

The Original Stageplay

THE WAITING ROOM II



CHRISTIAN PLAYWRIGHT

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Sample Script



LIGHTS UP ON

Six sleeping figures: GARY, CHARLINE, MIKE, JAMELIA, FELICIA, and KEITH.

Suddenly, they all jolt upright and awake. Curiously, they stare out into the black void that surrounds them. They are unaware of each other. In unison, they grow wideeyed and terrified until they scream:

CHARACTERS: Where am I? What is this place?!

BLACKOUT

LIGHTS UP ON

FELICIA is illuminated by a single spotlight.

FELICIA: The last thing I remember is the sound of my own voice. (*FELICIA pantomime's holding a steering wheel, then yells. She lowers her hands.*) I know where I am now. I know what this place is. But I can't believe I'm here. I SHOULDN'T BE HERE. IT'S TOO SOON.

The spotlight on FELICIA fades, as another rises on MIKE.

MIKE: When will the darkness end? I can't see so much as a foot in front of my own face. It feels like I've been here an eternity, yet it seems as though I've only taken a handful of breaths since I arrived. I can't stand not knowing. I can't stand not knowing how I got here, or why; not knowing where I am or how long I'm going to be here. I CAN'T STAND IT. The last thing I remember is following her, feeling terrified for her, feeling like I have to tell her but don't know how. I never reached her. I never told her. That's all I remember.

The spotlight fades off MIKE and rises on CHARLINE.

CHARLINE: The last thing I remember before showing up here is the overwhelming feeling of despair that consumed me, that had been slowly eating away at me for years and years. Where was God during my darkest days? Where is He now? I hate this place. WHY AM I HERE? The last thing I really remember is cursing Jesus.

The spotlight fades off CHARLINE and rises on GARY.

GARY: Oh God, oh Jesus, oh God, oh Jesus, I repent, I am sorry, I'm so sorry, please forgive, please Jesus forgive me, please save me, please take my sins away, dear God, please don't let them come, please save me, please don't let them come and drag me away in flaming shackles, please save me, PLEASE DON'T LET THEM COME! The last thing I remember is making the worst mistake of my life and knowing that it would send me straight to Hell.

The spotlight blacks out on GARY and pops sharply onto JAMEILA.

JAMEILA: Bring it on, you think this rattles me? You think I've never been locked away in a room somewhere, no food, no water? Then you never met my parents, did you? Whatever you think you're doing to me, like I'm going to weaken and do whatever you say. You're dead wrong. Nothing shakes me. I was once beaten, nothing but bruises, and I survived. I was once left in the ghetto score for my Ma, I survived. I was once used like collateral by my daddy to square a bet, and I survived, so whatever you think you got coming to me right now, if you think I won't survive it, then you got another thing coming. So come out. Come out. COME OUT, and let's see if you survive me. COME OUT AND LET ME FIGHT YOU.

The spotlight blacks out on JAMEILA and rises on KEITH.

KEITH: When I was a kid, I had a friend named Jimmy, and I used to play with Jimmy all summer even though he went to a different school than me. He lived across the street. He always seemed happy, and his parents were so nice. There were two weeks out of the summer, every summer, that I couldn't play with Jimmy, because he was at camp. When he would come back, he would be full

of life, and tell me all kinds of adventurous stories about him and the other kids. I wanted to go to that camp so badly. One summer I begged my parents to let me go, but when they asked for information on it and I told them it was a Christian boy's club, they said it was out of the question. There was no God, they told me. I resented them for not letting me go. But as I grew older, the resentment twisted. I found myself resenting Jimmy. Resenting his happiness. Resenting that he got to believe in something that I wasn't allowed to. My parents said Christians were fools, so I started saying that too. I stopped playing with him during the summertime. I spent my life resenting those who believed in God and refusing any possibility that there was a savior out there. The last thing I remember is wondering if maybe I was wrong. If after you die you're simply dead, then what am I doing here right now in darkness waiting? And more importantly, what comes next?

LIGHTS RISE *washing the stage with a dim light.*

For the first time, everyone sees each other, and they realize they are all in the same room.

MIKE takes a few steps towards CHARLINE in recognition, then stops himself; as GARY does the same, yet CHARLINE quickly backs away from him; at the same time, KEITH and FELICIA look at each other with vague recognition. JAMEILA looks from person to person, but only FELICIA seems familiar to her, though she can't place from where.

KEITH addresses FELICIA.

KEITH: I have an eerie feeling, like I know you, but I can't place it.

FELICIA: Me too.

JAMEILA: Yeah, me too, I feel like I know you from somewhere.

FELICIA: You do?

JAMEILA: What is this place?

CHARLINE: We're dead.

JAMEILA: How do you know that?

CHARLINE: Because I remember. (*CHARLINE glares at GARY*) I remember everything.

GARY: Good, I'm glad!

CHARLINE: Are you?!

GARY: I hope you remember every last detail, and I hope it tortures you!

CHARLINE: You're a monster.

GARY: I'm in here because of you! And you're in here because of you! You're the monster! You ruined our lives, Charline!

MIKE: Stay away from her!

GARY: I'll do whatever I want. She's my wife. Who are you?

MIKE: I'm no one.

KEITH: So you know each other?

GARY: Yes.

JAMEILA: I only remember pieces. And I don't recognize any of you.

FELICIA: Neither do I. Why would some of us remember our lives and the others don't?

JAMEILA: This is serious. (*JAMEILA paces around the stage in anger.*) I want whoever is pulling this to show yourself right now!

CHARLINE addresses GARY again as though she hasn't been involved in anything else.

CHARLINE: I married you because you were a Christian. I thought you were a good man.

GARY: You want to talk about being a good Christian? What's the seventh commandment?

CHARLINE: You want to quote the scriptures to me?! What's the sixth? Remember the sixth commandment? (*beat*) How did you end up dying? Peacefully? Of natural causes? I hope you rot in hell.

Suddenly, a silvery white light grows brighter and brighter UPSTAGE and JESUS appears. He carries a large book in his hand.

JAMEILA crosses to him still fuming with anger.

JAMEILA: You the one keeping us here? You think you can keep us here against our will? Is that what you think?

JAMEILA pulls her fist back intending to throw a hard punch. JESUS remains calm. JAMEILA hesitates. She discovers she can't go through with it; she doesn't want to. There's something about this person that she simply cannot strike him.

JAMEILA: Who are you?

JESUS: You already know who I am.

JAMEILA: I do?

JESUS: Yes. I visited you countless times during the course of your life.

JAMEILA: My life? So, you mean, I really am dead?

JESUS: Yes.

JAMEILA: How did I die? When? Why?

JESUS: You already know everything, deep down. But you're preventing yourself from remembering because you're afraid the Truth will be too painful.

JAMEILA: Then tell me! Now! What happened to me!

FELICIA: Is that why I can't remember everything either?

KEITH: What happens if we remember everything?

JESUS: The question isn't "if", it's "when", and when you know everything, you will also know what happens next.

JAMEILA: *(to the others)* What is he talking about?!

CHARLINE: This is purgatory. We are here to wait and to be judged. Once the judgment has come, we will know if we will pass through to heaven or fall into the pits of hell.

JAMEILA backs away and sits down terrified.

JAMEILA: I ain't going to hell. My life was hell, I mean, what I can remember from it. This isn't fair.

FELICIA sits beside JAMEILA and attempts to hold her hand to comfort her, but JAMEILA retracts her hand and snaps.

JAMEILA: Don't touch me, Miss Priss!

Instantaneously, JAMEILA and FELICIA look at each other as though they're about to remember something. Something about that nickname is familiar to both of them. It's on the tip of their tongues, but they can't quite get a hold of the memory.

CHARLINE: I know who you are, Jesus. And I know where I'm going. But I don't know why. You abandoned me. You had forsaken me.

JESUS: Show me, Charline. Show me where I had forsaken you.

Everyone except for CHARLINE and JESUS back away to the edge of the stage.

As though brought back in time, CHARLINE stands while pantomiming washing dishes at the sink. She calls out over her shoulder, as though she is talking to someone in a neighboring room. From the side of the stage, GARY responds when CHARLINE calls out.

CHARLINE: Gary?

GARY: I'm running out!

CHARLINE: You're what?

GARY: I told you, I got to meet the guys!

CHARLINE: But I thought we were going to church!

GARY: Church can wait, it's not going anywhere!

CHARLINE: The guys aren't going anywhere!

GARY: But the game's tonight, I promised the guys!

CHARLINE: Gary, you're never around! You're always off watching a game with the guys! I married a Christian!

GARY: I'll make it up to you. I'm running out the door now, I can't be late!

Exasperated, CHARLINE nearly screams, but suddenly cuts her finger on a knife from the sink. She looks at her finger closely, then wraps it with a kitchen cloth.

She lowers her finger, then grabs her head as though she's dizzy. The dizzy spell fades away. She shakes her head a bit as she opens her eyes.

CHARLINE: I need a drink.

JESUS then joins her, and the others step forward from the edge of the stage.

CHARLINE: See?! You never helped me! I was married to a man who was absent, and you were absent too! You should've made Gary go to church with me! If you did, then what ended up happening would've never happened. And it's your fault too, Gary!

GARY: Oh of course it is! It's everyone's fault but yours, isn't that right, Charline? You never made a mistake!

JESUS: Are you sure you haven't forgotten something, Charline?

CHARLINE: What are you talking about? You mean the hundreds of other instances I couldn't go to church because Gary was off with his friends and forgetting his faith?

JESUS: Show me again.

CHARLINE: I already did, Jesus.

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