

Dark Place

by

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Cast of Characters

JEFFREY:

20's

DARREN:

20's

Place
Asylum

Time
Day

Setting: Asylum visiting room. The room is large and open-spaced. Cheaply tiled plastic stick on tiled floors. Plastic round edged tables with oval steel chairs. There are no decorations but an off white paint covering the walls.

At Rise: The play opens up to Jeffrey and Seamus talking at a table. A guard dressed in white is not far off in the distance.

Seamus: I had no idea...

Jeffrey: What?

Seamus: Ummm, the—I didn't know you would be in a straitjacket.

Jeffrey: Surprise! (*laughing*)

Seamus: How long have---

Jeffrey: About a week. Fuckers expect good behavior so they wrap you up nice and tight as part of their plan to reform your humanity. Sucks when you have an itch, which is usually at night.

Seamus: Why at night?

Jeffrey: Dust mites, trying to sleep, the whole nine.

Seamus: I didn't think they would have let me see you. I've been coming for weeks trying to get in.

Jeffrey: Well, thank you for your loyalty.

Seamus: How have you---that's stupid. I don't know what to say, Jeff. Ummm, when will they take you out of that thing?

Jeffrey: When they fucking take me out of it.

Seamus: Right.

(*beat*)

Jeffrey: How's the show?

Seamus: The show? Oh, it's good, it's----

Jeffrey: Who did they get to replace me?

Seamus: Some shit actor but he seems to be getting good reviews so...

Jeffrey: Of course. Is the play a success?

Seamus: It seems to be doing well. To be honest, I think it should be attributed to you.

Jeffrey: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.

Seamus: I think all the press that was covered based on what happened, I think it gave us enough attention to keep filling seats. The play has already been extended.

Jeffrey: You're joking?

Seamus: No.

Jeffrey: How's Walton?

Seamus: He bounced back pretty quickly. Surprised he continued on. Very surprised, actually.

Jeffrey: Piece of shit. He should have died.

Seamus squirms uncomfortably in his chair.

That fucker. So now he's a success because of me. Isn't that great?

Seamus: It's complicated.

Jeffrey: Complicated? Insanity is complicated.

Seamus: I don't want to---

Jeffrey: Or complex, should I say. Life is complicated...life is...

Seamus: We all want you to get better Jeff---

Jeffrey: Does it matter to you that I am going mad? Not sure I can go away and reflect on it. Not sure I can get through my own madness. If I can go to the top of a mountain, like a Buddhist Monk, perhaps I may have a chance. Life, my DNA, it has fit perfectly together, hasn't it? What is it for? For my art? Is it fair for a man to sacrifice his sanity for his craft? Is that what God wants? If that is so, then why must I be sacrificed? Why does great beauty come from great pain?

We are all mad, crazy, nuts, psycho. It's true. Walk down the street and look into the eyes of the man or woman you walk past. It's hidden. It's hidden. When you are someone like me, you connect with that dark place instantly and you identify with it. I forget who said that we are all living lives of quiet desperation. I believe we are. The smiles, the charms, it's all bullshit...all smokescreen. We all suffer within, don't we?

Sometimes, I will stare into the mirror and wait for the madness to creep from my eyes and leave me once and for all. But all it ever does is reach the surface and smile gently at me, with a wise gleam.

Jeffrey (cont'd): Yeah, I am crazy. I love that I am crazy but I also hate who I am. I wouldn't expect you to understand that. They say genius and madness have a thin line between them. I walk that fence everyday and lately it has been getting harder to stay balanced. Haha, look where I am. Haha.

Chemical imbalance. Sure. Life experience. Sure. Being an artist. Sure. It all adds up to a pair of scissors embedded in someone's neck, doesn't it?

You can ridicule me some more my friend, you can pity me, you can lead me to inspiring advice but the truth is, there is nothing you can do or say that can haunt me more than my own soul. Do what you have to do, say what you have to say...it means nothing...nothing, my friend...nothing...

I will be waiting for you....we will be waiting....I am happy to entertain you my friend...I look forward to your next word...You can speak now, say something...

Seamus: Jeff, please, calm---I'm not trying to ridicule you at all.

Jeffrey: I see it in your eyes. You're with them now, aren't you? You and Walton and this new shit actor. Used me! Used me to become successful while I rot away in here with this anaconda wrapped around me, restricting everything i've sacrificed my life for!

Seamus: No, no Jeff, please, I don't give a damn about the play, I care most about your well being.

Jeffrey: You don't care about the play? Wait! Shhh! Shh! You just said, you don't care about the play, right?

Seamus: Yes, I did say that.

Jeffrey: Liar! Liar! Liar!

Seamus: Stop shouting.

Jeffrey: Liar, liar, pants on fire! *(beat)* It's okay Seamus, you worry about yourself and the group, you worry about you, I'm fine. If I were in your shoes, the show must go on. There are mouths to feed and rent to pay and food to eat. Yes?

Seamus: Of course.

Jeffrey: *(mocking)* Of course. Fruit cake.

Seamus: What?

Jeffrey: You, my friend are a fruit cake. An old forgotten fruitcake with white vanilla filling, and a bit of cheap cream squeezed on top for good measure. *(laughs)* A fruit cake eating a fruit cake. Ha, ha, ha!!

Seamus: Perhaps I should go.

Jeffrey: Perhaps, you ageing lemon tart. *(laughs)* It won't last forever, when you lose...when you lose, the things worth holding on to, they'll find you, they'll hunt you down and they'll bury you. Oh, they will bury you, you don't think they'll ever find you, do you? No, but they will, they always do. It's a lesson you'll learn perhaps in another lifetime, perhaps when it's not too late Seamus!

Seamus gets up to leave.

Jeffrey: No, no, allow me.

Jeffrey stands.

I think I am ready to go back to my room now. I'm starting to feel a little...yeah, I gotta go back now, please.

Seamus: Wait...Jeff...Jeffrey, I, I don't think you are crazy. You are my friend and I'm here for you. I can come back tomorrow and we can try this again.

Jeffrey: Try what, again?

Seamus: Visitation.

Jeffrey: Hmmmm. Doesn't that sound so, so rotten?

Jeffrey walks to the nursing staff and begins dancing and screaming.

Seamus looks on in shock, disbelief and defeat.

END OF PLAY