

Carpe Diem by David R. Roberts

LIGHTS UP ON ACTORS ALREADY SEATED.

Two men sit next to each other looking out at the audience. Nothing is said for some time.

JOEL Do you think we should be doing something?

JACK We are. We're waiting.

Silence continues.

JOEL I mean, shouldn't we be doing something interesting?

JACK *(Looks at him)* Like what?

JOEL *(Uncertain)* I don't know... it just seems that this is a bit of a waste of time.

JACK *(Looks back out)* Everything is. That's why we're here. *(Long pause)* It's not like I haven't thought about what I would do in this situation before. I thought I would grab some random woman and fuck her brains out. Or loot a shop and get so drunk I didn't even know who I was... But there's no point to any of it is there?

JOEL I just thought we could do something fun.

JACK I'm not stopping you.

JOEL *(A moment of hesitation)* Right.

JOEL stands up. He takes a step. Looks back. Hesitates. Sits back down.

JACK *(Pause)* Did you enjoy that?

JOEL *(Sighs)* I don't want to go out on my own.

JACK We all do anyway.

JOEL Don't say that! I don't like to think about it.

JACK That's all I'm thinking about. *(Pause)* I wish I was a rock.

JOEL *(Pause. Tentative)* We could pray?

JACK stares at him unimpressed. JOEL quails under his gaze.

JOEL We should do something to distract ourselves.

JACK That's what we do for our entire lives; distract ourselves.

JOEL Let's stop it then. We have a chance to truly be free from it all. Truly be ourselves. We are free. Free to do whatever we want.

JACK I know. Horrible isn't it. Look out that window. You see anyone, looting? Running naked through the streets? Making love or going on a rampage?

JOEL I saw one naked guy...

JACK Yeah, the crazy guy. He would have been running naked through the streets anyway. But everyone else... What is everyone else doing?

JOEL *(Shrugs)* Nothing, just, normal stuff I guess.

JACK Exactly? You know why? It's because they spent their entire lives thinking what it would be like to be free; to not have to go to work; to not worry what their friends really thought about them; to ask that girl if she wanted to fuck; to say I love you and not care if the answer is no; to not care what people think about your crooked teeth or your fat arse or the veins in your legs; to say to that person I don't want to spend time with you because you bore me; to walk away from the awkward silence; to hit that bastard in the face over and over again; to wear the purple trousers because you like them, not because you're making an alternative statement - They imagine being free of all these things and you know what? It scares the shit out of them. People are scared about the freedom they have now than the world ending and that's why no one is doing anything out of the ordinary.

JOEL I'm sure some people are. I don't think freedom is that frightening.

JACK Then why are you sitting here, waiting in a dentist surgery with me?

JOEL Why are you waiting to see a dentist?

JACK What else am I going to do?

JOEL *(Looking down. Nervous)* We could have sex.

JACK Yeah, bit of a problem with that. I'm not gay.

JOEL How do you know? Have you ever tried it?

JACK Yeah, I have tried it. I didn't like it. Have you?

JOEL *(Downcast)* No.

JACK *(Looks at him a long time)* How long have you wanted to ask me that?

JOEL I don't know. I was never sure. I'm still not. It's just... I... I've wanted to say that to you for so long. But I didn't know if I really... I didn't know how the words would sound. I didn't know if I would ruin everything. But it can't hurt now can it? Although now I'm going to leave the world feeling like shit. I still feel awkward! Why should I feel awkward!? It doesn't matter anymore does it? It doesn't matter what you think of me now. *(Subdued)* Or what I think of me.

JACK If you want to go now, you can. If that's all you were staying for.

JOEL No, I wanted...

JACK Joel! It doesn't matter.

They stare at one another for a long time. JOEL stands up and goes to leave. He turns back.

JOEL I love you.

JACK nods in acknowledgement. JOEL shrugs and sits back down.

JOEL Sorry.

JACK It's okay. It doesn't matter.

JOEL No, I suppose not. (*Silence*) What time's your appointment?

JACK Not long.

They sit in silence.

WAIT FIVE SECONDS THEN STRAIGHT TO BLACK OUT.

The End