

INTERVIEW WITH THE RECENTLY DECEASED

a one-act play

by

Kaushik Mukerjee

(c) 2016 Kaushik Mukerjee
contact: km@vrble.com

CHARACTERS

CRAIG LIPTON, corporate lawyer in his 50s or 60s

ROGER MAYS, senior official at Celestial Corporation, indeterminate age. Dressed in sleek business attire. Speaks in a slightly posh pseudo-British accent.

SETTING

A modern looking corporate office with a desk, armchairs, and office accessories like a tablet device. Present day.

In a modern looking corporate office, CRAIG LIPTON, a man in his 50s or 60s, sits in an arm chair. He is dressed in a hospital gown and hospital socks, and is hooked up to an IV unit. The IV fluid is blue and glowing. There is a large desk with two identical chairs. An iPad like tablet is on a charging stand on the desk, along with a phone. Behind the desk are three identical unmarked doors. He sits quietly and appears to be waking up from a nap. As he looks around and becomes aware of his surroundings, he is agitated and restless.

CRAIG

What the hell?

He examines his hospital gown and pulls gingerly on the IV tube connected to his forearm. He gets up from the chair, pulling the IV unit behind him, to take a closer look at the objects on the desk. He then walks behind the desk and looks at the three doors. As he is about to open one of the doors, ROGER MAYS bursts in through a different door and closes it behind him.

ROGER

Well hello! We haven't quite reached that part of the interview yet. Though I can understand your curiosity. You would like to know what's behind these three doors. Let me assure you, during our conversation today, the secrets of the doors will be revealed. In the meantime, if you don't mind, please have a seat and we will begin shortly.

CRAIG

(Reluctantly)

Sure.

Craig slowly shuffles back to his chair and sits down. Roger sits down at the desk and is busy on the tablet.

ROGER

Now let's see, Customer YC008403. Enter customer number here, search, select, summary view, detailed view. Excellent. Now. You are Mr. Craig Lipton. Corporate lawyer, married, three children. May I call you Craig or do you prefer Mr. Lipton?

CRAIG

Either is fine. What the hell is this all about? Who are you?

ROGER

You are currently in the screening room for the recently deceased. I am Roger Mays, principal screener and records management officer for Celestial Corporation.

CRAIG

You mean I'm dead? Goddammit.

ROGER

I'm afraid so. You departed your earthly form about one hour ago. We would have transferred you from the central processing room sooner, but we have a slight backlog today and had to keep you there a little longer than usual. I apologize for the delay.

CRAIG

I get all that. Here's the thing. I'm not supposed to be here! I'm fine. I shouldn't be dead.

ROGER

I'm sorry, but from a biological and neurological standpoint, you are now deceased.

CRAIG

So if I'm dead, what am I doing here talking to you? I don't feel dead at all.

ROGER

Sir, as I mentioned you were in the processing room until about an hour ago. The screening room is where you will stay for the next hour or so before you proceed to your final destination.

CRAIG

You don't understand. I can't be dead. I still feel alive, I'm still thinking, talking, breathing. I feel fine!

ROGER

Mr. Lipton, trust me when I say this, you are very much dead. You are here in the screening room in a transient form that is quite separate from your physical form.

CRAIG

You mean like a ghost or spirit or something?

ROGER

Just an interim, transitional state that's not quite physical.

CRAIG

Goddammit.

ROGER

You're upset. It's quite normal to feel this way. Being here brings out many unexpected and conflicting feelings. Denial, anger, fear, sadness, regret. I've seen it all and I see it a thousand times a day in this very room.