

The Reckoning
by
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Act 1:

Begins. On stage left are five stacked chairs, on stage right is a fold down table. JOE enters from behind the stage, holding a carrier bag. He unfolds the table and pulls out a kettle, tea bags and cups. He then walks over to stage left to unstack the five chairs and place them into a circle. As JOE sits, PETER and PAUL enter from the back, laughing mid conversation, and walk straight over to the table. They both wait by the table, looking around the room impatiently.

PAUL
(sarcastically out loud)
What does it take to get a brew in this place?

PETER
Yeah, where's John? He's usually here by now

PAUL looks across to JOE

PAUL
Joe, do you know where John is? I'm dying for a brew

JOE
He must be running late. But I reckon if you pour that hot water into one of the cups
with a bag in it, that will help

PAUL
Smart Alec (turning back to Peter). I'm guessing this is a self service checkout today.
Want one Peter?

PETER
Ta

PAUL
(calling over to JOSEPH)
Did you want one Skipper?

JOE
No thanks

PAUL

Wasn't going to make you one anyway

PAUL comically sticks his two middle fingers at JOE and JOE does the same back.

PETER

Settle down children. (pointing to the cup) Less talking, more pouring.

PAUL

Don't you start

PETER

I hope your brew making skills are up to John's high standards. They don't call him
King of the Brews for nothing

PAUL

Shut up and drink

JOE

On that note, shall we start?

PAUL finishes pouring two cups of tea, and PETER and PAUL take their cups over to the circle of chairs and sit next to each other.

JOE

OK, my name is Joe and-

A young woman, MARY, enters nervously.

MARY

Excuse me, is this the meeting?

JOE

Yes, welcome, come and join us.

MARY gingerly sits on an empty chair, furthest away from the rest of the group.
There is just one empty chair left in the circle.

MARY

Thank you

JOE

We were just starting... My name is Joe

PETER and PAUL

Hi Joe

JOE

Welcome to the meeting. This meeting is fully inclusive. Each one of us can share without judgement, interruption and whatever is said here stays here. I will now open the meeting for sharing

PETER and PAUL

Thank you Joe!

MARY

Thank...you

There is a pause

PETER

I will come in. Hi, my name is Peter

PAUL and JOE

Hi Peter!

PETER

I'm having a pretty good day today. Things are starting to feel a little easier than before. I'm trying to focus on the positive aspects of my life right now. I can't change the past. But it can be hard sometimes. The Reckoning made me lose my wife, my kids, but most of all, lose myself.... But I have to remind myself that I am one of the lucky ones. There are SO many people out there, affected by The Reckoning, that don't get the support I get here from you lot. I am so grateful for that. I know that, if I live one day at a time, things will get better. Thanks for listening, I'll leave it there

PAUL and JOE

Thank you Peter!

There is another pause.

PAUL

Hello everyone, my name is Paul

PETER, JOE and MARY

Hi Paul

PAUL

Very glad to be here... because I feel like I'm losing my mind... Somedays I forget about The Reckoning, and other days I just can't stop thinking about it. It keeps going round and round like a washing machine. Washing machine head I call it

PETER and JOE chuckle in recognition

PAUL

With me, it's all or nothing. I guess that's the way I am. I guess that's why I'm here. I have to accept that I have no control over The Reckoning. The Reckoning is The Reckoning. I have to learn to accept this. Otherwise we all know what can happen. Anyway, I'll shut my mouth and let someone else speak. Cheers

Act 2:

PETER, PAUL, MARY and JOE are all sitting in the circle, but in slightly different positions. But the empty chair remains the same.

JOE

...and I had enough. Something needed to change. Which brought me here. And I've never looked back. Thanks

PETER

Ok everyone, we are going to take a break. See you in 5

PETER and PAUL walk over to the brews table. JOE approaches MARY, sitting in the chair next to her

JOE

It's Mary isn't it?

MARY

Yes, that's right

JOE

I'm Joe. You've been coming to the meeting for a few weeks now haven't you?

MARY

Yes

JOE

How have you been finding it?

MARY

It's been good... It's been helpful. How long have you been here?

JOE

About five hundred years

MARY

Wow, that's a long time

JOE

It's completely changed my life. I don't know how I survived without this meeting. It might sound crazy, but I'm actually grateful that The Reckoning brought me here

MARY

I can't imagine ever feeling that way

JOE

You will. Give it time

MARY

Do you miss it... life before I mean.

JOE

I used to. In some ways The Reckoning kept things simple. There was The Reckoning and nothing else.

MARY

I can't actually remember what life was even like before The Reckoning. It's like a dream. Or nightmare. I can't decide which. Every day I wake up and I think 'Why me? Why did I choose this?'

JOE

You didn't choose The Reckoning. The Reckoning chose you. You need to stop blaming yourself. Remember, you're not a victim, you're a survivor

MARY

I wish I could see it that way

JOE

Well, you're in the right place here. Around people that truly understand

JOE taps MARY on the shoulder reassuringly. From across the room, PETER and PAUL are pouring themselves a cup of tea

PAUL

You heard from John at all?

PETER

No, I tried calling but no answer

PAUL

Do you think he's-

PETER

I hope not. It would be a shame to lose him. He was doing so well

PAUL

That doesn't mean a thing. It can happen to any of us, at any time. That's why we come here

PETER

True. Hopefully it's just temporary and the King of the Brews will claim his throne once more. In the meantime, keep it up, you're doing God's work

PAUL sighs as PETER approaches JOE and MARY

MARY

I appreciate you talking to me

JOE

You would do the same

PETER

Joe, have you seen John lately?

JOE

That clown? Hardly

PETER

John's alright

JOE

He is a bad influence to the group. He doesn't take The Reckoning seriously and that can make people go back out there

PETER

Sometimes humour is the only way to cope

JOE

He took things too far and you know it

PETER

I just hope he is ok...

Act 3:

Mary is now sitting in the same chair as JOE was in the first scene. Everyone else is in a different position, but JOHN's chair is still empty.

MARY

Hello everyone, my name is Mary

PETER, PAUL and JOE

Hi Mary

MARY

I have been coming to this meeting for a while now and I could have never predicted what a difference it has made. I was SO scared of everything before, now I realise the things that used to worry me are not important in the scheme of things. The fact that I am still here is a miracle and I am so grateful. Not everyone is so lucky. Today I found myself thinking about JOHN, as it is exactly a year since we lost him to The Reckoning. I never had the chance to meet him in person, but I always felt his presence. He was a key component to this meeting and he will be missed... We have come to the end of the meeting, thank you all for coming and see you next time.

PETER and PAUL get up to put their cups back on the table. JOE stays seated, clearly in distress. MARY approaches him

MARY

How are you doing Joe

JOE

I can't believe it's been a year.... I don't know why it has affected me so much. I thought he was a bit of a tool, but I still wished the best for him. I didn't want The Reckoning to take him, especially in such a cruel way. It is a harrowing reminder that none of us are safe. It can be easy to get complacent when you've been around as long as I have... But at the same time, I look at you and it gives me hope. You've grown so much as a person, I'm so proud.

MARY

Aw let me give you a hug

MARY and JOE hug.

JOE
I appreciate you talking to me

MARY
You would do the same.

JOE and MARY chuckle and PETER and PAUL approach. JOE quickly composes himself

PETER
Right, we're off

JOE
Thanks for sorting out the brews guys

PAUL
Of course. They don't call us The Brews Brothers for nothing

JOE smiles briefly. There is a moment of silence.

PETER
I know. We miss him too

PAUL
Come here you twat

JOE, PAUL and PETER exchange hugs.

PETER
And thank you for chairing Mary, you absolutely smashed it

MARY
Thanks Peter

PETER and MARY hug

PAUL
Yeah good job

PAUL and MARY hug. PETER and PAUL leave.

JOE

I need to go as well. Are you going to be alright sorting this all out?

MARY

I'll be fine, you go

JOE

Ok thanks. See you next time

MARY

Bye

JOE leaves. MARY stacks all five chairs and returns then to stage left. She walks over to the table, places all of the cups and kettle into the carrier bag and folds down the table. MARY looks around, walks back to chairs and returns JOHN's chair back to its original position. MARY smiles and, holding the carrier bag, exits the stage

FADE TO BLACK