"The Waiting Room"

by

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FADE IN

The set is one large waiting room. There are 2 seats in the room and a table. On the table is a phone. Standing in the room are BILL and SARAH. In walks ROWAN, who has a tissue tucked under his chin.

ROWAN
Oh no. More of you. You really are a selfish lot, aren’t you? I’ve been on my feet all day and when I finally get half hour to myself to finish off my jam sponge, you turn up! Things soon go stale up here, you now.

SARAH
Who... Who on earth are you?

ROWAN
Same old questions. You’re not on earth anymore. It says where you are on the other side of that door and who I am is of no importance to you. It’s who’s on the end of that phone you need to worry about.

BILL
What are we doi...

ROWAN
No, no, no. No more questions. I’ve got a headache coming on. I had one up earlier, asking a hundred and one questions. I told her to shut up in the end. Now... Forms, forms, forms. Run out of damn forms. I’ll just have to pop and get some more. Well... sit down. You may as well make yourself comfortable.

Rowan exits.

BILL
Who was that?

SARAH
...and what a stupid white suit.

Bill opens the door and reads the sign.

BILL
The waiting Room.
SARAH
The waiting room? Is that where we are?
Waiting for what? The Bus? The Dentist?
The Guillotine?

BILL
I went to the dentist last week. Had two fillings. Cost me a bleeding fortune.
It can’t be a dentist’s waiting room,
There’s no four year old copies of “Hello” magazine.

SARAH
Where were you before you came here?

BILL
I was on the sofa after finishing my nightshift watching England play India in the cricket world cup. Last thing I remember was Anderson going for a duck.

SARAH
Really? Couldn’t he have waited ‘till after the match? Anyway, I think that’s your answer. You fell asleep. Cricket would send anyone to sleep. This is a dream.

BILL
I had twelve cans of red bull. What are you doing in my dream? You don’t have strangers in it, do you?

SARAH
Maybe subconsciously you know me? I’m a cabaret singer in the pubs and clubs. I once got to the second round of the X factor!

BILL
Ahh. Maybe I’ve seen you on television, then?

SARAH
No, I didn’t quite make the TV Rounds.

BILL
Oh you’re good, then. Well what were you doing before you came here?
SARAH
I was watching my son. He’s in the southern area athletics championships. He’s a hundred metre hurdler. Unfortunately there was a mix up and he got put into the men’s category. Well, the hurdles are much higher than the one’s he used to. He kept knocking them over, but not with his feet, if you get me?

BILL
Oh yes. I get you. He’s now very good at yodelling?

SARAH
I’m not sure, but half way through cheering him on I jumped up and hit my head on an iron beam. I’d say I’m unconscious.

BILL
But why the waiting room I wonder?

SARAH
Just go along with it. You’ll wake up in a minute.

Rowan enters.

ROWAN
That’s better. Right, name please?

BILL

ROWAN
Thank you. And yours?

SARAH

ROWAN
Oh I see. A smart Alec, hey?

The phone rings. Rowan answers.

ROWAN
Yes. Yes. I know. Not at all serious. The one earlier? A Goldfish. Leave it with me.
BILL
(to Sarah)
I’d take this a bit more serious if I
were you. I’m not sure this is a dream.

SARAH
What makes you say that?

BILL
I’m an insomniac.

SARAH
Twelve cans of Red Bull. No surprise.

ROWAN
Excuse me. Can we get on with the job in
hand? Occupation?

SARAH
Me?

ROWAN
Yes, you.

SARAH
Cabaret singer.

ROWAN
Is that what you call it?

SARAH
I beg your pardon.

ROWAN
I’ve heard more pleasant noises in a
Cattery.

SARAH
You’ve never seen me?

ROWAN
Not seen, but heard! Your voice certainly
travels… And I thought Gabriel’s harp was
out of tune? You have a son and daughter.

SARAH
How do you know this? Are you a stalker?
ROWAN
It seems you’ve stuck your nose in once too often, Sarah Page. It says here that you told your daughter to change the lottery numbers she had been using each week to a lucky dip. If she had kept her previous numbers, both she and her husband, Nigel, would have won a nice little sum. Unfortunately they couldn’t live with the guilt, which caused friction between them, resulting in divorce.

SARAH
Yeah, well. He wasn’t good enough for my Judy anyway.

ROWAN
He picked those numbers. He would have made your daughter a very rich woman.

SARAH
Damn it! Well.. It doesn’t matter now. She found herself a footballer. She drives a Mercedes. She took my advice in the end. Always marry a rich man and lead the easy life.

The phone rings again. Rowan picks up.

ROWAN
Yes. Yes. Not pleasant. I don’t think it’s in her vocabulary. OK Leave it with me.

Rowan replaces receiver.

ROWAN (CONT’D)
Right, Sarah. He will see you now. Through the door, turn left.

SARAH
Oh I’m looking forward to this. What a joke this is. I’m off to Claridge’s later. I hope this won’t take too long. Left you say?

ROWAN
Yes, left. You can’t miss him. White robe, long hair, large beard.

SARAH
Another bloody homeless… let me at him.
ROWAN

Off you trot.

Sarah exits.

ROWAN (CONT’D)
She’ll enjoy being an Anteater. She can put her nose in anything she wants, now.

BILL
Reincarnation? Her? Where the blazes am I?

ROWAN
I thought it was perfectly clear?

BILL
The sign says waiting room.

ROWAN
You are in heaven’s waiting room, William.

BILL
Heaven?

ROWAN
Yes, you were one of the lucky ones. You could easily have gone to that other room.

BILL
You mean hell?

ROWAN
Of course. Probably a good thing you came here, their sewage pipe is blocked.

BILL
So I’m….

ROWAN
Dead!

End of act one.
Act Two.

BILL

Dead?

ROWAN

Yep. Brown Bread, I’m afraid. You didn’t know you were diabetic, did you Mr Roach?

BILL

No?

ROWAN

Seems your doctor was about as useful as Harrold Shipman. The Red Bull’s you drank overloaded your blood sugar levels causing you to go into seizure. I’m afraid you didn’t wake up.

BILL

Gosh. Well… May I ask one question?

ROWAN

Just the one, please. I deal with so many questions in this job and quite frankly I’ve had enough.

BILL

Who won the cricket?

ROWAN

England, by four wickets. Ever played a harp, Mr Roach?

BILL

A harp? I come from London! I’ve drank a few in my time, though.

ROWAN

We haven’t had a good harp player for a few years. It’s all getting rather stagnated up here. We could do with some fresh blood, so to speak. Oh well. Let’s see what he comes up with.

The phone rings… Rowan answers.

ROWAN

Yes. Yes. Oh I see. Lot’s for charity. OK Leave it with me.
ROWAN (CONT’D)
It seems you were a very charitable fellow, Mr Roach. Over a hundred marathons, all for Alzheimers charities. Most impressive. You will be coming back as a director of a successful business. Company car, beautiful wife... Git!
Also, you'll be a season ticket holder at Manchester United.

BILL
That’s great. Terrific!

The phone Rings...

ROWAN
Hello Sir, Oh I see. Leave it with me, sir.

Replaces receiver.

ROWAN (CONT’D)
It seems that back in ’91 you went a month without any valid road tax. You’ll now come back with all the above except you will be a season ticket holder with Millwall.

BILL
Bloody hell.

The phone rings again...

ROWAN
Yes? I know the “H” word. Leave it with me.

Replaces the receiver slowly this time.

ROWAN (CONT’D)
I’m afraid you just used the “H” Word. Now you’ll get all the above when you come back except your season ticket is for Scunthorpe.

BILL
(sarcastic)
Oh great.
ROWAN
Right. These are the rules of the game. You are allowed to be a ghost for one night only. You know, to scare ex-girlfriends, rude bosses and mother in law’s. But no smashing the crockery! You’re a ghost not a hooligan. Oh and one last thing. You also get to attend your own funeral to see which buggers didn’t turn up!

BILL
Oh wonderful. I hope my wife remembered I wanted Imagine by John Lennon played at my funeral. Hey, is he up here?

ROWAN
No, He went back down as a white dove, as he requested. He was an exception. Terrible harp player, though. I had high hopes for him. Oh well. We’ll have to see about Keith Richards. He shouldn’t be too long now.

FADE OUT.