

The Family Affair

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Cast

Man (in his late twenties)

Woman (in her early thirties)

(Single door Centre stage.)

Double movable screen SR.
 Double bed with head rest
 covered with single sheet
 slightly off centre stage.
 Back wall SL picture of
 enormous family tree. Stool
 down left close to audience.
 Sound of someone walking
 over a creaking floor.

Lights up.
 A woman dressed in a grey
 business suit sits on the
 stool staring out into the
 audience. She looks
 concerned. She sighs. She
 looks at her watch which
 isn't there. She frowns and
 shakes her head. (She gets
 up. She is wearing high
 heels and walk purposefully
 to the door like a model.
 She tests that it is opens
 and closes. She puts her
 outspread hand on the top
 panel. She listens. Turns
 her head to the side.)
 She walks back to the stool
 and sits.)
 There's a knock on the
 door, T he woman rises.
 Second knock.

Woman

Come in.
 (The door opens and a man
 appears carrying a large
 bouquet of flowers.)
 Those are not allowed.

MAN

I'm so sorry. I thought..... I'll leave them out
 here.
 It's This is.....
 (He closes door behind him
 and stands)
 This is not what I expected.

WOMAN

It is all according to the rules.

MAN

I'm sure. Well....ermmm?

WOMAN

Please go behind the screen and take your clothes off.

MAN

Right. Of course.

WOMAN

And don't forget to remove your watch.

MAN

This is safe isn't it?

WOMAN

Absolutely

MAN

I had a bad experience once. There were no controls.

WOMAN

You have no reason to worry.

MAN

Sometimes I think that I am not really here, not really anywhere.

WOMAN

That's very common.

MAN

I have always been frightened of disappointment.

WOMAN

All of us are.

MAN

You are very comforting.

(He emerges from behind the screen naked or in black underwear. He is totally comfortable and walks toward the bed.)

Do I get in the bed now?

WOMAN

Please do.

(He gets into the bed and pulls the sheet to his stomach. She walks behind the screen. Pause.)

MAN
Sometimes you don't know what to expect.

WOMAN
That is how it should be.

MAN
You are so right.

WOMAN
Life ought to be unpredictable.

MAN
So true.

WOMAN
Otherwise we die.

MAN
I had not thought death had undone so many.

WOMAN
What?

MAN
I had not thought..... Eliot... The Waste Land...
I think

(She emerges naked or in
black underwear and walks
confidently across to the
bed, pulls back the sheet
and lies down next to him
and pulls up the sheet.)

MAN
Do I hold your hand now?

WOMAN
Of course.
(They touch)

MAN
I have to confess this is not my first time.

WOMAN
There's nothing to be ashamed of. We all have to pass
this way sooner or later.

MAN
I had such dreams

WOMAN
Don't we all.

MAN
I am so grateful.

WOMAN
You're welcome.
(Long Pause. She pulls her hand away.)

MAN
Is it time to go?

WOMAN
Yes.

MAN
You can count the seconds.

WOMAN
It is never any different.

MAN
Your hand is cold.

WOMAN
My circulation is not what it was.

MAN
I too have noticed changes.

WOMAN
It is a temporary condition.

MAN
Thank you.
(He gets out of the bed and walks towards the screen)

WOMAN
Wait. You've forgotten something.
(She rises from the bed, reaches underneath bed and pulls out a brown paper bag.)
)
Your gift.

MAN
(He looks inside the bag)
Apples?

WOMAN
It's standard. Everyone gets them.

MAN
I didn't expect.....

WOMAN

It was in the agreement you signed.

MAN

Well.... Thank you. Thank you
(He goes behind the screen
and starts putting on his
clothes)

Apart from the woman at the gate I didn't see anybody
else on my way in.

WOMAN

The schedules are very precise. They like it that
way.

MAN

All I heard was a floor creaking. So there must have
been somebody there.

WOMAN

That's strange because they are usually very
particular about things like that.

MAN

Do I leave the same way?

WOMAN

No... just keep going straight down the corridor. You
can't miss the exit.

MAN

(He emerges holding the bag
of apples.)

WOMAN

If you would just wait.
(She goes behind the screen)

MAN

Perhaps we'll meet again.

WOMAN

I don't think so. They don't allow it.

MAN

You'd think they would encourage it.

WOMAN

Each to his own.

MAN

You're right.

(Pause)

What should I do with the flowers?

WOMAN

I think you'll find that they've been taken away.

MAN

Really. I didn't hear anything.

WOMAN

They are very detail orientated and they don't like waste.

MAN

The apples are a nice touch. That's one hell of a family tree? Is it your family? Wow, it goes back so far.

WOMAN

No. I don't know whose it is. It has always been there.

MAN

So many names. Someone had to have some money to just find out but then if you're important.....
(She emerges, goes to the door and opens it.)

WOMAN

It was nice meeting you.

MAN

Just as you said. They've taken the flowers away. No it was my pleasure. I am sorry we can't meet again. Can I just give you a hug. I'll put the apples down.
(He hugs the woman. She remains stiff.)

Thank you.

(He picks out an apple from the bag. Looks at it.)

WOMAN

You're welcome. And good luck.
(He bites into the apple)

MAN

This is good. Luck? I'm going to need it. Goodbye.
(She closes the door behind him.)

WOMAN

Goodbye.

(She puts her hand on the door as at the opening of the play. Waits.)

Listens Walks back to the
chair. Sits. Stares out into
the audience. Lights go
down. There's the sound of
a floor creaking.)