

A very Scottish play

by John Waterhouse

(excerpt)

The play was first performed on 28th October 2010 at Salford Arts Theatre, Salford.

Cast :-

Terry Fusspot – Garry Smith

Angela Fusspot - Mairie Macfarlane

Sid Didler- Paul Green

Valerie Goodthighs – Bethan Thomas

Gerald Grubenstein – Darren Connolly

Fenella Roberts – Jay Hobday

Directed by Scott Berry

Cast

Terry Fusspot – 40's

A London business **Man**: on the edge of a nervous breakdown brought on by stress and overwork.

Angela Fusspot – 40's

Terry's wife; very much wears the trousers in the relationship. Organised and determined.

Sid Didler – 50's

The owner of a small Scottish guest house; originally from London. A gregarious rogue always on the lookout for ways to make money or amorous encounters.

Valerie Goodthighs – 30's

A bizarre and eccentric writer on the occult who either looks like a gypsy fortune teller or else is surprisingly at home in outdoors and sporting outfits.

Gerald Grubenstein, the second – 50's

A flamboyant film director from America who will let nothing stand in the way of his new film.

Fenella Roberts – 30's

An attractive young starlet who's rise as a film actress is in no small way helped by the fact she is going out with Gerald Grubenstein.

Scene Listing

All the action takes place in the lounge/dining area of a small guest house, remotely located on a small Scottish island.

There is a brief initial scene set on the edge of a forest on the island.

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Act One Scene One. The edge of a forest. Early evening.

A man and a woman enter a darkened stage with torches.

Man: Beats me honey. We could be anywhere.

Woman: We should have taken that turning back on the left.

Man: That wasn't going anywhere!

Woman: So what now?

Man: Guess we'll just have to turn back and look again tomorrow.

Woman: I don't believe this place. Hey, she might be able to help!

(enter a woman in a black cloak and hood).

Man: Hi; we're looking for an old house. Somewhere that looks haunted.

(The hooded woman is silent)

Man: Could you help us? Is there anywhere like that round here?

(The hooded woman remains silent)

Woman: You know; like in Scooby Doo.....or the Addams family mabe?

(The hooded woman remains silent and the man and woman look at each other. The hooded woman raises an arm and points)

Man: Er, thanks. I think she means this way.

Woman: It doesn't look like it's leading anywhere to me.

(The man and the woman exit and the woman screams)

Woman: Help me!

Man: What's up honey?

Woman: I'm stuck in something! I'm sinking in it!

Man: Here; grab my hand...ahh....I'm stuck in it as well.

Woman: On no!!

Man and Woman: Help, please. HELP ahhhh.

(The woman in black gives a devilish laugh and exits).

Act One Scene Two. The lounge/dining area of a guest house.
Early evening.

Terry: It's not quite as it appears in the brochure is it?

Angela: It's comfortable enough.

Terry: Pity that the bedrooms are so small.

Angela - Now stop fussing. You can't have everything just as you want it.

Terry: We want to be comfortable, don't we?

Angela: Remember that you've come away to relax.

Terry: Yes, I MUST RELAX.... I know I need to RELAX. I just wasn't expecting everything to be so pokey!

Angela: All island cottages are like this.

Terry: But it sold itself as a hotel; not a pokey, little cottage!

Angela: I think you did well to find this place. It's got a certain old world charm. I'd never even heard of this island.

Terry: I didn't find it!

Angela: You did. Where did you get the brochure?

Terry: It came in the post; I thought that you must have requested it.

Angela: No, I hadn't seen this place advertised anywhere. Strange! It must have just been junk mail.

Terry: And there's plenty of junk on these walls. I mean, those duelling pistols are made of plastic! that's not very olde worlde!

Angela: Why don't we go for a walk? Explore a bit. We've not come away to just sit in the hotel with so much beautiful countryside surrounding us!

(enter Sid)

Terry: Later maybe.,.oh hello.

Sid: Afternoon; everything all right?

Angela: Everything is fine thank you. Just fine.

Sid: Excellent; just let me know if you need anything. (he starts polishing some items on the wall).

Terry: Be careful with that metal polish on the pistols; it might melt them.

Angela: Terry!

Sid: It's all right, I'm only doing the brass ducks.

Angela: Have you lived here long?

Sid: Ten years.

Angela: You must know all about the island and the local culture?

Sid: Oh I do, things that would make your curl (laughs).

Terry: Where did you live before you came up here?

Sid: London. Haringey to be precise.

Angela: Oh that's where we're from. What did you do there?

Sid: I was an undertaker

Angela: Oh! Quite a change then?

Sid: Not really; before I was an embalmer; here, I'm mainly serving them drinks. Either way, it's putting fluids into people.

Terry: Judging by the size of the room, you're still putting people into boxes as well!

Sid: (laughs) That's good! But you can't have old world charm and big rooms can you? It was a good crem though...you know, crematorium that I used to send them to!

Terry: Really?

Sid: Oh yes. The 'crem de la crem' (*laughs; Terry starts to look anxious*). Would either of you like a drink?

Angela: Er, no thank you. No fluids for me (*nervous laugh*).

Sid: Whisky? On the house?

Oh all right. Thanks.

Terry: And one for me please.

Sid: I always used to have a scotch after every embalming. A toast to the customer if you like.

Terry: What you might call a.....stiff...drink!

Sid: Yes you could say that (*laughs and pours three drinks*). Cheers. (*Sid sits down*).

Terry: Cheers. So what made you come up here?

Sid: Oh, just wanted to get away from the city.

Angela: Well you've certainly done that. It's lovely up here.

Sid: Yeah, not bad. Less traffic certainly.

Terry: (*sees magazines on the coffee table*) What's this? The local rag? (*picks up magazine*) Strange cover photo. What? This is the Embalmer's Chronicle!

Sid: Oh that? Well, I like to keep up to date with the old business. On these islands, you need to do several jobs to make a living you know. This place can come in very useful when there are no guests here.

Angela: I suppose so.

Terry: Hang on; you don't lay dead people out in the guest rooms do you?

Sid: No of course not. Well.....not usually.

Angela: Since we're still with the living, we thought we'd just go for a walk.

Sid: Oh! Well, I'd do that sooner rather than later.....if I were you.

Terry: Why?

Sid: A nasty storm is on its way (*gets up and collects the glasses*).

Angela: (*looks out of window*) It looks all right to me.

Sid: You mark my words; treacherous weather we have up here (*puts glasses away*).

Angela: We can always get a bus if it turns nasty.

Sid: Only one every six hours.

Terry: Then we'll call a taxi.

Sid: We don't have one on the island.

Angela: How do people get about here then?

Sid: They don't much.

Terry: Perhaps we ought not to go.

Angela: If we go right now, it should be all right (gets up).

Terry: All right, if we must (gets up).

Sid: Oh and beware of the mist.

Terry: The mist?

Sid: Sweeps in very quickly and before you know it, you're lost and don't know where you are!

Angela: Don't worry; we'll just follow the road back.

Sid: It's got many forks and turn offs. You might go the wrong way.

Angela: Then we'll follow the beach.

Sid: You might wander into the quick sands. There are warning signs telling you to keep going!

Terry: Couldn't we just walk across the fields?

Sid: The bogs can be very treacherous! I wouldn't if I were you.

Terry: (to *Angela*) I wish I hadn't left my mobile at home as you told me to.

Sid: It wouldn't work here in any case.

Angela: Well I'm sure we'll be all right if we leave now.

Sid: That's what some other guests said.

Terry: What happened?

Sid: I don't know.....I never saw them again.

Terry: What?

Sid: (*dirty laugh*) No, I'm kidding. They turned up eventually...next morning. They'd ended up sleeping under a hedge.

Angela: Oh, how awful.

Sid: I don't know; I think they came away for a dirty weekend and that's what they got. They were filthy when they arrived back here (*another laugh*).

Terry: Why do people come here?

Sid: The views, the tranquillity.....and the adventure (*another dirty laugh then exits*).

Terry: Oh, I don't know; do you think we should still go?

Angela: Of course; he was just trying to frighten us.

Terry: Well just a short walk perhaps. All that talk has unnerved me!

Angela: Now just relax. Don't worry, we won't go out of sight of the house.

(enter *Sid*)

Sid: There's a good pub down the road.

Terry: That sounds more like it.

Sid: They don't take to strangers so it's best to keep a low profile.

Angela: But you say it's a good pub.

Sid: It is....it's just that the locals view it as their community centre so they don't want tourists taking it over. Just sit quietly in a corner and you'll be all right (*sets table for breakfast*).

Angela: How do you get there?

Sid: Easy. Follow the path by the side of the house until you come to the burnt ok tree and then turn sharp left following the path until you come to the house with the skull over the door.

Terry: And it's there? The house with the skull?

Sid: No; Turn right there and carry on until you reach the cemetery. Walk right through the cemetery until you come to another road. You should be able to see the pub across the fields from there. You go past a scarecrow and a burnt out farmhouse along the way.

Angela: Thank you. I'm sure we'll find it.

Sid: Any time. (*the doorbell rings*) Excuse me (*exits*).

Terry: The more I learn about this island, the less I like it!

Angela: We're here now so we might as well make the most of it.