

THERAPY

A One-Act Comedy

by

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CHARACTERS

SIMON - A driving instructor, late 30s

LOUISE – Simon's wife and bookkeeper, mid 30s

BRIAN - A Counsellor, 40s

BECKY - A Learner Driver. Early 20s

SETTING

The play can be played on a stage bare of any set but chairs.
All characters can be on stage throughout.

SCENE ONE

SIMON Look, I've said I'm sorry.

LOUISE And you think that makes it all right?

SIMON No. Course not.

LOUISE You just want me to forget it ever happened, don't you?

SIMON What am I supposed to say?

LOUISE That would just suit you, wouldn't it?

SIMON No.

LOUISE Of course it would.

SIMON Well – yes then.

LOUISE I don't think you realise what you've done.

SIMON I do.

LOUISE You don't.

SIMON I've apologised often enough.

LOUISE That's not the point, Simon. In fact if you think it makes any difference at all, it just proves it. You don't understand.

SIMON What do you want me to do?

LOUISE I've had an idea.

SCENE TWO

SIMON I was brought up not to complain, to make the best of things.

BRIAN Right.

SIMON So it's not really my kind of thing - therapy.

BRIAN It's not therapy - it's counseling

SIMON But that's what it's about, isn't it? Baring your soul. Going back to your childhood, blaming your parents, society.

BRIAN Not necessarily.

SIMON No?

BRIAN It depends how you want to use it.

SIMON Does it?

BRIAN Yes.

SIMON Go on then.

BRIAN What?

SIMON Do your stuff. Might as well get started.

BRIAN Actually we have started.

SIMON Oh. You mean the meter's running?

BRIAN If you like

SIMON Fair enough. It's not as if you'd invite me into your house like this if I wasn't paying you. (*Waits for BRIAN to respond. He doesn't*) You charge twice as much as me, you know.

BRIAN Pardon?

SIMON Per hour. And I have to provide a car, petrol, insurance. Have you any idea how much it costs to get dual controls fitted?

BRIAN No.

SIMON You can't have a lot of overheads, though, can you? Chairs, coffee table, plants, a few books. Can you claim them against tax?

BRIAN Is this really what you've come here to talk about?

SIMON I'm interested.

BRIAN Can I make an analogy?

SIMON Can I stop you?

BRIAN Yes, if you want.

SIMON Go on.

BRIAN What would you think if one of your pupils wanted to spend their driving lesson discussing the ethics of your profession?

SIMON (*Laughs*) Its ethics? That wouldn't take long.

BRIAN And would they not be better off using their time to do hill starts and three point turns?

SIMON They're not actually called that, you know.

SCENE THREE

SIMON Can you now turn around by means of forward and reverse gears.

BECKY What?

SIMON A three point turn.

BECKY Oh. Why didn't you say so?

SIMON Because that's what the examiner will say - in the test.

BECKY Why?

SIMON Because technically that's what it is. Turning around by means of forward and reverse gears.

BECKY Is it not the same thing?

SIMON No. You can do it in more than three moves if you have to.

BECKY Really?

SIMON Yes. But I wouldn't advise it.

BECKY Why not?

SIMON They might fail you.

BECKY Why?

SIMON Because they're expecting a three point turn.

BECKY They should say it, then.

SIMON As I said - technically it doesn't have to be a three point turn.

BECKY Except that if you don't do one, they'll fail you? (SIMON *shrugs*) It's stupid.

SIMON I don't make the rules. Now, shall we get started?

BECKY With what?

SIMON The three point turn.

BECKY I thought you said...

SCENE FOUR

BRIAN Are they not?

SIMON No.

BRIAN Are you sure?

SIMON Of course I am

BRIAN Sorry. You must be. It's funny though. I always thought that was what you called it - a three point turn

SIMON Most people do, but technically... Actually do you mind if we don't discuss this?

BRIAN Fine.

SIMON Thanks.

(Pause)

BRIAN So...?

SIMON Yes?

BRIAN So what shall we discuss?

SIMON You mean like my childhood or something?

BRIAN Not necessarily.

SIMON My Dad was a train driver.

BRIAN Right.

SIMON East Coast main line.

BRIAN Anything else?

SIMON He did the Carlisle run as well sometimes - via Hexham.

BRIAN That's not really what I meant.

SIMON I could ask him for his cap and badge if you like.

BRIAN As you pointed out, you're paying me for this time.

SIMON Look, I've got nothing against you personally.

BRIAN Good.

SIMON But...

BRIAN Yes.

SIMON Never mind.

BRIAN What?

SIMON It's just I hate this kind of thing.

BRIAN Right.

SIMON What do you mean – right?

BRIAN I hear what you're saying.

SIMON That's exactly what I mean. I hate that. Having to sound positive all the time.

BRIAN You don't like sounding positive?

SIMON No. On the whole – no.

BRIAN Why not?

SIMON It's dishonest.

BRIAN Is it?

SIMON Yes.

BRIAN Why?

SIMON The world's not like that.

BRIAN Like what?

SIMON All good and positive. People are selfish. Stupid.

BRIAN But then it's not always bad to be selfish, is it? I would say it's good sometimes to be selfish. We all need a bit of Me Time.

SIMON What?

BRIAN That's what this is. Time for you to spend on yourself.

SIMON (*Sarcastic*) Being positive?

BRIAN If you like.

SIMON You never say anything, do you?

BRIAN What do you mean?

SIMON You twist things and you bounce things back, but you never actually say anything. Suppose that's your job though, isn't it?

BRIAN I often find it's helpful to have a focus. A target.

SIMON Like?

BRIAN Perhaps you could tell me why you're here.

SIMON Right.

BRIAN And...?

SIMON (*Checks watch*) It's time, though, isn't it?

BRIAN It is, but if you want to go on. . .

SIMON No - you've probably got another patient waiting.

BRIAN You're not a patient.

SIMON (*Laughing*) I know. You should lighten up a bit.

BRIAN OK. You win. Will I be seeing you again?

SIMON (*Sighs*) Yes. I think so. (*Hands money over*)

BRIAN Next Thursday, then? Thursday at eight.

SCENE FIVE

LOUISE So...?

SIMON So what?

LOUISE So what was it like?

SIMON OK.

LOUISE Is that it? Is that all you're going to tell me?

SIMON It's confidential isn't it?

LOUISE For him it is.

SIMON You knew didn't you?

LOUISE Knew what?

SIMON You did. When you made the booking. You knew he was gay.

LOUISE No I didn't. Anyhow what difference does that make?

SIMON Expect you think it's funny.

LOUISE Don't be ridiculous. How do you know anyway?

SIMON You can just tell. And it's the right sort of job isn't it?

LOUISE What does that mean?

SIMON And there's no pictures anywhere. You know - wife and kids?

LOUISE I don't remember seeing many pictures of me on your dashboard.

SIMON That's different.

LOUISE How? Anyway - why are we having this conversation? I want to know what's he's said. About what you need to do.

SIMON We aren't sure I'm ready.

LOUISE For what?

SIMON For opening out. It's important that I have some Me Time

LOUISE Some what?

SIMON Some Me Time. I need to be more selfish.

LOUISE No you don't. You're selfish enough already.

SIMON Brian doesn't think so.

LOUISE Brian doesn't, does he not? Well you can tell him he's wrong. In fact that's why you're going there in the first place.