

Cats and Dogs

Karen, middle-aged.

Robert, middle-aged.

It is grey rainy afternoon on the outskirts of Birmingham; there is a bus stop centre stage. A 4 foot high stone wall lines the back of the stage, and a road stretches in front. Just by the bus stop is a gutter that is blocked, and slowly rising with water. Robert is dressed in a suit with a flamboyant red petal tie; he is not standing under the shelter of the bus stop and decides instead to stay under his umbrella. Karen arrives to the bus stop from SL and hurries to get under the shelter. She sits on the bench. She is wearing her purple anorak and wellington boots.

Karen Oh my goodness.

Robert looks over at Karen.

Robert It's not nice is it?

Karen (Laughs) No it is not.

Very long pause.

Karen notices Robert is not under the bus shelter.

Karen Why don't you use the shelter?

Robert Excuse me?

Karen Why don't you use the bus shelter?

Robert I don't need to, I have this.

Robert nods to his umbrella. Karen studies Robert's umbrella.

Karen You are not getting wet?

Robert My feet are damp. But there is nothing I can do about that.

Karen raises her leg.

Karen I have these, my feet are always so dry.

Robert I can't.

Karen So you wear those smart shoes.

Robert For work.

Karen But you're feet are damp.

Robert But they're smart.

Karen But they are damp.

Robert Wellington's are too, large.

Karen Mine fit me just fine.

Robert Too loud, then.

Karen They do not squeak.

Robert Too bright.

Karen They are dark purple.

Robert Too happy.

Karen Perfectly happy. And why not? On a day like this, be happy.

Robert Work.

Karen You're work does not make you happy?

Robert It is work.

Karen It is slavery.

Robert It is just work.

Karen It is just slavery.

Pause

Robert You wear that anorak.
Karen Comfortably.
Robert But you wear it under the shelter. Why not make room for someone else?

Karen looks around

Karen There's someone else?
Robert Someone to come. Someone who may now not come at all, because they cannot stay dry.
Karen Then they are a fool.
Robert How so?
Karen To not wear an anorak on a day like this.
Robert Am I a fool?
Karen You are not happy, you are a fool.
Robert Fine.

Long pause.

Robert Let's swap.
Karen Swap?
Robert Places, I take the shelter you take the rain.
Karen But I do not have an umbrella.
Robert You have a hood.
Karen Fine. Just for a moment, it's my knee you see.
Robert I don't.
Karen It hurts, it's sore, inside.
Robert Then let's swap for a moment.

Robert and Karen switch places. Karen rises slowly and puts on her hood. Robert closes his umbrella, walks under the shelter and shakes it off into the rain. He then looks at his umbrella, realises it's still too wet and shakes it off in the rain. Robert observes the umbrella, it is still not dry, so he shakes it off in the rain. Robert now looks at the umbrella, he is not satisfied with how dry it is, so he shakes it off in the rain.

Karen Stop this.
Robert What?
Karen This shaking, it's going everywhere.
Robert It's raining, it is everywhere.

Robert surveys the umbrella, he is happy with it, and places it next to him, he sits on the bench.

Long pause

Robert I feel uncomfortable.
Karen As do I.
Robert Let's swap back.
Karen Good.

Robert rises and opens up his umbrella, he holds it up as Karen removes her hood and sits back down.

Pause

Karen This is better for me.
Robert Me too.

Pause

Karen Excuse me, sir.
Robert Me?
Karen Yes.
Robert Yes?
Karen Are you not worried sir?
Robert I do worry, all the time yes.
Karen Yes as do I, I do.
Robert But not now.
Karen No?
Robert I have nothing to worry about now.
Karen What if the bus doesn't come?
Robert Not to worry.
Karen No?
Robert Another will come.
Karen What if your umbrella breaks.
Robert Not to worry.
Karen No?
Robert I can buy another.
Karen What if this water from the drain floods the pavement.

Robert sees the drain and is alarmed.

Robert I...

Pause. Robert looks straight ahead into the distance.

Karen What if this water from the drain floods, your feet will be even more damp, no?
Robert No...I...
Karen And this not clean water, this is drain water.
Robert I...realise.
Karen Do you not worry about this?
Robert If the bus comes I will not need to.
Karen What if the bus doesn't come?
Robert Not to worry.
Karen No!?
Robert Another will come.
Karen Before the water rises?

Pause

Robert You're sweating.
Karen It's the rain.
Robert Like a pig
Karen Pigs don't sweat.
Robert Horses then
Robert Horses sweat.

Pause.

Robert (Shouting) Yes!
Karen Yes?
Robert (Shouting) I worry. I worry, I worry. I am worried.
Karen I had a feeling, I always do.
Robert How did you know?
Karen Because you are not happy.
Robert You saw this?

Karen You're not wearing wellingtons in the rain.
Robert Like a child would.
Karen Yes.
Robert I'm miserable. I'm worried.
Karen Then you should have brought wellingtons.
Robert Maybe we could swap again?
Karen No my knee.
Robert Where is this bus?
Karen Late.

Pause

A gust of wind blows the umbrella almost out of Robert's hands.

Robert I almost lost it.
Karen But you caught it.
Robert I'm worried.

Pause

Karen Where is this bus?
Robert It's late, will another come?
Karen It might.

-End-