

FEAR OF STRANGERS

A Very Short Play

by

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(A RAILWAY STATION.)

(JANET and CARRIE are CENTRE STAGE.)

(Carrie is clutching a GIANT CARDBOARD CLOCK attached to a BROOMSTICK - complete with MOVEABLE HANDS... As the two women peer out towards the audience - looking in all directions.)

JANET

He's not coming.

CARRIE

But I spent a bloody fortune on these highlights!

(Carrie smooths her hair.)

JANET

Who, in their right mind, says "let's meet under the clock" - without first checking there *is* one?

CARRIE

It's a station. You sort of expect there would be.

JANET

Well he's late.

(Janet moves the BIG HAND of the clock forward 10 minutes.. Carrie stares at Janet.)

JANET (Continued)

I'm telling you, they're all nutters on that internet.

(Carrie gazes off stage.)

CARRIE

He's here.

JANET

What?

CARRIE

Over there, red button-hole. Oh my God he's cute!

(Janet follows her gaze.)

JANET

All that glitters is not gold.

CARRIE
You what?

JANET
Appearances can be deceptive.

CARRIE
Just hide for God's sake!

(Janet runs up and down in a
panic.)

JANET
Hide, hide...

CARRIE
HIDE!!!

JANET
Right.. Tap your head when you want rescuing...

(Janet runs up and down a bit
more.)

CARRIE
(Shouting)
If I *do* want rescuing, make it good - be more persistent
this time!

JANET
Persistent. Right...

(HERBERT is fast approaching,
wearing a RED CARNATION in his
button-hole.)

CARRIE
Get lost!!!

(Janet runs off and crouches down
STAGE LEFT.)

(HERBERT rushes to Carrie.)

HERBERT
You must be...

CARRIE
Yes.

(They grin nervously.)

HERBERT
You tried this kind of thing before?

CARRIE
No not at all.

HERBERT
Nor me, how terrifying! What is that?

(He points to the CLOCK.)

CARRIE
My little joke.

(Carrie waves her arms about.)

CARRIE (Continued)
No clock.

HERBERT
Ah.

(He laughs.)

HERBERT (Continued)
You're much prettier in the flesh.

CARRIE
Thank you.

HERBERT
You've had you're hair done.

CARRIE
Yes.

(Carrie smooths her hair and taps her head.)

CARRIE (Continued)
Can you see the highlights?

(Herbert peers at Carrie's head as Janet LEAPS out of the shadows - waving her arms and her MOBILE PHONE.)

(Carrie spots her and waves at Janet to 'go away'.)

(Janet retreats as Herbert stands up straight.)

HERBERT
Lovely. So you know this area?

(Carrie's MOBILE PHONE RINGS.)

CARRIE
Shit.

(Carrie stares at her mobile phone.)

HERBERT

Aren't you going to answer?

(Carrie answers the phone
reluctantly.)

CARRIE

(To phone)

Hello?

(SPOTLIGHT ON JANET: CROUCHED DOWN
STAGE LEFT, TALKING INTO HER
MOBILE.)

JANET

(To phone)

Oh Carrie there's been a terrible accident! You must come
immediately!

CARRIE

(To phone)

I'm not going anywhere.

JANET

(To phone)

It's your mother! She's fallen down the stairs!

CARRIE

(To phone)

I'm a little busy now - please leave me alone.

JANET

(To phone)

She's broken both her legs!

CARRIE

(To phone)

Didn't you hear me? I don't care!

JANET

(To phone)

It's really bad, they've rushed her into hospital - you
have to come at once!

CARRIE

(To phone)

I'm not going anywhere, I'm on a date!

JANET

(To phone)

But they're not even sure how long she's got to live!

CARRIE

(To phone - SHOUTING)

I don't give a monkeys how long she's got, stop bothering
me!!

HERBERT
Is everything all right?

CARRIE
(To Herbert)
My friend.. She's highly strung.

HERBERT
What on earth does she want?

(Carrie, flustered, waves her
hands dismissively)

CARRIE
My mother fell down the stairs.

HERBERT
How awful! Is it serious?

CARRIE
(Flustered)
She's fine, she's in the hospital.

HERBERT
Good heavens! We must go at once, which one?

(Carrie looks confused.)

CARRIE
Well I don't know.

(Herbert, agitated, snatches the
PHONE from Carrie.)

HERBERT
(To phone)
Which hospital?

(Janet panics.)

JANET
Oh, I'm not sure.. A big one?

HERBERT
(To Carrie)
She doesn't know either!

CARRIE
She does this all the time.

HERBERT
(Hysterical)
Forgets the names of hospitals?!

CARRIE
Gives me grief.

HERBERT
But your mother's had an accident!

CARRIE
She hasn't!

(Herbert points to the PHONE.)

HERBERT
She's in the hospital!

CARRIE
She's lying!

HERBERT
She's lying?

CARRIE
It's quite compulsive.

(Carrie taps her forehead and
rolls her eyes.)

CARRIE (Continued)
Pathetic really.

(Carrie snatches the PHONE from
Herbert and firmly switches it
OFF.)

(BLACKOUT ON JANET.)

(Herbert looks aghast.)

HERBERT
Well I find your attitude somewhat cavalier.

(Carrie gives him her best
flirtatious smile.)

CARRIE
You ain't seen nothing yet pal - we having that drink or
what?

(Herbert eyes her sadly.)

HERBERT
To be quite honest I'm feeling rather queasy.

CARRIE
You want to go to hospital?

(Carrie ROARS with laughter at her
joke.)

(Herbert eyes Carrie strangely and
shakes his head.)

I should have known. HERBERT

What? CARRIE

Good-bye Carrie. HERBERT

(Herbert walks away as Carrie
stares after him.)

(Shouting)
Herbert!!! CARRIE

(SPOTLIGHT ON HERBERT AS HE
WANDERS OFF STAGE RIGHT.)

HERBERT
They're all nutters on that internet.

BLACKOUT.