

Sheep Love To Die

A play by

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SCENE ONE

THE STAGE IS DIMLY LIT BY ONE SINGLE LIGHT. AN OLD MAN WEARING PYJAMAS AND A 'DO NOT RESUSCITATE' TAG STUMBLES INTO THIS LIGHT. AS HE ARRIVES THE LIGHTS SNAP UP FULL ACROSS THE STAGE. BLINDED, THE OLD MAN GIVES A LONG MOURNFUL CRY.

OLD MAN IN PYJAMAS

Aarghhhhh!

HE THEN FLEES THE STAGE AS THE LIGHTS FADE SLOWLY TO BLACK AS A SINGLE CHURCH BELL BEGINS TO TOLL.

SCENE TWO

THE RINGING OF THE BELL CONTINUES AND BLEEDS INTO THE BEGINNING OF SCENE THREE.

LIGHT FADES UP ON BRENDON. HE WEARS A RUMPLED BLUE SUIT, A LOOSE TIE AND A SHIRT THAT DOES NOT DO UP AT THE COLLAR. HE SPEAKS WITH A SOUTHERN IRISH ACCENT AND IS GIVING EVIDENCE AT A TRIAL.

BRENDON

I think, before I begin, it's important to put things into some sort of context.

SCENE THREE

LIGHTS UP TO REVEAL GEORGE WILSON, AN UNDERTAKER, SAT AT HIS DESK, ILLUMINATED ONLY BY THE LIGHT FROM HIS DESK LAMP. HE PORES OVER AN OPEN ACCOUNTS LEDGER AND IS CONCERNED AT WHAT HE SEES. HE PUTS HIS PEN DOWN AND SIGHS.

A LIGHT ALSO ILLUMINATES A SINGLE CHAIR IN ANOTHER PART OF THE STAGE.. AS GEORGE CONTINUES TO WORK AT HIS DESK, ANDREW JOHNSON, A PARAMEDIC, ENTERS, THROWS HIS BAG DOWN BESIDE THE CHAIR, AND SITS, PUTTING HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS.

GEORGE
 It's funny...

ANDREW
 A strange feeling, the first time you...

GEORGE
 A strange feeling, the first time you...

GEORGE
 See.

ANDREW
 Sell.

ANDREW
 A dead body.

GEORGE
 A dead body.

FROM OFFSTAGE WE HEAR ANDREW'S WIFE, LOUISE, CALL OUT.

LOUISE
 (Off stage) Andy? Is that you?

ANDREW
 Yeah?

LOUISE
 (Off stage) Are you coming to bed?

ANDREW
 In a minute.

LOUISE
 (Off stage) How was it?

ANDREW
 Tough.

LOUISE
 (Off stage) Are you OK?

ANDREW DOESN'T ANSWER. HE TAKES OFF HIS BOOTS, PICKS UP HIS BAG AND EXITS. GEORGE SPEAKS LOOKING AT HIS ACCOUNTS.

GEORGE
 This is all such a mess.

SCENE FOUR

LIGHTS CROSSFADE TO THE ENTRANCE OF TRIMMING, WHO SITS ON THE CHAIR VACATED BY ANDREW JOHNSON. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY REECE ENTERS. AS HE DOES SO THE OLD MAN IN PYJAMAS ENTERS FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION WAILING AT THE TOP OF HIS VOICE. HE NEARLY BUMPS INTO REECE AND THEN EXITS AT THE RUN.

REECE

Did you hear that?

TRIMMING

What?

REECE

That terrible screaming.

TRIMMING

No.

REECE

Nothing?

TRIMMING

I heard nothing.

REECE

Really?

TRIMMING

You must be imagining it.

REECE

I'm not the only one who's heard it.

TRIMMING

That wouldn't be unusual; the country's gripped by collective hysteria at the moment.

REECE

You think it's all in my head?

TRIMMING

It's possible.

REECE

Should I see a doctor?

TRIMMING

I wouldn't trouble them with this. It's best to leave them to the job they were employed to do.

REECE

Then, what?

TRIMMING

Take my advice. Go home. Rest.

REECE

Right.

TRIMMING

Or take the dog out for a walk; the fresh air will do you good.

REECE

You think?.

TRIMMING

Yes. But don't associate with others until the symptoms pass. Just to be on the safe side.

REECE

No. Of course.

TRIMMING

Just follow our advice, and you'll be fine.

REECE

Thank you. I will.

TRIMMING

Was there anything else?

REECE

No.

TRIMMING

In that case... It was nice to see you again.

REECE

Yes. And you.

REECE EXITS. TRIMMING WATCHES REECE EXIT AND THEN EXITS HIMSELF.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE FIVE

LIGHTS SNAP UP ON BRENDON

BRENDON

There are those who'll say I'm to blame and I'm not here to deny my part in what happened. But was I the cause? No. The events that happened here were always far beyond my control.

LIGHTS SNAP TO BLACK

SCENE SIX

LIGHTS UP TO REVEAL GEORGE WILSON AGAIN SAT AT HIS DESK PORING OVER THE ACCOUNTS BY THE LIGHT OF A DESK-LAMP. AISLING, HIS WIFE, ENTERS WEARING A DRESSING GOWN. AS SHE ENTERS THE LIGHTS RAISE TO CREATE AN ATMOSPHERIC LIGHT.

AISLING

What are you still doing down here?

GEORGE

I'm just going through the figures.

AISLING

Again?

AISLING WAITS FOR A RESPONSE, BUT GETTING NONE SHE SPEAKS AGAIN.

AISLING

Are things really that bad?

GEORGE

Yeah.

AISLING

Would it help to talk about it?

GEORGE SHRUGS

GEORGE

Not really.

AISLING

You'll change nothing by sitting up half the night poring over the books, George.

GEORGE

If I come to bed now, I won't sleep.

AISLING

No. But I might.

*AISLING WAITS FOR HIM TO MOVE BUT HE
REMAINS AT HIS DESK*

AISLING

If there was anything to do, you'd have done it by now.

GEORGE

I just keep thinking.... There must be something I've overlooked.

AISLING

I doubt it.

GEORGE SHAKES HIS HEAD

AISLING

You fought for so many years with your father over this. But he died happy knowing you were taking over the family firm. And now look at you? What was it you used to call this place?

GEORGE

The 'Bone Yard'.

HE CHUCKLES AT THE MEMORY

AISLING

You see, we used to laugh about it!

GEORGE

He hated me calling it that.

AISLING

He did. But when you finally gave in?

GEORGE

He was delighted.

AISLING

He was. Because he knew he could trust you, George. And he was right!

GEORGE

But what would he say now?

AISLING

He'd say, 'Go to bed.'

GEORGE

I feel responsible, Aisling.

AISLING

Answer me this.... Is any of this your fault?

GEORGE

No.

AISLING

No. No-one saw this coming. No-one.

GEORGE

With everything that's going on, we should be thriving.

AISLING

And we would be... if the work was coming our way. But it's not!

GEORGE

No.

AISLING

It's all gone to fill the coffers of their friends. 'Corporate is King', that's what you've always said.

GEORGE

You'd think, in times like these, people would like the personal touch.

AISLING

But that's not how the money's made. Is it? Cheapest way in, quickest way out. That's what they offer. And you can't blame people for jumping at it in these hard times. But that was never what you and your father were about. You prided yourself! A Personal Touch in Difficult Times, that's what it said on the leaflets.

GEORGE

Once, it meant something to be the local undertaker. Now...It all feels a bit hopeless.

AISLING

It's never that.

GEORGE

I wish I had your faith.

AISLING

So we look for another way.

GEORGE

You think I haven't tried.

AISLING

Tomorrow, we'll sit down. Together. Two heads are always better than one. And maybe....

GEORGE SIGHS

AISLING

But now... Bed! Sleep.!

AISLING HOLDS A HAND OUT TOWARDS HIM.

GEORGE SLOWLY CLOSES THE BOOKS AND GETS TO HIS FEET. THEY EXIT TOGETHER.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.