

THE SESSION

A Play

by

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SHE reaches behind her head and takes the clip out of her hair and gently shakes her head, her hair falling to her shoulders. SHE runs her hand through her hair and fluffs it out, her gaze still on her reflection in her compact.

From stage right enter DARIEN HELLER. SHE carries a shoulder bag. SHE stops when SHE reaches the edge of the sofa and watches CATHERINE for a beat or two. CATHERINE closes her compact and looks up. SHE utters a short GASP.

CATHERINE

What are you doing in here?

DARIEN

Dr. Simone?

CATHERINE

Yes, I'm Dr. Simone. Who are you?

DARIEN

I'm sorry to barge in on you like this but...

CATHERINE

Excuse me one moment.

(Picks up telephone and pushes a button. We hear a BUZZ)

Adele?

DARIEN

She's not out there...

CATHERINE

Adele?

DARIEN

There's nobody out there.

CATHERINE hangs up the phone and rises.

CATHERINE

I'm sorry Miss...?

DARIEN

Heller. Darien Heller.

CATHERINE

Miss Heller. But my office is closed. And as you can see, I'm on my way out --

DARIEN

The outside door was unlocked, so I just let myself in. I figured you probably had a receptionist but she wasn't there. I saw the door to your office and I just took a chance you'd still be here.

CATHERINE

Yes, well. I am on my way out. And I'm running a little behind. So, if you'd like to make an appointment, please call back on Monday and my secretary will be sure to arrange that for you.

DARIEN

You can't see me now?

CATHERINE

I'm sorry, but I don't take walk-ins.

DARIEN

I see. Well. I'm sorry to have bothered you.

CATHERINE

Not a bother, really.

DARIEN

Call back on Monday?

CATHERINE

Yes, Monday.

DARIEN

Thank you.

CATHERINE

No problem.

Sits back down and adjusts some things in the suitcase.

DARIEN

Is it okay if I use your ladies' room?

CATHERINE

Of course. It's just through there.

DARIEN exits through the door. CATHERINE closes the suitcase and exits stage left. SHE reenters wearing a raincoat and carrying a purse. SHE walks to the desk and turns off the desk lamp. Offstage we hear loud SOBBING. CATHERINE hesitates a moment then walks over to the door and gently KNOCKS on it.

CATHERINE

Are you all right?

DARIEN (OFF STAGE)

I'm fine. (Sobs)

CATHERINE

Are you sure?

DARIEN (OFF STAGE)

I'll be fine. Just give me a minute, please.

CATHERINE

Okay.

CATHERINE walks back to the desk and lifts the suitcase. SHE carries it over to the armchair and sits down. Offstage SOBBING continues but much quieter. CATHERINE looks at the door, then her watch.

CATHERINE

Miss Heller, I really must be going. My secretary will be sure to schedule an appointment with you on Monday. No response. The sobs have subsided.

CATHERINE

Miss Heller?

Still no response

CATHERINE

Oh, shit.

CATHERINE rises and KNOCKS on the door.

CATHERINE

Miss Heller? Miss Heller? (tries the doorknob. It's locked)

Miss Heller. I need you to please open the door. (Tries the door again, KNOCKS harder).

Miss Heller. I really need you to open this door. (No response)

Miss Heller, I'm going to open this door, now.

CATHERINE walks to the desk, opens the top drawer and withdraws a key. SHE hurries to the door, puts the key in the lock and opens it. SHE walks into the rest room.

CATHERINE (OFF STAGE)

Miss Heller? Miss Heller?

Offstage SOUNDS of RUSTLING and doors OPENING and CLOSING).

CATHERINE

Would you please come out? (Offstage SOUND of window CLOSING).

CATHERINE reenters and closes the door. SHE walks back over to the desk and replaces the key. SHE exits stage right.

CATHERINE (OFF STAGE)

Miss Heller? (Offstage SOUND of door OPENING).

CATHERINE (FARTHER OFFSTAGE)

Miss Heller? (Offstage SOUND of door CLOSING).

CATHERINE reenters from stage right. SHE walks back to her desk, picks up the telephone and punches in a number.

CATHERINE

Hi, baby... I'm leaving right now... I know but the strangest thing just happened... I'll tell you when I see you... Well, this woman just dropped into the office - no appointment... I don't know. I never saw her before... Anyway, she asked to use the bathroom and I heard her crying... And when I went in there, the window was wide open and she was gone... I know. I don't understand it. I thought it was locked. I'll have to remind Adele about that. I know, what a whack job. Don't worry; we'll be there before dark. Okay. Bye, babe.

CATHERINE hangs up the phone, picks up her purse and walks over to her suitcase, picks it up starts to exit stage right.

DARIEN (OFF STAGE)

Do you always refer to you patients as "whack jobs?"

DARIEN enters. CATHERINE puts down her suitcase and turns to face DARIEN.

CATHERINE

Why did you climb out of the window like that?

DARIEN

I was too embarrassed to face you. And then I thought of how strange that looked so I came back to apologize. I couldn't help but overhear your conversation. Do you always refer to your patients as "whack jobs?"

CATHERINE

Well technically, you're not my patient. And, no. I don't.

DARIEN

Well, that's a relief. I guess I'll get going...

DARIEN starts to exit, but stops. SHE puts her hands over her face and silently SOBS, her shoulders heaving. CATHERINE walks over to her and gently leads DARIEN to the armchair and sits her down. CATHERINE plucks a couple of tissues from the Kleenex dispenser and presses them into DARIEN'S hand. CATHERINE walks over to the wooden armchair, pulls it closer to DARIEN and sits.

DARIEN

I'm sorry. I just can't seem to keep it together. (Takes a deep breath). I'll be okay, Thank you for letting me sit here.

CATHERINE

Of course.

DARIEN

You're very kind. I mean, me barging in like this. A "whack job" and all...

CATHERINE

I'm sorry. I'm --

DARIEN

No, don't apologize. I am a whack job. I just don't know what to do. I'm terrified of myself. Of what I've become.

CATHERINE

Why did you come here?

DARIEN

(Almost a whisper) For help.

DARIEN rises and walks behind CATHERINE'S desk.
SHE looks at the framed certificates and diplomas.

CATHERINE

Excuse me?

DARIEN

Oh, I'm sorry. I had heard so much about you. And it's all true. That's why I came to you.
(Gestures toward wall) It's all true. I knew it would be true.

CATHERINE

Maybe we can work this out. I'll tell you what. Forget about calling my secretary. Just come here first thing Monday morning. Can you be here around eight?

DARIEN

I don't think so. But thank you.

DARIEN walks towards stage right exit.

CATHERINE

Would another time be better?

DARIEN

Yes. Now.

CATHERINE

I'm sorry. I really can't now. I'm already late --

DARIEN

I know. I just don't know what else to do --

CATHERINE

I can give you the number of an excellent therapist that you can talk to in the meantime.
Then, if you choose, we can meet on Monday.