optimistically described as 'up and coming'.

STEVE

Yeah but if we make it a destination pub...

CATH

Oh shut up Steve.

STEVE

What?

CATH

I said shut up. We are never going to be a destination pub Steve. Unless your destination is the shit-hole at the arse-end of nowhere. In which case we're it.

I just want a holiday, nowhere mad I'm not talking Australia or New-fucking-York, just somewhere that isn't here and isn't your Mum's caravan and that includes, booze, food and sunshine.

Beat

STEVE

And sex?

CATH

I'm getting there, Steve. It's just...

Cath shakes her head. Steve avoids the moment by going to the bar and getting his paper. They sit for a moment in silence.

CATH

I reckon I can get some more hours off Darren.

STEVE

God, do you want more?

CATH

No, of course I don't *want* more. But, obviously, until your destination Shangri-la becomes a fiscal reality.

STEVE

Yeah, but honestly love six quid an hour... you work more and more and you still end up with fuck all.

CATH

Yes, thank you Steven, I'm aware of that fact. But, We Need The Money. I feel so fucking trapped, Steve. We're in debt up to our ears, we're tied to this money pit, I work every hour god sends and I still can't even afford an all in to Benidorm. Where the hell did we go wrong?

STEVE

We didn't go wrong did we. The cards were - you know. Five years of trying Cath, at three grand a pop. It's no wonder we ended up broke.

CATH

Yes.



STEVE

Well it's true.

CATH (VEHEMENTLY)

Yes, I know. What a waste of money.

STEVE

I didn't say that, I've never said that Cath.

Steve reaches across and touches Cath's hand.

CATH

I know.

STEVE

And I want kids as much as you.

CATH

Do, do you really?

STEVE

Of course I do and what does that mean?

CATH

I don't know, I don't know Steve, it's just that well, every time, I seemed to lose a part of myself, my heart broke a it more and you, well you just stayed the same, smiling away at people behind that bloody bar.

STEVE

Oh come on Cath that's not fair, it's my job, how do you expect me to be?

CATH

I don't know! I wanted you to be upset, to be angry, to rage, to shout, something, to feel something.

STEVE

I did feel Cath, I looked at you and the pain you were going through and I felt useless. And here I am smoothing away everyone else's problems, when I couldn't even help my own wife. If I could have done anything to make a difference you know I would have.

CATH

I know, I know, I'm sorry...

STEVE

(beat) Anyway we've still got a lot more than some people.

Cath seems less convinced that Steve.

STEVE

Come on, Cath, we've got each other and this place.

CATH

We could still look at adopting.

STEVE

Cath, we've been through this. What have we got to offer a child at the moment? We need to get back on our feet first. Come on love, it will get better, Cath, promise. Come here...

Steve leans across and embrace tightly. Suddenly the cellar door bursts open and out jumps Keith, he has a ski mask over his face, is wearing a camo jacket and trousers and is waving a gun around. He strides across the room and leaps onto a chair.

KEITH

Nobody move, stay right where you are! NOBODY MOVE!!

Steve and Cath tense mid-hug. They look sideways at Keith. Keith realises the bar is empty. He looks at his watch.

KEITH

Where the fuck is everybody?! This is a bit awkward. Um, unfreeze, I guess.

Cath and Steve pull apart Cath and Steve look at Keith. They have realised who he is.

KEITH

This is a hostage situation if you do as your told nobody will get hurt.

STEVE

Keith, is that you? You fucking idiot, What the fuck are you doing I nearly wet myself.

CATH

For fuck's sake, you wanker, what the hell do you think you're playing at? Did Billy put you up to this? (SHOUTS) Very funny, guys, ha ha!

Cath goes to behind the bar, Steve moves towards Keith.

KEITH

Don't come any closer.

STEVE

Keith, it's been a long day and I was hoping to get upstairs and make beautiful love to my wife, so this is a trifle inconvenient.

Steve steps towards Keith.

STEVE

Come on Keith, bugger off home.

KEITH

Just, stay back!!

STEVE

Look Keith we've got an early start -

Keith drops his coat and reveals a bomb vest he also holds up his hand with the trigger.

STEVE

What the..!

KEITH

I said, don't come any closer, if I press this, then it all goes up, the whole lot, okay, so just back off.

STEVE

Bloody hell Keith, what the fuck is that?

KEITH

It's a bomb vest, what does it look like?

STEVE

Well, a bomb vest, I'll grant you that, but...

Cath laughs.

CATH

Oh that's hilarious. Did Billy make that? Oh my God, this isn't going on Facebook?!...

KEITH

Facebook?! Fucking facebook? This isn't a kitten making a funny noise, Cath, this is for real. I'm prepared to blow myself up if my demands are not fully met.

CATH

Really, you'd make a rubbish Jihadi, they're all over Youtube these days.

She laughs again, Steve, on the other hand is starting to look concerned.

STEVE

Is that really explosive then?

KEITH

Yes.

STEVE

Fuck!

Steve backs away. Cath continues to clear glasses from the bar, she doesn't seem to be taking the situation very seriously.

KEITH

Yeah FUCK!

CATH

Keith?

KEITH

What?

CATH

Why are you wearing a ski mask?

KEITH

Anonymity.

Cath laughs.