

End of Messages

a short play by
Peter M. Floyd

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

BRAD WELKER, male in his thirties
JESS, female (voice only)
OPERATOR, female (voice only)

NOTE: The playwright recommends that JESS's lines be performed by an actress offstage or via a sound system rather than having them be pre-recorded, in order to more perfectly time the lines to BRAD's actions. The OPERATOR's lines may be pre-recorded or performed live. (They may even be given by the same actress playing JESS if she can make her voice sound different enough.)

SCENE: Brad's apartment, present day

The scene is the living room of BRAD's apartment, a fairly large flat. At left is a door leading outside, to the right is a door leading to the bedroom, and upstage is an entryway into the kitchen. The furniture consists of a sofa, one or two chairs, a coffee table, and various side tables. On one of these tables is a telephone. On the wall in the back is a clock which, at lights-up, is at 6:50.

The room is in a disastrous state, as if it had been left untidied after a party. Several empty beer bottles litter the floor, and empty bags of chips are scattered about. A bowl of popcorn sits on the coffee table. A shirt is draped across the back of the sofa.

After lights come up, BRAD enters through the front door. He is wearing a suit and tie, and carrying a briefcase, which he sets down on the floor immediately on entering. He looks at the mess, shrugs, and then crosses to the telephone and presses a button, activating the speakerphone: We hear a dial tone, and then a set of beeps as BRAD enters a telephone number. There is a single ring, and then we hear the mechanical voice of the prerecorded operator.

OPERATOR (voice)
You have reached the voice mail for --

BRAD (voice)

Bradley Welker.

OPERATOR (voice)

Please enter your password.

There are further beeps as BRAD enters his password.

OPERATOR (voice)

You have...three...new messages. To hear your messages, press one.

A further beep as BRAD presses one. He then sets down the phone.

OPERATOR (voice)

First message, sent...today...at...11:38...A.M.

During the following, BRAD removes his coat and tosses his coat on the back of the sofa.

JESS (voice)

Brad! Bradley! Hey, this is me, Jess, from last night? I know we didn't get a chance to talk much this morning, 'cause you had to run off to work -- oh, and I hope you don't mind that I didn't tidy up after last night -- but anyway I just wanted to call and let you know that I had a wonderful time.

BRAD smiles at memories from last night as he loosens his tie and unbuttons the top button of his shirt. He moves up into the kitchen.

And I don't want you to think that I'm the sort of girl who goes to Harry's every night, has a couple of White Russians, and then goes home with some guy she just met. I swear, I've done that two or three times, four tops. Anyway, I think the two of us shared something special last night, something more than just the sex, though the sex was pretty darn great, wasn't it?

BRAD returns with a bottle of beer. He sits down on the couch, kicks off his shoes, and rests his feet on the coffee table, taking a handful of popcorn from the bowl and eating it.

I think we made a real connection, and I don't want to lose that. Last night was just the beginning. The beginning of something *magical*.

BRAD smiles, and takes a swig of his beer.

But, so we don't get off on the wrong foot, I think we should be honest with each other. And, well, I have to admit I wasn't entirely honest with you last night. I didn't lie to you; it's just that I didn't tell you something that I probably should have told you. The thing is, I kind of have a husband.

BRAD, in the middle of another swig, chokes, and spits out a mouthful of beer.

His name's Vince, and I'm sure you'd like him if you met him. He's a great guy, really nice. There's only one thing about him, just one teeny-tiny microscopic little thing, but it is really super-annoying. He can be kind of jealous. Now, I just want to say that I don't necessarily buy this whole monogamy thing. I mean, if women were meant to have only one man, God wouldn't have given us two breasts, you know what I'm saying? (*BRAD looks puzzled.*) So, if I want to get a little on the side, that's none of Vince's business, am I right?

BRAD turns and looks at the phone, a little dubiously.

Well, he doesn't really see things like that. When he even thinks I've been looking at another man, he gets into a total snit, and wants to go pound the guy's face in right then and there. Even if I haven't been doing, you know, the things we were doing last night. He's so unreasonable, not understanding like you. (*Thoughtfully*) You know, there are two kinds of men in this world. (*Beat.*) Anyway, after I left your place this morning, I went back home. I thought he'd have gone off to work – he trains boxers at this gym – but he was there waiting for me, and he's like, "Where were you all night?" And I was all, "It's none of your business." He wanted to know everything, who I'd been with, and what I was doing to them, and all that. Boy, I'd never seen him so mad!

BRAD stands up, showing signs of agitation.

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